

Dating Violence, Bullying at School and Family-of-Origin Violence among Japanese College Students †

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Abstract

The relationship between dating violence and bullying experience at school or violence in family of origin were examined among Japanese college students. One hundred sixty six Japanese college students (64 males and 102 females) completed the original Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS). About 77 percent of subjects reported the use of psychological aggression. Forty percent have used some forms of minor or severe physical abuse. A positive relationship was found between psychological and physical aggression in dating relationships and bullying experiences. Experiences of parental aggression at home including witnessing parental arguing and fighting were also associated with psychological and physical aggression in dating relationships.

Key Words : Dating violence, Bullying, Family of Origin violence

Violence in intimate relationships has been a serious problem. Studies indicate that about 20 to 50 percent of college students experienced physical aggression in at least one dating relationship (Sigelman, Berry & Wiles, 1984; White & Koss, 1991). The most frequently reported aggressive behaviors were minor forms of physical aggression such as pushing, grabbing and slapping. One to 3 percent of students have experienced severe forms

of physical aggression such as beating, hitting with hard objects, and assaults with weapons (Makepeace, 1986; Riggs, 1993; Sigelman et al., 1984).

Despite numerous studies investigating the problems in the United States, only a few studies have been conducted in Japan. Yoshihama and Solenson (1994) examined the rate of female partner abuse in Japan and found that about two thirds of Japanese women had experienced some types of abuse from their partners or spouse. This study, however, did not investigate the male side of the story. Since aggressive behaviors are reciprocal in intimate relationships (Straus & Sweet, 1992; Burke, Stete, & Pirog-Good, 1988; Dean & Wampler, 1986; Vivian & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 1994), it is

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†日本人大学生の恋愛関係における暴力経験, いじめ・いじめられ経験, 家庭内での暴力経験

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important to investigate aggressive behaviors of both sexes. Violence is also known to start early in relationships (Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980), so it is also helpful to investigate aggressive behavior in dating relationships to obtain a better understanding of violence in intimate relationships.

This study examines the relationship between dating violence, early childhood experience of physical aggression and bullying experiences at school. Bandula (1973) discussed social learning of aggressive behavior among children. Children learn aggressive behaviors by observing significant others aggressive behaviors, and they imitate these behaviors. Studies found that one of the risk factors of aggressive behavior in intimate relationships is experiencing and/or witnessing violence at home (Caesar, 1988; Murphy, Meyer, & O'Leary, 1993). Therefore, it is hypothesized that students who have experienced violence at home tend to bully others at school. The second hypothesis is that students who have bullied others at school have a higher tendency to use violence as a method of conflict resolution in their dating relationships. It is also hypothesized that experiences of violence in family of origin increase aggressive behaviors in adult intimate relationships.

Method

Sample

One hundred sixty six Japanese college students (64 males and 102 females) participated in this study. The average age of participants was 21.1 ($SD=1.9$) years old. All of the participants either had dating experiences or currently had a dating partner. About 40 percent of the students lived with their parents and 40 percent of them lived alone. The lengths of their current relationships were one to two years (23.1%), 2 years (30%), and less than 6 months (25%).

Measures

The original Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) developed by Straus (1979) was used to examine

methods of conflict resolution among Japanese college students. This scale is a widely used instrument to measure conflict resolution in intimate relationships and has been shown to have good validity and reliability. The original CTS consists of 19 items with four subscales: reasoning (3 items), psychological aggression (7 items), minor violence (3 items), and severe violence (6 items). Examples of the items are: "Threw something at him/her" (minor violence); "Kicked, or hit him/her with a fist" (severe violence), etc. The original CTS was translated into Japanese by a bilingual researcher and reviewed by two other bilingual professionals. The final version of the Japanese CTS was tested in an abnormal psychology class for its readability. In the Japanese version, the participants are instructed to answer whether they have ever conducted such behaviors as described on each item in the dating relationship.

The questionnaire also asked about experiences of aggressive behaviors at home and bullying at school. The items tapped into parental physical aggression toward children, sibling fights, parental fights, various kinds of bullying and victimization. The participants were instructed to indicate whether or not they had experienced the aggressive behavior described in each question. In both instructions of the questionnaire we emphasized anonymity and asked the participants to answer honestly.

Procedure

Japanese college students in a small college in South Japan were asked to participate in this study. They filled out the Japanese version of CTS and the questionnaire voluntarily. A series of chi-square analyses was rendered to analyze the data.

Results

About 77 percent of the participants reported the use of psychological aggression, whereas 40 percent of them used some forms of minor or severe physical aggression in their dating relationships. The most frequently reported aggressive

Table 1 The Association between Childhood Experiences at Home and Aggressive Behaviors in Intimate Relationships in Adulthood

Aggressive behaviors in adulthood		Childhood experiences at home		
		Hit by parents		χ^2
		No (68)	Yes (96)	
Psychological aggression	Yes	51	78	1.20
	No	17	18	
Physical assault	Yes	13	35	6.21*
	No	55	61	
Severe physical assault	Yes	6	10	0.22
	No	62	86	
		Seen brothers/sisters hit by parents		χ^2
		No (103)	Yes (61)	
Psychological aggression	Yes	76	53	4.20
	No	27	8	
Physical assault	Yes	28	20	0.99
	No	75	41	
Severe physical assault	Yes	11	5	0.37
	No	92	56	
		Seen parents arguing		χ^2
		No (49)	Yes (116)	
Psychological aggression	Yes	33	97	5.45*
	No	16	19	
Physical assault	Yes	13	35	0.22
	No	36	81	
Severe physical assault	Yes	4	12	0.18
	No	45	104	
		Seen parents hitting each other		χ^2
		No (135)	Yes (30)	
Psychological aggression	Yes	106	24	0.03
	No	29	6	
Physical assault	Yes	36	12	2.11
	No	99	18	
Severe physical assault	Yes	9	7	7.78**
	No	126	23	

** $p < .005$ * $p < .05$ **Table 2 The Association between Bullying and Family-of-Origin Experiences of Violence**

		Family-of-Origin Experiences of Violence		
		Seen parents' physical fighting		χ^2
		No	Yes	
Bullying others At grade school	No	102	33	5.950*
	Yes	16	14	
Bullying others At junior high school	No	112	23	5.781*
	Yes	19	11	
Bullying others At high school	No	131	3	19.050***
	Yes	23	7	
Being bullied by others At grade school	No	94	41	4.218*
	Yes	15	15	
		Seen parents' arguing		χ^2
		No	Yes	
Bullying others At high school	No	49	0	4.538*
	Yes	105	10	

*** $p < .001$ * $p < .05$

behaviors were those of psychological abuse, such as "insulting or swearing" (40%), and "sulking" (52%).

The results also showed a positive relationship between bullying experiences and both psychological and physical aggression in dating relationships. The students who had bullied others in school tended to use psychological aggression, $\chi^2(1, N=169) = 11.39, p < .001$, as well as physical

aggression, $\chi^2(1, N=169) = 8.25, p < .005$, in dating relationships.

Experiences of parental aggression at home were also positively linked with physical abuse toward their partners. The students who had been hit by their parents' tended to use physical assault toward their partners. The students who had witnessed their parents' arguing tended to use psychological aggression in their dating relationships. It was also found that witnessing the parents' physical fights at home was associated with a high rate of severe physical violence in adult intimate relationships (see Table 1).

Moreover, students who witnessed their parents' physical fights are at higher risk of bullying others in school. Witnessing parents' arguing at home tended to increase bullying behaviors in high school. It was also found that the students who have witnessed their parents' physical fights at home had higher risk of being bullied in grade school (see Table 2).

Conclusions and Discussion

This study found that the rate of violence among Japanese students was higher than that found among the American samples in previous studies (Setes & Henderson, 1991; Riggs, O'Leary, & Breslin, 1990). Kumagai (1979) discussed a low rate of domestic violence reported in Japanese culture and attributed it to "quiet non-expressive culture." Yoshihama (1997) attributed it to the questionable validity of the Western-culture based measure. The findings in this study did not support the previous finding of a low rate of physical violence among Japanese (Kumagai, 1979). The findings did support the results of numerous studies that violence in intimate relationships related to family-of-origin experiences of violence and aggression (Hotaling & Sugarman, 1986; Murphy, Meyer & O'Leary, 1993). Moreover, experiences of violence and/or witnessing violence at home are associated with an increased risk of bullying or being bullied at school.

There are some possible reasons for the high

rate of violence found in this study. A high tolerance of violence in Japanese society may contribute to a high rate of violence among Japanese college students. Frequent descriptions of severe violence in Japanese comics are well known (Yi, Lee, & Chyung, 1993). Japanese television broadcasts programs with severe violence. Moreover, corporal punishment by parents and teachers is still accepted as one of the alternatives for disciplining children in the society. This study suggests that children who are raised in an atmosphere in which violence toward others, including intimate individuals, is accepted are more likely to use violence as one of the means of conflict resolution in their intimate relationships.

Another explanation of the discrepancy between the present result and the previous one could be changes in Japanese society. Kumagai's study was conducted in the 1970s. Since then, social values and lifestyles have changed and violence may be no longer something to hide. In particular, since the participants in this study are relatively young, they may have been more open about their aggressive behaviors.

This study is limited to a small sample of college students in South Japan. Further study is strongly recommended to examine intimate violence with a larger sample. It is also recommended that factors contributing to a high rate of intimate violence in Japanese society be examined.

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日本語の抄録

恋愛関係における暴力経験と学校でのいじめ・いじめられ経験や家庭内での暴力経験との関係を166人の日本人大学生（男子64人，女子102人）を対象に調査した。恋愛関係における暴力経験に関しては、日本語に翻訳されたコンフリクト・タクティック・スケールによって、学校や家庭内での暴力経験に関しては、質問紙によって測定した。その結果、約77%の学生が心理的暴力を、40%の学生が何らかの身体的暴力を恋愛関係において使ったことがあると答えた。学校でいじめを経験した者は恋愛関係において心理的・身体的暴力を使ったことがある者が多いという関連が認められた。また、家庭内で両親から暴力を受けたり、両親の口論や身体的暴力を目撃した経験がある者は恋愛関係において心理的・身体的暴力を使う傾向があることがわかった。

キーワード：恋愛関係における暴力，いじめ経験，家庭内での暴力

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