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## **Prevalence of Dating Violence and its Impact on Undergraduate Students' Learning at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana**

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### **Abstract**

The study explored the prevalence of dating violence and its impact on learning among undergraduate psychology students in the University of Cape Coast. The descriptive survey design was employed for the study with a total of 376 students made up of 193 males and 183 females drawn from the department of education and psychology. Proportional and systematic sampling procedures were employed to obtain the sample. Results revealed that undergraduate psychology students experience dating violence ranging from physical, psychological and sexual. Results indicated that dating violence has negative impact on students academically, socially and psychologically. It was again discovered that female undergraduate students and young undergraduate students experience dating violence more than male undergraduate students and older under undergraduate students. It was recommended that undergraduate students should postpone dating while in school and concentrate on their learning. Besides, those who may be affected should seek counselling.

**Key Words:** *Dating, violence, prevalence, undergraduate students, learning*

### **Introduction**

The violence in intimate relationships may include physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological/emotional abuse or controlling behaviours by a current or former partner/spouse and it includes any behaviour within an intimate relationship that result in sexual, physical or

psychological harm (Heise, & Garcia-Moreno, 2002). Intimate partner violence is a pervasive social disorder among students in tertiary institutions and societies (Straus, 2004).

College students experience dating violence in which victims describe experiences of control by their partner, particularly through use of technology, sexual pressure and/or rape, and physical abuse but find it difficult and often took manifold fruitless attempts to end it (Toscano, 2014). These abusive acts can occur through an isolated event or through recurring cycles, which may remain stagnant or increase in severity over time (Martsolf, Draucker, Stephenson, Cook & Heckman, 2012). Researchers have also described a series of emotional effects that result from dating violence among college students, including poor mental health, distrust of future partners, and low self-esteem. Despite these negative outcomes, college survivors of dating violence have also acknowledged the ability to grow from these negative situations through an increased sense of empowerment (Amar & Alexy, 2005).

### ***Forms of Dating Violence***

Dating violence can include physical, sexual, and psychological or emotional abuse and is common among college students (Murray & Kardatzke, 2007). It is reported that physical dating violence for college students range from 20% to 45% (Amar & Gennaro, 2005). In an investigation of dating violence in 31 universities around the world, it was found that 29% of respondents had used some form of physical violence against their partners, with approximately 10% of the violence being “severe” (choking) (Straus (2004).

Psychological victimization is more prevalent than physical or sexual victimization and is not limited to relationships that are physically aggressive (Lawrence, BaYoon, MaLanger, & MaRo, 2009). A study by Katz, Arias and Beach (2000) found that 90% of college women reported psychological victimization at some point in their relationships. With a sample of 150, Mason and Smithey (2012) in a study revealed 79% of psychological aggression as dating violence, with respondents reporting at least one incidence of insulting or swearing at their partner or stomping out of the house or yard. Ijadunola, Mapayi, Afolabi and Ojo’s (2014) study of 400 undergraduate students in Nigeria revealed that students suffered from different forms of dating violence including, sexual violence 90.80%, emotional violence 81.30%, and underscored a commonest pattern of dating violence as emotional abuse that included name calling, low self-worth, threatening, humiliation and controlling. Again, a study carried out on the campuses of University of Benin, Benin city among 400 students, Iwemjiwe and Okojie (2016) reported a prevalence of physical violence at 54.4%, emotional violence at 50.8% and sexual violence at 23.3% respectively.

### ***Gender Differences in Dating Violence among Students***

Empirical study by Pengid and Pelzer (2016) involving 16,979 undergraduate university students in Africa revealed that 11.3% of men experienced physical violence as against 10.4% women while 9.3% men against 11.3% women experienced sexual dating violence. In a sample of 300 female university students, Iliyasu, Abubakar, Aliyu, Galadanci, and Salihu (2011) revealed that 22.8%, 22.2% and 50.8% female students experienced physical, sexual and emotional violence respectively in their relationships as compared to the male students.

Chan, Straus, Brownridge, Tiwari, and Leung (2008) found in their study of 16,000 university students across 22 sites among 21 countries that the rates of students perpetrating physical assault ranged from 17% to 44% with proportion of students being the victim of a physical assault ranging from 14% to 39%. The report corroborated that for 12 out of the 22 sites, the rates of perpetrating physical assault, such as “threw something at my partner that could hurt, twisted my partner’s arm or hair, pushed or shoved my partner, grabbed my partner, slapped my partner,” and so on, were higher for females, while for 17 out of the 22 sites, the rates of being a victim of physical assault were higher for males. With respect to reports of perpetrating sexual coercion, such as “made my partner have sex without a condom, insisted on sex when my partner did not want to,” and “insisted my partner have oral or anal sex,” 20 sites had rates higher for males. For reports of being a victim of sexual coercion, 12 sites had rates that were higher for females. It was clear that consistently fewer females had perpetrated sexual coercion across the sites. Though both males and females could be victims of violence in intimate relationships evidence shows a disproportionate prevalence among women (WHO, 2012).

Harned (2001) identified differences in both the types and outcomes of violence experienced by young men and women and reported that women are more often the victims of sexual violence and concluded that while both men and women experience similar acts of violence and aggression by their partners, the violence perpetrated against women by men is likely to be much more severe and potentially injurious and the study undertaken by Iwemjiwe and Okojie (2016) at the University of Benin corroborates the above report.

A survey of 205 first and second year students at a small northeastern university by Flack, Caron, Leinen, Breitenbach, Barber and Brown (2008) found that approximately 44% of women in their first and second years of college encountered some form of sexual victimization and in particular 30% of this sample of women experienced unwanted touching, 25% attempted anal, oral, or vaginal sex, and 8% complete penetration. A study by Katz, Arias and Beach (2000) found that 90% of college women reported psychological victimization at some point in their relationship.

Coker-Appiah and Cusack (1999) reported that one in three Ghanaian women experienced physical abuse by male partners in their lifetime while Ajah and Agbemaflle (2016) reported that 33–37% of women in Ghana had ever experienced abuse in an intimate relationship.

#### ***Age Differences in Dating Violence among Students***

With regard to age, Iliyasu, Abubakar, Aliyu, Galadanci and Salihu (2011) found the highest among students in the 20- 24 years bracket and lowest among the age group 25-29. This difference, however, was not statistically significant but underscored a study conducted by Adogu, Adinma, Onyiaorah, and Ubajaka (2014) which revealed that age group of 18 to 26 experience more dating violence as compared to those in the age group of 27 and above.

In sharp contrast, Kordom, Julie and Arunachallam (2014) found the highest mean rank for dating violence among the age group 35 to 44 and the lowest mean rank among the respondents within the 18 to 24 age group. In another study involving 1362 undergraduate students, Aguanunu (2014) revealed that there was no significant difference between older and younger students with regards to dating violence. The outcome of intimate partner violence for females

in early adulthood can be fatal, with women between the ages of 20 and 29 having the greatest risk of being murdered by an intimate partner (Cercone, Beach, & Arias, 2005).

### ***Effects of Dating Violence among Students***

Although research on college students with regards to dating violence and its impact on their academic learning has received little attention, earlier work by DeKeseredy and Schwartz (1998) pointed to a number of negative academic outcomes and suggested that perpetrators may engage in a host of behaviours that prevent victims from fully engaging in college activities. In short, it is well noted from previous studies that dating violence can lead to severe psychological trauma which may influence a victim's ability to succeed academically. A student who is being abused may find it difficult to stay focused in the classroom and may experience dropping grades and perform poorly on tests (Foshee, Linger, MacDougall, & Bangdiwala, 2004). Beale (2001) has shown that victims of school violence, and specifically bullying, suffer both academically and socially and experience lower self-esteem and suffer from higher levels of anxiety and depression than do their non-victimized peers (Gilmartin, 1987). As a result, students aren't able to concentrate on the learning process.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Sugarman and Hotaling (1989) posited that, dating couples are significantly more likely to be violent in their relationships than married couples. During college going age young people become associated with a variety of new experiences and challenges. According to Schwartz and Runtz (2002) the college going age is a period in the life span characterized by intimate dating relationships which are important to the continued development of the individual and it is clear that not all dating relationships lead to positive developments. Schwartz and Runtz again, argued that a significant proportion of youth will engage in acts of violence against their partners during their college going years.

Gross, Winslett, Roberts and Gohm, (2006) in their study pointed out less parental monitoring and support, isolation in unknown place, and a strong desire for peer acceptance as factors that are associated with relationship violence. Straus (2004), asserted that dating violence is a common phenomenon among university students and occurs among students in all levels though fresh men (first years) are most likely to experience abuse by a dating partner. Stated similarly, violence in adolescents dating relationship is problematic and is usually carried on to the tertiary institutions and may result in lasting trauma and psychological consequence for victims. According to Kaura and Lohman (2007) college or university students experience extremely high rates of dating violence and between 20 % and 47% of men and women are victims of physical dating violence in their relationships.

It has been revealed by researchers including Straus (2004) that university students are most likely to be involved in violence in relationships and De Keseredy and Schwartz (1998) reported that researches in colleges and universities have revealed that dating violence is flourishing and impacting negatively on students' learning.

A World Health Organisation (2013) report intimated prevalence partner violence and non-partner sexual violence shows a higher burden in Africa at 45.6% followed by South-East Asia –40.2%, and Americas–36.1%. Findings from the Ghana Family Life and Health Survey

indicate that violence is widespread among the Ghanaian population (15–60 years) with about 71% of both men and women surveyed having reported experience of at least one form of violence (both domestic and non-domestic) in their lifetime (Institute of Development Studies, 2016).

University of Cape Coast being an academic environment may not isolate itself from issues related to dating violence among students in as much as these students of varied backgrounds associate with others for academic and social-related programmes. Again, there seem to be scanty research works done on dating violence and its negative effects on students' learning in Ghanaian universities particularly among students in the University of Cape Coast.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore and better understand the prevalence of dating violence among University of Cape Coast undergraduate students, and its impact on their learning. Specifically, the study sought to address the following objectives:

1. Find out the forms of dating violence that occur among undergraduate students in the University of Cape Coast.
2. Examine the impact of dating violence on undergraduate students' learning in the University of Cape Coast.
3. Ascertain gender difference with regards to dating violence among undergraduate students of the University of Cape Coast.
4. Determine age difference with regards to dating violence among undergraduate students of the University of Cape Coast.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the forms of dating violence that occur among undergraduate students in the University of Cape Coast?
2. How does dating violence impact on learning among undergraduate students in the University of Cape Coast?

### **Research Hypotheses**

2. **Ho:** There will be no statistically significant difference in terms of gender with regards to dating violence among University of Cape Coast undergraduate students.  
**H1:** There will be statistically significant gender difference with regards to dating violence among undergraduate students of the University of Cape Coast.
2. **Ho:** There will be no statistically significant age difference with regards to dating violence among undergraduate students of the University of Cape Coast.  
**H1:** There will be a statistically significant age difference with regards to dating violence among undergraduate students in the University of Cape Coast.

## Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was used to identify the opinions held about dating violence and learning among undergraduate students (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

The population for the study was all students in the Faculty of Educational Foundations in the University of Cape Coast with estimated student number of 1054. The accessible population for the study was all Bachelor of Science (Psychology) students in the Department of Education and Psychology numbering 513.

The sample for the study was 376 out of a population of 1054 based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table. In choosing the researcher used proportional sampling and systematic sampling techniques. Proportional sampling procedure was used based on the differences that existed among students' population within the class levels. Proportional sampling technique is used when the population is composed of several subgroups that are vastly different in number. This sampling technique was applied in getting respondents from the various levels (100, 200, 300, and 400), and the various gender groups (male/female). Systematic sampling was conducted by sampling every Kth item in a population after the first item is selected at random from the k items (Black, 2010). In collecting the data from respondents, the first person on the first roll was given the questionnaire after which every 5th person was given the questionnaire to complete. The distribution of participants according to levels is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Sampling Distribution**

Levels	Number	Percent (%)
100	109	29.0
200	94	25.0
300	83	22.0
400	90	24.0

An adapted instrument and a self-designed instrument were used in collecting the data. The questionnaires were a close-ended type with a four-point Likert Scale made up of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree(A), Disagree(D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The questionnaire comprised three (3) sections, where Section A covered the demographic information of respondents which were their gender, age and levels (100, 200, 300 and 400). Section B covered forms of dating violence. The items which are eighteen ranged from physical abuse, psychological abuse, and sexual abuse. The Revised Conflict Tactic Scale 2 (CTS II) subscales of psychological violence, physical violence, and sexual coercion, with a reliability coefficient of 0.84 was adapted to measure the occurrence/forms of dating violence (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996). Also, Section C measured the impact of dating violence on students learning and comprised of 15 items. The questionnaire was given to two professors in the area of Measurement and Evaluation for review and was piloted at Takoradi Technical University Business School with thirty undergraduate students randomly selected. The Cronbach Alpha reliability was .07 which lies within the normal range (Field, 2005).

The researcher went to the various levels during their lecture hours to administer the questionnaire. Questionnaires were administered either before their lectures began or after the lecture. Before the administration of the questionnaire, the purpose of the study was explained to the respondents. They were also assured of confidentiality of their responses and anonymity of information provided. Respondents were given 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

The data collected from the field were sorted, categorized and coded into Statistical product and Service Solution version 23.

Research questions one and two were analysed using means and standard deviation. The means and standard deviation scores were to ascertain whether the data were close to the average; since low standard deviation indicates that the data points tend to be very close to the mean, whereas high standard deviation indicates that the data is spread out over a large range of values.

Hypotheses one and two were tested using the independent samples t-test to find out whether differences existed between the independent and dependent variables used.

### **Results and Discussion**

The purpose of the study was to gain a better understanding of the prevalence of dating violence among undergraduate students in the University of Cape Coast, specifically, Bachelor of Science (Psychology) students and its impact on their learning

#### ***Demographic characteristics***

These demographic analysis results indicated that most of the respondents (n=193, 51.3%) were males while females were (n= 183, 48.7%). A large majority of the respondents (n=206, 54.7%) were within the ages of 17-30 years while those from 31-45 were the least (n= 170, 45.2%).

**Research Question One:** What are the forms of dating violence among undergraduate students of the University of Cape Coast?

The drive for this research question was to find out the forms of dating violence that occur among University of Cape Coast undergraduate students. The forms of dating violence were categorized on sub-headings such as physical, sexual and psychological. Means and standard deviations served as the tools used to measure the magnitude of the forms. Table 2 presents the results with rank order of the forms.

**Table 2: Form of Dating Violence that occur among University of Cape Coast Undergraduate Students**

Statements	T-Value =2.50		Rank
	Mean	Std. Dev	
<b>Physical</b>			
Those dating sometimes slap their partners.	3.06	.128	1st
Those into relations sometimes inflict injuries on their partners.	2.76	.240	2nd
Those into relationships punch or kick or beat their partners.	2.09	.106	3rd
Those into relationships push/shove their partners.	1.76	.560	4th
Those dating sometimes twist the hair or arm of their partners.	1.11	.890	5th
<b>Sexual</b>			
Those dating sometimes force their partners to have sex with them without using contraceptives.	3.39	.406	1st
Those dating sometimes inflict injuries on their partners during sexual intercourse.	3.36	.848	2nd
Those into relationships sometimes touch or kiss their partners against their will.	3.19	1.26	3rd
Those into relationships sometimes use force (like hitting, holding down, or using a weapon) to make their partners have sex with them.	1.97	1.15	4th
Those dating sometimes insist on sex when their partners did not want to (but do not use physical force).	1.76	.940	5th
<b>Psychological</b>			
Those into relationship sometimes annoy each other.	3.97	.315	1st
Those dating frequently monitor their partners.	3.66	.728	2nd
Those into relationships sometimes shout or yell at their partners.	3.23	.190	3rd
Those dating sometimes insult or swore at their partners.	2.99	.740	4th
Those dating sometimes refuse to talk to each other about some issues.	2.86	.578	5th

Source: Field Survey (2018)

*n*=376

To realize the purpose of the study, the researchers requested that the respondents indicate the common forms of dating violence that occur among University of Cape Coast undergraduate students.

**Physical Abuse:** Under physical violence category, respondents agreed that the most common form of dating violence among undergraduate students was sometimes slap their partners with



a mean score of 3.06 and a standard deviation of .128. This response was closely followed by respondents who agreed that their *partners inflict injuries on them* with a mean score of 2.76 and a standard deviation of .240. Also, respondents agreed that their partners *punch or kick or beat them* came next with a mean of 2.09 and a standard deviation of .106. The study further revealed that those into relationships *push/shove their partners with a mean of 1.76 and a standard deviation of .560*.

**Sexual Abuse:** With regard to sexual violence in dating, respondents indicated that their partners use force to make them have sex without using contraceptives, with a mean of 3.39 and a standard deviation of .406. The response was seconded by respondents who agreed that their partners sometimes inflict injuries on them during sexual intercourse, with a mean of 3.36 and a standard deviation of .848. It was again revealed that sometimes partners touch or kiss their themselves against the will one partner, with a mean 3.19 and a standard deviation of 1.26. The study also revealed respondents agreed dating partners use force (like hitting, holding down, or using a weapon) to make them have sex, with a mean of 1.97 and a standard deviation of 1.15. Lastly, respondents agreed that sometimes partners insist on sex when one party did not want to (but do not use physical force), with a mean of 1.76 and a standard deviation of .940.

**Psychological Abuse:** Under psychological violence dimension, respondents agreed that sometimes dating partners annoy each other with a mean of 3.97 and a standard deviation of .315. This was followed by the agreement that partners frequently monitor themselves with a mean of 3.66 and a standard deviation of .728. The study also revealed that partners sometimes shout or yell at each other with a mean of 3.23 and standard deviation of .190. Also, respondents agreed that partners sometimes insult or swore at each other with a mean of 2.99 and a standard deviation of .740. Lastly, it was revealed that partners sometimes refuse to talk to each other about some issues with a mean of 2.86 and a standard deviation of .57.

It can therefore be said that the forms of dating violence among undergraduate University of Cape Coast Psychology students cut across the physical, sexual and psychological forms of violence.

**Research question Two:** What are the effects of dating violence on students learning among University of Cape Coast undergraduate students?

The focus of this research question was to establish the effects of dating violence on students learning among University of Cape Coast Undergraduate Psychology students. Means and standard deviations again served as the tool used to measure the magnitude of the effects. Table 2 presents the results with rank order of the effects.

**Table 3: Effects of Dating Violence on Students Learning among University of Cape Coast Undergraduate Students**

Statements	Criterion Value=2.50		Rank Order
	Mean	Std.D	
Dating violence result in persistent sadness (depression) among students who are victims.	3.91	.650	1st
Those who experience dating violence lose interest in education.	3.76	.360	2nd
Those who experience dating violence lose interest in activities and hobbies that were once enjoyable.	3.46	.258	3rd
Those who experience dating violence experience difficulty sleeping at night.	3.43	.220	4th
Those who experience dating violence sometimes prepare less for quizzes and exams.	3.29	.406	5rd
Dating violence result in poor participation in class.	3.28	1.26	6th
Those who experience dating violence sometimes find it difficult to concentrate when studying.	3.27	.125	7th
Victims of dating violence are not motivated toward learning.	3.27	1.05	8th
Those who experience dating violence sometime miss lectures.	3.26	.701	9th
Those who experience dating violence fail to meet deadlines for assignments.	3.26	.348	10th
Dating violence results in victims not getting on well with others in the lecture room.	3.09	.206	11th
Those who experience dating violence sleep during lecture hours.	3.07	.640	12th
Dating violence results in low self-confidence in students.	2.86	.238	13th
Dating result in victims abusing alcohol and other drugs.	2.76	.541	14th
Dating violence results in feeling of unworthiness and incompetents (low self-esteem) in students.	2.51	.890	15th
Overall means of on the effects of dating violence	3.23	.526	

Source: Field Survey, (2018)

n=376

*Table 3 presents results on the effects of dating violence on students learning and all responses were above criterion mean which indicates agreement to the statements. For instance, respondent agreed that dating violence result in persistent sadness (depression) among victims with a mean score of 3.91 and a standard deviation of .650. The revelation was narrowly followed with agreement that those who experience dating violence lose interest in education with a mean score of 3.76 and a standard deviation of .360.*

The study also revealed agreement that those who experience dating violence lose interest in activities and hobbies that were once enjoyable *with a mean score of 3.46 and a standard deviation of .258*. Again, respondents agreed that those who experience dating violence experience difficulty sleeping at night *with a mean score of 3.43 and a standard deviation of .220*.

Furthermore, it was revealed that respondents agreed that those who experience dating violence sometimes prepare less for quizzes and examinations with *mean score of 3.29 and a standard deviation of .406* while those who agreed that dating violence result in poor participation in class was with *mean score of 3.27 and a standard deviation of 1.26*. The study as well revealed that respondents agreed that dating violence results in feeling of unworthiness and incompetents (low self-esteem) among students with a *mean score of 2.51 and a standard deviation of .890*.

The computed overall mean of 3.23 which is higher than the criterion value of 2.50 gives evidence that the dating violence have significant effects on learning among University of Cape Coast undergraduate students. It can therefore be concluded, respondents agreed that dating violence has effects on students' academic lives in terms of learning.

**Hypothesis One**

**H0:** There will be no gender difference with regards to dating violence among University of Cape Coast undergraduate students.

Research hypothesis one sought to test whether gender difference exists in dating violence among University of Cape Coast undergraduate students. The independent samples t-test was conducted and the results is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Results of t-test of Gender of Dating Violence among University of Cape Coast Undergraduate Students**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	Sig
Male	193	22.05	.241	-9.01*	374	.000
Female	183	28.12	.260			

Source: Field Data, (2018) \*Significant differences exist @ p<05

Table 4 indicates the t-value and it was found that the t-value of -9.01 was significant at 0.05 level of confidence interval. Therefore, null Hypothesis one which states that “There will be no statistically significant gender difference with regards to dating violence among University of Cape Coast undergraduate psychology students was rejected;  $t(df=374) = -9.10, sig.=0.000, p <.05$ . Hence, alternative of Hypothesis one was upheld. The results therefore imply that undergraduate female students in the University of Cape Coast experience dating violence than the males.

It can therefore be concluded that there was a statistically significant difference in terms of gender concerning dating violence where female undergraduate psychology students experience dating violence (mean=28.12) more than their male counterparts (mean=22.05).

## Hypothesis Two

**H0:** There will be no statistically significant difference in age with regards to dating violence among University of Cape Coast undergraduate students.

*Research hypothesis two aimed at testing whether age difference exist in terms of dating violence among University of Cape Coast undergraduate psychology students. The independent samples t-test was conducted and the results is offered in Table 5.*

**Table 5: Results of t-test of Age of Dating Violence among University of Cape Coast Undergraduate Psychology Students**

Age	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	Sig
17-30	206	30.12	.343	-12.11*	374	.002
31-45	170	21.98	.163			

Source: Field Data, (2018) \*Significant differences exist @  $p < 0.05$

Table 5 shows t-test results and was established that the t-value of -12.11 was significant at 0.05 level of confidence interval, implying that, the null Hypothesis two which states that “There will be no age difference with regards to dating violence among University of Cape Coast undergraduate psychology students” was rejected; that is  $t(df=374) = -12.11$ , sig. = 0.002,  $p < 0.05$ , 2-tailed. Therefore, the alternative of Hypothesis two was maintained to imply differences existed among the age of the students with regards to dating violence and such the younger students experience dating violence than the older students.

It can be deduced that respondents aged between 17 to 30 experience more (mean=30.12) dating violence as compared to undergraduate psychology students aged between 31-45 (mean=21.98).

## Discussion

Primarily, the study was to investigate the prevalence of dating violence espousing the forms, effects and the differences in terms of age and gender. The forms of dating violence among undergraduate University of Cape Coast Psychology students cut across the physical, sexual and psychological forms of violence. In light of this, the revelation confirms that of Ijadunola, Mapayi, Afolabi and Ojo (2014) involving 400 undergraduate students in Nigeria, which revealed that students suffer from dating sexual violence with 90.80%, those who suffer emotional violence had 81.30%, those dating verbal violence had 79.30% and students who suffer dating physical violence had 71.82%. In the study, the common pattern of dating violence identified were emotional abuse that include name calling names, low self-worth, threatening, humiliation, controlling. The outcome is not farfetched in as much as dating is common among university students who have just assumed autonomy from parents. The revelation further supports Kordom, Julie and Arunchallam (2014) study findings among 243 undergraduate students also reported lifetime prevalence of dating violence included psychological, physical, and sexual abuse, with a prevalence of 65%, 45%, 23% and 46% for psychological, sexual, physical and financial abuse respectively. In their line of exploring with curiosity, it may put them into problems of dating violence.

The study sought to find out the effects of dating violence among undergraduate students. The computed overall mean of 3.23 which is higher than the *criterion value* of 2.50 gives evidence that the *dating violence have significant effects on learning among University of Cape Coast undergraduate psychology students*. It can therefore be concluded respondents agreed that dating violence has effects on students' academic lives in terms of learning. In relation to the study findings, it corroborates with *DeKeseredy and Schwartz (1998)* suggestion that perpetrators of dating violence may engage in a host of behaviours' that prevent victims from fully engaging in school activities and could lead to severe psychological trauma which may influence a victim's ability to succeed in school

In terms of gender difference among undergraduate students concerning dating violence, it can therefore be concluded that there was a statistically significant difference in terms of gender concerning dating violence where female undergraduate psychology students experience dating violence more than their male counterparts. The findings debunked Pengid and Pelzer (2016) study outcome in 22 countries in Africa, Asia and the Americas involving 16,979 undergraduate university students, and the study revealed that 11.3% of men experienced physical violence as against 10.4% women. Again, 9.3% men against 11.3% women experienced sexual dating violence. Conversely, the findings affirm a similar study involving a total of 400 undergraduates of the University of Benin on the prevalence of dating violence where prevalence of reported cases of dating violence in females was 60.6%, while males was 39.3% which suggests clear gender differences in dating violence experiences (Iwemjiwe, & Okojie, 2016).

In terms of age difference, it can be deduced that respondents aged between 17 to 30 experience more dating violence as compared to their counterparts aged between 31-45. This implies that undergraduate students with lower age engage in dating violence more than those who are older which is in consonance with Iliyasu, Abubakar, Aliyu, Galadanci and Salihu (2011) study. The difference could be accounted for due to the fact that young people seems to be new in the dating and thus are unable to tolerate each other in the face of any challenge that pops up in the relationship. Whereas older students are able to reasonably control their emotions maturely with problems in their relationships, the younger ones seem unable to do so.

It is concluded that undergraduate students experience dating violence, dating violence affects students learning and social interaction, and also dating violence varies based on gender and age. The onus therefore lies on students to postpone their dating in school and concentrate on their academic work as the negative aspect of it can have a lasting effect on their entire life. Those who are already experiencing problems should seek counselling services. This can be made possible if the counselling department of the University of Cape Coast continues to popularise their worth in students' fora to help promote healthy relationships among students.

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