

ABUSIVE DATING BEHAVIOURS AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Adolescence is the crux of sexuality and a period of development marked by the establishment of intimate relationships with the opposite sex. The occurrences of abusive dating behaviours at this stage of development are on the rise. Although little attention has been placed on this, these behaviours could serve as risk factors for worse maladaptive behaviours later in life and even the manifestation of psychological distress which is not limited only to the victims but as well, the perpetrators. Hence, this study sought to identify the role of self-esteem, empathy, family background and peer influence in predicting the occurrence of abusive dating behaviour. Cross-sectional survey design was employed in the collection of data from a sample of 219 undergraduates of University of Ibadan, consisting of 156 females and 63 males. A self-administered structured questionnaire was used to measure patterns of abusive dating behaviour, self-esteem, empathy and resistance to peer influence while family background was measured as part of the demographic characteristics. Three hypotheses were tested using T-test and multiple regression analytical tools. Results reveal that self-esteem, empathy and peer influence had significant joint influence on abusive dating behaviour ($F(3,206) = 8.796, p < .05; R^2 = .114$). Self-esteem and empathy had significant independent influence on abusive dating behaviour [$(\beta = -.306, p < .05)$ and $(\beta = .156, p < .05)$ respectively] while peer influence had no significant independent influence on abusive dating behaviour ($\beta = -.020, p > .05$). This infers that an undergraduate's self and empathy are major concerns for engaging in abusive dating, peer influence could only complement the influence of these two factors. It was also found that students from monogamous homes and polygamous homes did not differ in their abusive dating behaviour ($t(213) = .519, p > .05$) and that gender differences do not exist in abusive dating behaviour ($t(213) = .500, p > .05$). This also infers that neither experiences from family backgrounds nor undergraduate's gender determines abusive dating. It was therefore recommended that clinical psychologists and counsellors help adolescents who have been involved in abusive relationships, either as perpetrators or victims to build their self-esteem and empathic ability to prevent future reoccurrence.

JEL Classifications: A13, D71

Introduction

THE manifestations of different types of abuse in relationships has been highly reported amidst adults in marital relationships, with little attention given to the possibility of such occurrences in adolescent relationships (Frye and Karney, 2006), whereas studies on dating violence have found that at least one in every five dating relationships has been characterized by violence (Makepeace, 1981; Wolfe and Wekerle, 1999) occurring in various forms or patterns. Anderson and Danis (2007) defined abusive dating as the threat or actual use of physical, sexual or verbal abuse by one member of an unmarried couple on the other member within the context of a dating relationship. Sugarman and Hotaling (1989) also defined dating violence as the use or threatened use of physical force or restraint carried out with the intent of causing pain or injury. Generally, abusive dating would include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, verbal abuse, relational abuse and threatening behaviour (Hanley and O'Neill, 1997; Jackson, 1999; Murphy and Hoover, 2001; Riggs and O'Leary, 1996; Shook, Gerrity, Jurich and Segrist, 2000).

For many, dating begins in adolescence – a period of development marked by the establishment of close, intimate relationships with same and opposite sex peers. Although, many adolescent relationships are healthy and supportive, coercive and aggressive behaviours are also found to occur at an alarming rate (Lavoie et al., 2000). Abuse within dating relationships is characterized by deliberate intimidation or coercion by one partner against the other to compel participation in sexual intercourse or other sexual acts or to compel the partner to participate in sexual activities at a rate that is greater than desired (Cornelius and Resseguie, 2007; Smith and Donnelly, 2001). Studies have shown that when emotional or physical violence occur within a romantic relationship, it is probable that there is at least some degree of sexual coercion occurring which can function to increase power differentials within the relationship (Smith and Donnelly, 2001).

Variations exists on the definitions given by authors in describing the concept of abusive dating and this is probably due to the fact that dating abuse is multi-determined; that is, abuse in dating relationships can occur in varying forms. According to Anderson and Danis (2007), it is the threat or actual use of physical, sexual or verbal abuse by one member of an unmarried couple on the other member within the context of a dating relationship. Sugarman and Hotaling (1989) defined referred to this concept as dating violence and defined it as the use or threatened use of physical force or restraint carried out with the intent of causing pain or injury.

Many researchers have focused on overt physical aggression, but focusing on just this underestimates other types of violent and aggressive behaviours often displayed in dating relationships but may serve the same purpose as physical violence but later researches focused on other patterns of dating abuse, most notably, verbal or emotional abuse and sexual abuse (Hanley and O'Neill, 1997; Jackson, 1999; Murphy and Hoover, 2001; Riggs and O'Leary, 1996; Shook, Gerrity, Jurich and Segrist, 2000). Lavoie et al. (2000) defined teen dating violence as any behaviour that is prejudicial to the partner's development or health by comprising his or her physical, psychological or sexual integrity. Wolfe and Wekerle (1999) defined relationship violence as including any behaviour that is intended to control or dominate another person physically, sexually or psychologically, causing some levels of harm.

These more inclusive definitions of relationship aggression give an understanding of what is meant by both psychological and sexual abuse. Verbal, emotional or psychological abuse involves the use of verbal or nonverbal acts intended to intimidate or hurt the other partner, or the use of threats functioning to coerce the victimized individual (Hanley and O'Neill, 1997; Murphy and Hoover, 2001). In contrast to physical abuse which intent is to cause bodily harm, emotional abuse threatens victimized individuals' personal integrity, self-worth, self-esteem and often evokes fear and increased dependency on perpetrating partners (Hanley and O'Neill, 1997; Smith and Donnelly, 2001). According to Infante and Wigley (1986), verbal aggressiveness is a personality trait involving one's tendency to attack other's self-concept. Sexual Abuse within Dating relationships is characterized by deliberate intimidation or coercion by one partner against the other to compel participation in sexual intercourse or other sexual acts or to compel the partner to participate in sexual activities at a rate that is greater than desired (Cornelius and Resseguie, 2007; Smith and Donnelly, 2001). Studies have shown that when emotional or physical violence occur within a romantic relationship, it is probable that there is at least some degree of sexual coercion occurring which can function to increase power differentials within the relationship (Smith and Donnelly, 2001).

Research findings have also shown that the occurrence of one form of violence in romantic relationships often open the way for the occurrence of other forms of violence, that is, these various patterns are interrelated and that verbal aggression often precedes physical aggression (Jackson, 1999; Ryan 1995). A study conducted by Stet (1990) showed that verbal aggression occurred without physical violence in 50% of dating couples while physical aggression occurred without

verbal aggression in only 0.2% to 0.4%. This shows that verbal and emotional abuse occurs with physical abuse in relationships where this exists. According to a study by Follingstad, Rutledge, Berg, Hause and Polek (1990), emotional abuse seems to have more detrimental psychological effects on women. Therefore, no form of abuse is worse than the other and none should be neglected so that effective intervention and preventive solutions will be gotten to manage dating abuse. In actual terms, psychological abuse involves insulting, degrading or criticizing one's partner, threatening to break up or making a partner feel guilty or inferior, saying things that upset or hurt one's partner (Cyr, McDuff and Wright, 2006) and has been linked as a precursor to physical violence in dating relationships (Hamby and Sugarman, 1999; Jackson, 1999; Murphy and O'leary, 1989; Ronfeldt, Kimerling and Arias, 1998; Ryan, 1995).

When examining a complex construct such as abusive dating behaviour, it is important to identify those factors that could influence or predict the phenomenon as well as the uniqueness of these factors to males and females. In the past, possible risk factors found to influence abuse in dating relationships include; high risk behaviours such as substance abuse, coming from disadvantaged neighbourhood, impoverished homes, peer influence and family structure (Foshee, Benefield and Ennett, 2004; Robert, Klein and Fisher 2003, Chase et al., 2002), mental health problems such as low self-esteem, anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation (Chase, Treboux and O'Leary, 2002; Howard, Wang and Fang, Summer 2007) and low academic performance (Wekerle and Wolfe, 1999).

However, with respect to gender, studies have shown that both boys and girls tend to be perpetrators of abuse in dating relationships except that they might differ in the pattern of abuse used. Although, researchers have noted that rates of violence may be inaccurate since most studies rely on self-report measures (Sugarman and Hotaling, 1989). Jackson (1999) found that males may tend to under-report and deny or minimize their own aggression while females may over-report to accept blame. Consistently, studies have shown that the non-use of sexual abuse indicates that both partners are involved in reciprocal use of violence and that females use more physical violence than males (Foshee, 1996; Cray and Foshee, 1997; Malik, Sorenson and Aneshensel, 1997; Roscoe and Callahan, 1985; O'Keefe, 1997). Gender difference is significant when it comes to sexual abuse, and the female appear to be the greater victims and experience greater emotional impact compared to the male (Foshee, 1996). Researchers have however suggested that though there seems to be gender parity in the occurrence of violence among adolescents, one should not be quick to say abuse in adolescent dating relationship is gender neutral.

Risk factors for dating violence has been identified to be attributes or characteristics that are associated with an increased probability of its reception and or expression (Hotaling and Sugarman, 1990), which would include self-esteem, empathy, peer influence and family background as are the interests of this present study. Coopersmith (1967) defined self-esteem as a personal judgement of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes an individual holds towards himself. Self-esteem is also partly determined by how much the self-image differs from the ideal self. If our self-image is the kind of person we think we are, then our ideal self is the kind of person we would like to be; the greater the gap between our self-image and our ideal self, the lower our self-esteem (Carl Rogers, 1959). The sociometer theory maintains that self-esteem evolved to check one's level of status and acceptance in one's social group. Specifically, Leary (1999) posits that self-esteem is more strongly related to individual's belief about others' evaluations of them than their own self-evaluation with an evolutionary drive to belong to social groups and maintain significant interpersonal relationships. It is highly likely that the consequences of not doing so led to the development of a mechanism (the sociometer) that continuously monitors the social environment for cues of acceptance or rejection from others (Leary,2003). In the context of abusive dating, the sociometer could explain how individuals are consistently gauging their perceived acceptance or rejection by their loved ones, thereby, the level of self-esteem of a dating partner could influence abusing a dating partner likewise a dating partner's abuse can affect the self-esteem of the other.

Empathy, another risk factor, involves the ability to place information into a broader social context; the reaction of an individual to the observed experiences of another (Davis, 1983). Eisenberg and Miller (1987) among others are of the opinion that to have an empathic response, the observer's emotional response must be the same as that of the observed other. Other researchers argue that any emotional response to another's distress qualifies as an empathic response, even if that emotional experience differs from the emotion exhibited by the target (Stotland, 1969). Rather than emphasizing affect, another school of thought viewed empathy as a cognitive activity. Those who hold this point of view have emphasized an individual's capacity to accurately perceive and understand another's plight (Dymond, 1949). Davis (1994), however, described empathy as a multidimensional construct consisting of both affective and cognitive component with five components which includes perspective taking – the tendency to spontaneously adopt the psychological point of view of others; fantasy – the tendency to transpose imaginatively into the feelings and actions of fictitious

characters in books, movies and plays; empathic concerns – ability to assess ‘other-oriented’ feelings of sympathy and concern for unfortunate others; and personal distress– ‘self-oriented’ feelings of personal anxiety and unease intense interpersonal settings.

Theories of cognitive and moral development have attempted to explain the cognitive and behavioural components of empathy. For example, the formal operations stage of Jean Piaget’s cognitive development theory begins at age 11 or 12 and continues throughout the adolescent age group. Perspective taking; a major element of Piaget’s formal operations stage has also been viewed by various authors as the cognitive component of empathy. According to Piaget’s theory, an adolescent at the formal operational stage is able to adopt the psychological point view of others. Thereby, adolescents with impaired cognition might be unable to psychologically view situations from their partner’s perspectives and this could be a risk factor for adolescents’ perpetration of abuse, especially verbal and emotional forms in their dating relationships.

Family background, the third risk factor of concern in this study, could refer to a number of factors such as parental violence, child abuse, lack of parental supervisions and single parenting; but for the purpose of this research, family background is defined as the distinction between monogamy and polygamy. Polygamy is the practise of an individual having more than one spouse. Polygamy exists in three main forms; polygyny – the practise of one man having more than one wife, polyandry – involves a woman having more than one husband and polyamory which involves multiple husbands and wives. Of all these, polygyny is commonly practised in Africa and it is the main focus of this study. Monogamy on the other hand is the practise of one man having one wife or one woman having one husband. It is common knowledge that violence such as abuse against children, women and intra household conflict are often at a higher rate in polygamous homes compared to monogamous homes. Bandura (1973) showed that family of origin violence could be transmitted from generation to generation through a child’s social learning history. Also, Henrich (2012) found that monogamous marriages result in significant improvements in child welfare, including lower rates of child neglect, abuse, homicide and intra-household conflict.

The heightened importance of peer influence is a hall mark of adolescent psychosocial functioning (Brown, 2004). Peer influence is commonly invoked in discussions of adolescent misbehaviour and is implicated in many accounts of adolescent risk taking; most risky behaviours engaged in by adolescents are carried out in the company of peers (Simons-Morton, Lerner and Singer, 2005). For

deviant anti-social peer influence, a curvilinear relationship between age and susceptibility to peer influence is reported and this susceptibility is said to be strongest during mid-adolescence (Brendt, 1979).

The psychosocial theory according to Erik Erikson says that the adolescence is at the 'identity versus role confusion' stage of psychosocial development. The psychosocial modality at this stage is to be oneself (or not to be) and the radius of significant relationships is peer group, out-groups and models of leadership. The social learning theory also explains that behaviours can be learnt from peers and that the reinforcement of these behaviours will increase the likelihood of occurrence of the behaviour. Thus, the peers adolescents interact with can go a long way in influencing abusive behaviours in their dating relationship. Although previous studies have considered familial factors as possible risk factors, it has not been examined in the context of monogamy and polygamy. Also, few studies relating to adolescents dating violence have used populations including college age students, most studies have used high school populations.

Banyard, Cross, and Modecki (2006) established that the higher the number of risk factors the greater the likelihood of teen dating perpetration, with the inference that an attempt to prevent teen dating violence must first examine the different risk factors involved (Uttech, 2012). Hence, the need to establish whether or not self-esteem, empathy, family background and peer influence are possible risk-factors of abusive dating behaviour. To this end, three hypotheses were proposed in this study: self-esteem, empathy and peer influence will have significant independent and joint influence on abusive dating behaviour; students from monogamous homes will less likely be abusive in their dating relationships than those from polygamous homes; and there will be gender difference in abusive dating behaviour among undergraduates of University of Ibadan.

Review of Literature

Abuse that take place in the context of dating relationships have been relatively sparse until Makepeace's (1981) investigation on dating violence found that at least one in every five dating relationships was characterized by violence, that research into this area of behaviour increased and since then, researchers have explored correlates, possible risk factors, and the effectiveness of prevention and intervention programmes to address violence in dating relationships (Brown, Puster, Vazquez, Hunter, and Lescano, 2007; Cornelius and Resseguie, 2007; Foshee, 1996; Harper, Austin, Cercone, and Arias, 2005; Lane and Gwartney

Gibbs, 1985; Marshall and Rose, 1988; Munoz-Rivas, Grana, O'Leary, and Gonzalez, 2007; O'Keefe, Brockopp, and Chew, 1986; Prospero, 2006).

Some factors have been claimed to be predisposing, moderating, or mediating factors related to dating aggression, including gender (Monson and Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2002; Banyard, Cross, and Modecki, 2006), exposure to childhood aggression (Follingstad, Bradley, Laughlin, and Burke, 1999; Hickman, Jaycox, and Aronoff, 2004; Shook, Gerrity, Jurich and Segrit., 2000), previous victimization (Hickman et al., 2004; Smith, White, and Holland, 2003; Banyard et al., 2006), attitudes about interpersonal aggression (Lewis, Travea, and Fremouw, 2002; Foshee, Bauman, Ennett, Suchindran, Benefield, Linder., 2005), alcohol use (O'Keefe, 1997; Shook et al., 2000), and low self-esteem and depression (Capaldi and Crosby, 1997; Foshee, Bauman, Ennett, Suchindran, Benefield, Linder. , 2004; Marshall and Rose, 1990).

While gender is a risk factor for teen dating violence, it is more complicated than labelling the victims as girls and the perpetrators as boys. Boys and girls are both victims and perpetrators (Banyard et al., 2006; Hickman, Jaycox, and Aronoff, 2004; Williams et al., 2008). A study found the majority of violent teen Dating relationships to be mutually violent (Foshee and Gray, 1997). Foshee and Gray (1997) found that 14.3% of adolescents were victims only, 19.5% were perpetrators only, and 62% were both victims and perpetrators. Mutually violent dating relationships had more frequent, severe, and injury-causing violence than one-sided violent dating relationships (i.e., victim only or perpetrator only) and they found mutually violent dating relationships to be reciprocal; if one partner initiated severe violence then the other partner reciprocated with severe violence.

According to Banyard et al. (2006), boys are more likely than girls to be perpetrators of either physical abuse or sexual abuse or the combination of both with a total of 14.5% of boys and 9.8% of girls who are perpetrators. However, O'Keefe (1997) found that 43% of girls and 39% of boys reported using physical aggression against their dating partner. In addition, Foshee and Gray (1997) found that 26% of boys reported being victims of teen dating violence only compared to 8% of girls. The authors suggested that this difference may be due to underreporting by boys due to societal stigma of boys hitting girls. Even so, several studies have found that boys and girls are almost equally likely to be perpetrators of teen dating violence (Banyard et al., 2006; O'Keefe et al., 1986; Wekerle and Wolfe, 1999; Williams et al., 2008). According to Noonan and Charles (2009), girls are more likely to slap than boys. O'Keefe (1997) found that girls reported more kicking, biting, slapping, hitting with a fist or with an object

against their partners than boys. Boys reported using more sexual force against their partners than girls (O'Keefe, 1997). Boys are found to be more threatening than girls because, when they resort to violence, they cause more damage than girls do (Hickman et al., 2004; Wekerle and Wolfe, 1999). O'Keefe et al. (1986) supported this idea and hypothesized that while girls are frequently perpetrators as much as boys, they tend to do less damage than boys. Also, according to the United State Department of justice et al. (2000), women over the age of 18 who were assaulted by their intimate partner or ex-intimate partner were more likely to be injured or severely injured than women who were raped or physically assaulted by other perpetrators.

Ajuwon, Funmilayo and Osungbade (2011) assessed the experience and perpetration of physical, sexual and psychological violent behaviours of in-school adolescents during which male and female public secondary school students (1366) were randomly sampled. Results revealed use of alcohol, witnessing domestic violence, involving in work and parental use of alcohol as predictors of experience of violence among males while parental use of alcohol and being young were predictors of violence among females.

Dating violence among adolescents is associated with diverse deleterious psychological consequences (Lewis and Fremouw, 2001). Research related to dating violence has suggested that individuals reporting dating violence evidence reduced self-worth, increased self-blame, cognitive impairment, lower self-esteem, difficulties performing work duties, depression, anger, substance abuse, chronic gastrointestinal, cardiovascular conditions, and injury (Anderson and Danis, 2007; Campbell, 2002; Cornelius and Resseguie, 2007; Jackson, Cram, and Seymour, 2000; Jezl, Molidor, and Wright, 1996; Makepeace, 1986; Nightingale and Morrissette, 1993; Rhatigan and Street, 2005; Smith and Donnelly, 2001; Straight, Harper, and Arias, 2003; Truman-Schram, Cann, Calhoun, and Vanwallendael, 2000). Furthermore, individuals with a history of dating violence often show signs of decreased abilities to effectively solve problems and display inferior communication skills than individuals not exposed to such violence (Carlson, 1987; Frieze, 2000; O'Leary et al., 1989; Robertson and Murachver, 2006; Smith and Donnelly, 2001), including less facilitative communication (Robertson and Murachver, 2006), and may develop the belief that violence is a successful and normal way to influence ones partner and gain control in the relationship setting (Carlson, 1987; Cornelius and Resseguie, 2007; Frieze, 2000; Harper et al., 2005; Prospero, 2006; Munoz-Rivas et al., 2007). Also, there is evidence to suggest that inferior communication skills in childhood are predictive of perpetration of

violence against an intimate partner later in life (Andrews, Foster, Capaldi, and Hops, 2000), and that negative communications between partners may increase violence in the relationship (Follette and Alexander, 1992). Consequently, with homicide being the most tragic result of maladaptive relationships (Pflieger and Vazsonyi, 2006; Shackelford and Mouzos, 2005), with female partners the victims of murder more often than male partners (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002; Garcia, Soria, and Hurwitz, 2007).

Ekechukwu and Ateke (2014) examined the causes and effects of dating violence in adolescent relationships. 2,386 adolescents consisting of 988 males and 1,398 females between the ages of 16 and 19 were conveniently sampled from 5 tertiary institutions. Psychological, verbal, physical and electronic attacks were found as the most common forms of dating violence that characterize adolescent relationships, while intrapersonal (such as low self-esteem, poor anger management, deception and secretiveness, jealousy, domineering/ controlling attitude, etc.), interpersonal (such as poor communication skills, poor social skills, etc.), and situational (such as lack of guidance, disagreement on partner's choice of friends, inability to meet partner's demand etc.) factors are discovered to be active triggers of dating violence among adolescents.

Exposure to childhood aggression has been found to be predisposing to dating violence (Follingstad, Bradley, Laughlin, and Burke, 1999; Hickman, Jaycox, and Aronoff, 2004; Shook et al., 2000). Studies have shown the numerous detriments of parental violence on the health and psychological well-being of children (Carroll, 1977; Herrenkohl, Herrenkohl, and Toedter, 1983; Milner, Robertson, and Rodgers, 1990). Within the domestic abuse literature, family of origin violence (i.e., violence perpetrated by parents either against each other or toward their children) is thought to be 'transmitted' to future generations through the child's social learning history (Bandura, 1973).

Some studies have also suggested that childhood exposure to domestic violence make it more difficult for battered women to leave their abusive partners (Overholser and Moll, 1990), that males who observed aggressive acts between their parents were three times more likely to have assaulted their wives than those who had not (Straus, Hamby, Sherry, Boney-McCoy, Sue and Sugarman, 1980), and both males and females who observed hitting between their parents were twice as likely to engage in marital aggression as either the perpetrator or victim (Kalmuss, 1984). Other family factors include lack of closeness in the parent/child relationship and lax parental monitoring; a level of monitoring disproportionately associated with a particular family structure, namely, single-parent households

(Chase Treboux and O’Leary, 2002) and parental monitoring or supervision. (Browning, Leventhal, and Brooks-Gunn, 2005).

Lack of self-esteem has been shown to influence a diverse array of human behaviours (Baumeister, 1993). Self-esteem has been found to enhance resiliency and its lack has been shown to increase vulnerability (Spencer, Josephs and Steele, 1993). Low Self-esteem has been found to be predisposing to Abusive dating behaviour (Capaldi and Crosby, 1997; Foshee et al., 2004; Marshall and Rose, 1990) and that increases in Self-esteem can lead to abuse in dating relationship (Wekerle and Wolfe, 1999) as supported by the Sociometer theory of Self-esteem such that as acceptance increases, abuse increases. According to Kinsfogel and Grych (2004), boys and girls who have homes with higher levels of interparental conflict reported having peer groups who were more likely to be verbally and physically aggressive with their dating partners than adolescents from homes with less amount of violence. This indicates that certain peer groups are more accepting of aggression in dating relationships; therefore, the members of that peer group engage in more aggression in dating relationships (Kinsfogel and Grych, 2004).

Boys with friends who have aggressive and delinquent behaviours are at a greater risk of being involved in aggressive dating relationships (Foshee et al., 2001; Noonan and Charles, 2009; Williams et al., 2008). According to Williams et al. (2008), peer behaviour such as talking negatively about their partner, may reinforce aggressive behaviours. Foshee et al. (2001) found that boys who have friends who are perpetrators of teen dating violence are at a greater risk for teen dating violence perpetration currently and recurrently. In a study conducted by Noonan and Charles (2009), boys between the ages of 11 and 14 reported that there is limited support from their peers for treating their girlfriends well. Boys who treat girls well were thought of as ‘not manly’ (p. 1092). Noonan and Charles, 2009 suggested that this is because boys who do not have girlfriends may be jealous because their friend does not spend as much time with them. They may also be jealous because their friend has a girlfriend when they do not. In addition, boys reported being afraid that their girlfriends would try to control or manipulate them if they treat them well.

Method of Study

This study is a cross-sectional survey and the correlational design was used for this study to establish a relationship between the independent variables; self-esteem, empathy, family background, peer influence and the dependent variable, abusive dating behaviour. The study was carried out using willing participants from halls of

residence and faculties within University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The halls of residence included Queen Idia, Obafemi Awolowo, Kutu and Sultan Bello. The faculties included the Social Sciences, Arts, Technology, Science, Law and Agriculture. The sample consisted of two hundred and nineteen undergraduate students in the University of Ibadan (156 females and 63 males). The 219 participants were between the age range of 16 to 20 years with the mean age of 19 and standard deviation of 1.06. One hundred of the participants had girlfriends or boyfriends while 119 did not currently have but had been in a relationship in the last year. Forty three were 100 level students, 41 were in 200 level, 77 were in 300 level, 52 were in 400 level and 3 were in 500 level. A total of 199 were from monogamous homes while 20 were from polygamous homes.

Multistage sampling was employed, which included stratified random sampling and accidental sampling techniques. Stratified random sampling was used to select the faculties and halls of residence in the University of Ibadan to be included in this study. Accidental sampling technique was afterwards used to select the participants, such that in all the faculties and halls of residence the questionnaires were distributed based on availability and willingness to participate. The section A of the instrument was designed to get information on demographic characteristics of the participants. It contained seven items which included age, gender, department, level of study, have boyfriend/girlfriend or not and number of wives by ones father.

Furthermore, section B of the instrument consisted of Conflict in Adolescent Dating Relationship Inventory (CADRI) which was used to measure Abusive Dating Behaviour. CADRI is a self-report 35 item scale developed by Wolfe et al. (2001) and it is made up of 5 subscales; Sexual Abuse (SA), Threatening Behaviour (TB), Verbal/Emotional Abuse (VE), Relational Abuse (RA) and Physical Abuse (PA). Only 25 items of the CADRI make up these 5 subscales. Other items in the CADRI refer to conflict resolution behaviour to add balance. They are not scored as part of the CADRI scores. The scale has a reliability coefficient of .88 for VE, .70 for RA, .91 for PA, .75 for SA and .66 for TB. The CADRI is scored on a scale of 1 to 4 (from never to often). Section C consisted of the Rosenberg Self-esteem scale (RSES) developed by Rosenberg in 1965. RSES is a 10 item scale with a scoring of 3- 0 (strongly agree - strongly disagree). It has 5 reversed items which are scored on a scale of 0-3 (strongly agree - strongly disagree). The scale has an internal consistency that ranges from 0.77 to 0.88, a test retest reliability that ranges from 0.82 to 0.85, criterion validity of 0.55 and

construct validity: correlated -.64 with anxiety, -.54 with depression and -.43 with anomie.

Section D measured empathy using the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) developed by Davis (1980). It is a 28 item scale answered on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 'does not describe me well' (A) to 'describes me well' (E). It has 4 subscales, but for this study, only the composite score was used. It is scored on a scale of 0 - 4 with higher scores indicating higher level of Empathy. It has 9 reversed items. The IRI has a reliability coefficient of .78 for males and .79 for females on the fantasy sub scale, .71 for males and .75 for females on the perspective taking sub scale, .68 for males and .73 for females on the Empathic concern sub scale, .77 for males and .75 for females on the personal distress sub scale. On the composite scale, it has a test-re-test of .60 to .79 for males and .62 to .81 for females for 60 to 75 days. Section E consisted of the Resistance to Peer Influence Scale (RPI). It was developed by Steinberg and Monahan (2007). It is a 10-item scale consisting of 10 pairs of opposite statement about interactions. The scale is scored from 1 to 4 except for items 2, 6 and 10 which have reversed scoring of 4 to 1. The participant has to indicate which one is more like her or him and to what degree. The scale has a Cronbach alpha that ranged from 0.7 to 0.8 (0.73-0.76). RPI is significantly but modestly negatively correlated with widely used measure of impulsivity (the Barrat impulsiveness scale = -.22) and antisocial risk taking (-.12). High scores indicate high level of resistance to peer influence.

In conducting this study, research assistants were employed for the distribution of the questionnaires. They knocked on room doors in halls of residence and requested for the consent of the room occupants to be part of the study. Although, most people volunteered, few declined. Similarly in the faculties, questionnaires were distributed and administered on corridors, lounges and lecture rooms. Each participant was given a minimum of 15 minutes to fill the questionnaires and those who were not through after 15 minutes were given more time for completion. Using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software 21.0 version, the data collected were analysed. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the analysis of the data collected. Specifically, multiple regression analysis was used for the first hypothesis, the analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the second hypothesis and the t-test analysis for independent samples for the third hypothesis.

Results

The first hypothesis tested the joint and independent influence of self-esteem, empathy and peer influence on abusive dating behaviour among University of Ibadan undergraduates. The hypothesis was tested with a multiple regression analysis as presented in table 1.

Table 1: Summary of multiple regression analysis showing joint and independent influence of self-esteem, empathy and peer influence on abusive dating behaviour

<i>Variables</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R² F P</i>
Self-Esteem	-.306	-4.728	<.05		
Empathy	.156	2.323	<.05	.337	.114 8.796 <.05
Peer Influence	-.020	-.296	>.05		

The data in table 1 show that self-esteem, empathy and peer influence have a significant joint influence on abusive dating behaviour ($F(3,206) = 8.796, p < .05; R^2 = .114$). This indicates a joint percentage prediction of 11.4%. This implies that self-esteem, empathy and peer influence accounted for 11.4% of the variation observed in abusive dating behaviour of University of Ibadan undergraduates, with the inference that there are other variables that accounted for a higher percentage (about 88.6%) of the variation not accounted for by these three. The result also revealed that both self-esteem and empathy had significant independent influence on abusive dating behaviour ($(\beta = -.306, p < .05)$ and $(\beta = .156, p < .05)$ respectively), while peer influence had no significant independent influence on abusive dating behaviour ($\beta = -.020, p > .05$). This result implies that self-esteem has an inverse relationship with abusive dating behaviour, that is, as self-esteem decreases, abusive dating behaviour increases, and vice versa. Empathy, on the other hand has a positive relationship with abusive dating behaviour, that is, as empathy decreases, abusive dating behaviour decreases also. Peer influence has no significant independent relationship with abusive dating behaviour. There is, however an inverse relationship between peer influence and abusive dating behaviour. The hypothesis stated is therefore partially accepted.

The second hypothesis tested the variation in abusive dating behaviour of University of Ibadan undergraduates as a function of family type, with the expectation that undergraduates from polygamous homes will engage in abusive dating behaviour more than those from monogamous homes. The hypothesis was tested with t-test for independent samples as presented in table 2. The data in in table 2 reveal that there is no significant difference in the abusive dating behaviour of participants from monogamous and polygamous homes ($t(213) = .519, p > .05$).

This infers that undergraduates from monogamous and polygamous homes engage in abusive dating behaviour in similar manners. The stated hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Table 2: T-test of independent measures showing the difference between monogamous and polygamous homes on abusive dating behaviour

<i>Family Type</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>
Monogamous	195	64.41	10.1			
				213	.519	>.05
Polygamous	20	61.20	7.3			

The third hypothesis tested the variation in abusive dating behaviour of University of Ibadan undergraduates as a function of gender, with the expectation that male undergraduates will engage in abusive dating behaviour more than female undergraduates. The hypothesis was tested with t-test for independent samples as presented in table 3.

Table 3: T-test of independent measures showing the difference between male and female undergraduates on abusive dating behaviour

<i>Gender</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
Male	62	62.82	9.8			
				213	.500	>.05
Female	153	62.08	9.9			

Table 3 shows that there was no significant difference in the abusive dating behaviour of male and female undergraduates ($t(213) = .500, p > .05$). This infers that male and female undergraduates engage in abusive dating behaviour in like manners. However, a further observation of the means show that male undergraduates are slightly higher in abusive dating behaviour ($X = 62.82, SD = 9.8$) than female undergraduates ($X = 62.08, SD = 9.9$) even though not significant. The stated hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Discussion and Conclusion

The central aim of this study was to investigate the influence of self-esteem, empathy, peer influence and family background on abusive dating behaviour among undergraduate students of University of Ibadan, with the rationale that the manifestations of different types of abuse in relationships has been highly reported amidst adults in marital relationships, with little attention given to the possibility of such occurrences in adolescent relationships. Three hypotheses were stated towards achieving this objective.

The first hypothesis tested the joint and independent influence of self-esteem, empathy and peer influence on abusive dating behaviour. The hypothesis was partially accepted such that self-esteem, empathy and peer influence had significant joint influence of 11.4% on abusive dating behaviour. Also, self-esteem and empathy were found to have significant independent influence on abusive dating behaviour while peer influence did not. This result also showed an inverse relationship between self-esteem and abusive dating, with the indication that abusive dating behaviour increases as undergraduate self-esteem decreases. A positive relationship was also found between empathy and abusive dating, such that abusive dating increases as undergraduates' empathy increases. The inverse relationship observable between peer influence and abusive dating, though not statistically significant reveal an interesting finding, inferring that abusive dating increases as peer influence increases in this population.

This result aligns with the findings of Foshee et al. (2004) when he reported that low self-esteem was found to be a predisposing factor to abusive dating behaviour. Also, feelings of low self-esteem have repeatedly been shown to be a consistent correlate of experiencing abuse by several researchers (Aguilar and Nightingale, 1994; Orava, Mcleod, and Sharpe, 1996; Tutty, Bidgood, and Rothery, 1993). Similarly, Capaldi and Crosby (1997) identified Low Self-esteem as a major predisposing factor to abusive dating behaviour as supported by the Sociometer theory of self-esteem. Aguilar and Nightingale (1994) also reported that low self-esteem is a consequence of repeated violent assault of either a physical or verbal nature which can negatively affect battered women's abilities to protect themselves against future incidents of abuse.

However, with reference to the positive relationship and influence found between empathy and abusive dating, the result of several previous researches seem rather contrary. For example, Baron (1983) reported that empathy and aggression have been seen as incompatible, and an empathic response by an aggressor to an individual in distress appears to reduce displays of aggression towards that person (Miller and Eisenberg, 1988). Similarly, a study by Lester (2000) showed a strong, positive relationship between empathy and lower rates of interpersonal aggression and a strong positive relationship between empathy and higher rates of behaviour compliance. Feshbach and Feshbach (1969) had also hypothesized that empathy would act as an inhibitor of aggression and violence. Nevertheless, a few researches support the outcome of this study, such as the reports by Marshall and Moulden (2001) and Fernandez and Marshall (2003). They reported that men who were sexual offenders are not lacking in empathy towards people in general. They further

delineated that while some lacked empathy towards victims of unknown offenders, the majority displayed little or no empathy towards their own victims.

Peer influence could not independently predict abusive dating behaviour among University of Ibadan undergraduates, a result that does not confirm the stated hypothesis; hence was rejected. This result negates the findings of Capaldi et al. (2001) which explain that males' deviant peer association during mid-adolescence (11-16) predicted degree of observed hostile talk about females during late adolescent (16-19), which in turn predicted levels of aggression towards a dating partner during young adulthood (20-22). Noonan and Charles, (2009) also found out that boys with friends who have aggressive and delinquent behaviours are at a greater risk of being involved in aggressive dating relationships. Foshee *et al.* (2001) found that boys who have friends who are perpetrators of teen dating violence are at a greater risk for teen dating violence perpetration currently and recurrently. It should however be noted that most of these researches view perpetration of dating violence from the point view of boys and not girls, whereas this present study appears to have a higher percentage of females (71%) than males (29%) as participants. Hence, this might account for the direction of influence noted in this study, as there have been few literatures on the influence of female peers on abusive dating behaviour.

The second hypothesis looked at the difference between undergraduates from monogamous and polygamous homes' abusive dating behaviour, while hypothesizing that those from polygamous homes will be more abusive than those from monogamous homes. The hypothesis was however disconfirmed. It was rather revealed that there is no significant difference in the abusive dating behaviour of University of Ibadan undergraduate students from monogamous homes and polygamous homes. This shows that students from polygamous homes perpetrated abusive dating behaviours just the same way students from monogamous homes do. This finding is somewhat consistent with a study conducted by Elbedour et al. (2007) who found that no significant difference was found between adolescents coming from polygamous or monogamous homes on hostility. It is however worthy of observation to note that adolescents from polygamous backgrounds included in this study were insignificant in number compared with the total number of adolescents from monogamous family backgrounds, bearing the decline in the rate of polygamy as westernization encroaches deeper into the African society.

Although it may be too early to conclude, the results obtained in this study indicate that the perpetration of abuse by an adolescent in a dating relationship lies majorly on the level of self-esteem and empathy while family background and peer

influences do not really count. Again if we agree that empathy and self-esteem predicts abusive dating behaviour and that peer influence correlates to some extent with abusive dating behaviour, we could say that abusive dating behaviour among adolescents lies majorly on self-esteem and empathy. This brings to fore Nathaniel Branden's quote, 'I cannot think of a single psychological problem from anxiety and depression, to fear of intimacy or success, to spouse battery or child molestation that is not traced back to the problem of low self-esteem'.

Consequently, considering the diverse factors that could affect self-esteem and empathy and how self-esteem and empathy can increase criminal rates and psychological problems in our society, this study has shed more light on the importance of adolescents thinking highly of themselves and the ability to empathise in the perpetration of dating abuse in our society. It is therefore recommended that clinical psychologists and counsellors should help adolescents who have been involved in abusive relationships, either as perpetrators or victims to build their self-esteem to prevent future reoccurrence. Also, counsellors and social psychologists should initiate programmes that would express the importance of self-esteem and behaviours that develop a high self-esteem. Also, parents should be educated in ways they might not know but could negatively affect their children's self-esteem, while employing methods to help their children develop a high self-esteem from a very young age.

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