



SCHOOL of
GRADUATE STUDIES
EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

East Tennessee State University
Digital Commons @ East
Tennessee State University

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Student Works

12-2002

The Need for Control in Interpersonal Relationships and Courtship Violence.

Marcella Horn Dunaway
East Tennessee State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.etsu.edu/etd>



Part of the [Psychology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Dunaway, Marcella Horn, "The Need for Control in Interpersonal Relationships and Courtship Violence." (2002). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. Paper 723. <https://dc.etsu.edu/etd/723>

This Thesis - Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Works at Digital Commons @ East Tennessee State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ East Tennessee State University. For more information, please contact digilib@etsu.edu.

The Need For Control In Interpersonal Relationships And Courtship Violence

A thesis
presented to
the faculty of the Department of Psychology
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Art in Psychology

by
Marcella Dunaway
December 2002

Dr. Peggy Cantrell, Chair

Dr. Jon Ellis

Dr. Jim Bitter

Keywords: Violence, Courtship, Control

ABSTRACT

The Need For Control In Interpersonal Relationships And Courtship Violence

by

Marcella Dunaway

This study explored an individual's need for control and the level of violence within a dating relationship.

This was a self-report study. Subjects consisted of 175 students from a university in the southern Appalachian region of the U.S. Questionnaires were combined with a scenario depicting violent behavior. Subjects were asked to rate their level of control on the Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Inventory (FIRO-B), to complete the Conflict Tactics Scale - revised (CTS-2), and to rate the acceptability of the scenario. Data were analyzed using an ANOVA.

Results did not support the main hypothesis. No relationship was found between control and violent behavior, or between men and women and their expression of control. There was no connection between violence and level of expressed control. Men showed more approval for violence than women. Individuals with higher levels of expressed control were more accepting of violence than others without the need to control.

CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	2
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	5
Theoretical Perspectives	9
Three-Dimensional Theory of Interpersonal Behavior	9
Attachment Theory	13
Feminist Theory	14
Social Learning Theory	16
Empirical Findings	18
Statement of the Problem	20
Hypotheses	23
2. METHOD	24
Participants	24
Measures	24
Physical Violence Scenario	27
Procedure	28
Experimental Design	28
3. RESULTS	30
Descriptive Results	30

Chapter	Page
Hypotheses Results	32
Additional Statistical Information	34
4. DISCUSSION	35
Suggestions for Future Research	43
REFERENCES	45
APPENDIX A: Participant Information	48
APPENDIX B: Scenario	49
VITA	50

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Unfortunately, the occurrence of violent behaviors within the context of a romantic relationship has become all too common. Too often it is overlooked, or minimized, in the shadow of violence on a larger social scale (Lloyd & Emery, 2000). If such behaviors are not experienced within the context of our own relationships it becomes incredibly easy to deny their existence and focus on other issues of seemingly more pertinence. Violence, as it is discussed here, includes physically abusive behaviors (e.g. hitting, pushing, slapping, using a weapon, etc.) as well as verbal abuse (e.g. yelling, cursing, making derogatory remarks to the partner, etc.). Courtship refers to intimate relationships (e.g. dating or cohabitating) between two unmarried individuals. The area of courtship violence is one aspect of violent relationships that was largely overlooked, among those who investigate domestic violence, until the groundbreaking research of Makepeace (1981). This study found that 21% of college students had experienced some form of violence in a dating relationship while still others knew of such violence through vicarious means, such as through third-party reports. Before the Makepeace study, the attention of researchers was focused on other forms of aggression such as domestic (marital) violence or the incidence of child abuse. Makepeace's exploratory research spawned several years of follow-up studies that endeavored to obtain additional data on the incidence of violence in the milieu of a pre-marital relationship. Since that time numerous researchers have provided evidence for the existence of physical violence in non-marital romantic relationships. Makepeace (1986) found that 16.7% of respondents reported having been involved in courtship

violence. Bogal-Allbritten and Allbritten (1985) found that 61% of the students in their study knew of someone who had been a victim of dating violence and 19% of those respondents reported having experienced similar violence themselves. Stets and Henderson (1991) found that 30% of respondents from a nationally representative sample of dating young people (not exclusively college students) reported having either used or been a victim of some form of physical aggression, while nearly 90% reported either having used or received verbal aggression. An examination of much of the literature indicates that the prevalence of courtship violence is approximately 33% of all dating couples (Hanley & O'Neill, 1997), and battering of the partner is most likely to occur in young couples (below the age of 30) (Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980, p. 141). Although the reported incidence of courtship violence appears relatively high, it may be possible that it is underrepresented. This may be due to fear of retaliation or perhaps because the form the violence has taken has been of a milder nature and the victim may be hesitant to place these incidents into the category of abuse (Lloyd & Emery, 2000). This supposition, if true, provides violence researchers with additional impetus to further investigate the causal factors involved in this type of violence.

It appears that once members of a couple become engaged in violence a pattern develops that may be difficult for some individuals to escape. Studies have shown that a large percentage of high school and college dating relationships fail to disintegrate following an incidence of violence (Henton, Cate, Koval, Lloyd, & Scott, 1983; Makepeace, 1981). Explorations into the incidence of violence in dating relationships have given researchers additional cause for concern because it is believed that during the courtship period later marital roles are established. It is thought that violent behaviors in a dating relationship are a likely precursor to violent behaviors in a marital relationship. Researchers have speculated that the number of cases of abusing wives

and husbands may be as high as two million every year in the U.S. (Gelles & Cornell, 1990; Makepeace; Stets & Pirog-Good, 1987). Some researchers believe that serious dating relationships closely resemble marital relationship in features such as knowing one another for a longer period of time, possessing a deeper level of commitment, and having information about the other partner's weaknesses and insecurities (Stets & Pirog-Good, 1987). Dating violence may have serious consequences for the college student because it happens while the members of the couple are working on identity formation and looking for their niche in life (Stith, Jester, & Bird, 1992). If an individual becomes socialized into an abusive pattern during the premarital years it is likely that this same pattern will continue or increase into his or her marital life. "[O]nce physical aggression becomes established, it appears difficult to unlearn" (Coleman, 1980 as cited in Makepeace, 1986).

Research during the past 20 years has clearly established the incidence of courtship violence. More recent explorations have led to a shift in the focus of many researchers away from establishing prevalence and more toward an attempt to uncover the reasons behind why this violence occurs. Past research has investigated such areas as self-esteem (Deal & Wampler, 1986), gender roles (Bernard & Bernard, 1983), and attitudes toward aggression (Cate, Heaton, Koval, Christopher, & Lloyd, 1982) in an attempt to explain intimate/courtship violence. Other researchers suggest that this violence may be related to gender differences (Gyrl, Stith, & Bird, 1991; Thompson, 1997) or degree of commitment in the relationship (Hanley & O'Neill, 1997). While each of these areas have been shown to have an influence on the incidence of dating violence, "interpersonal processes" that might influence courtship aggression have been largely overlooked (Stets & Pirog-Good, 1990).

One possible interpersonal explanation of the causes of such violence that has recently begun to be explored is a control motive in the personality of the abuser. This control is directed toward the partner in an attempt to influence the behavior of that partner (Rouse, 1990). “Interpersonal control” is often defined as a desire to regulate another’s behaviors, thoughts, actions, and/or feelings. It is a way of getting another person to do what he or she would not otherwise do (Stets & Pirog-Good, 1990). Situations in which control might be sought may include whether dating other people is allowed, issues concerning sexual behavior, or who pays for dinner on a date. When one partner attempts to control another in a relationship the goal is often to maintain a desired level of control within the situation. If that level of control is perceived to be threatened, the controlling partner intensifies his or her efforts to control the partner (Stets, 1993). This behavior may be directed toward “present-or future-oriented” compliance; however, any attempt to obtain compliance from the partner may be interpreted as an effort to establish control in the relationship (Felson & Messner, 2000; Stets & Pirog-Good, 1987).

Examining relationships on a larger scale, it is not inconceivable to see how this control may have developed. We live in a society in which males have traditionally been more powerful than females in areas such as religion, politics, and economics. Over time this position of power and dominance began to be viewed as acceptable within the context of a man’s interpersonal relationships, i.e. with his mate (Stets & Pirog-Good, 1987). It has been accepted, largely without question, that the male is the dominant figure within a relationship and that he usually regulates any action by the female. This traditional view was challenged in the 1960s and 70s as women came to understand themselves as individuals separate from their relationships and male

dominance was disputed. Along with dominance came the dispute of the violence that can result at an intimate level within a relationship (Stets & Pirog-Good).

Control in relationships is not exclusively a male domain. Women appear to be just as likely to have a need for control as men, which may be due to the increasing independence of women, or to women taking a more active role within the relationship. No longer are large numbers of women content to defer to their male partners and allow themselves to remain silent partners. Stets (1993) found that women are more likely to be the partner who attempts to exhibit greater control, regardless of the degree of involvement of the relationship. These results were hypothesized to stem from women's "greater felt loss of control" and their attempt to "regain control over the situation." Whatever the motive one must keep in mind that control is not exclusively within the male domain. Women, too, have such a need. Exactly how this control affects the degree of violence within a relationship remain to be investigated.

The goal of the current study is to examine the relationship between a need to control others and the incidence of courtship violence in a group of college students at a university in the southern Appalachian region of the United States.

Theoretical Perspectives

Three-Dimensional Theory of Interpersonal Behavior

Schutz (1966) proposed the three-dimensional theory of interpersonal behavior, which, stated simply, says, "people need people" (Schutz, 1966, p.1). Or more eloquently stated, every individual has three basic interpersonal needs: inclusion, control, and affection, and these three components work together to satisfy the needs of the individual. Schutz defined an interpersonal need as a need that may only be satisfied when one has attained a fulfilling

relationship with another person. This relationship becomes the vehicle through which the needs for inclusion, control, and affection can be met. These interpersonal needs are an important necessity since in any relationship in which the needs of either partner are not met, anxiety will result for the partner whose needs are neglected. This anxiety may be manifested in a variety of ways including physical illness, mental illness, anger, or even death, whether through suicide or a general lack of desire to continue with life (Schutz).

In response to each of the interpersonal needs, an individual may react with a variety of behaviors. First, the person may not directly try to satisfy the need. He or she may find it easier to attempt to ignore the problem's existence. Alternatively, the person may focus on satisfying the need in an extreme manner and engage in constantly trying to satisfy that need. Lastly, the person may have satisfied the need and found a balance between under- or over-striving to meet that need.

The need for inclusion is defined "as the need to establish and maintain a satisfactory relation with people with respect to interaction and association" (Schutz, 1966, p.18). In response to this need an individual may become an undersocial person, an oversocial person, or a social person. The undersocial person is "introverted and withdrawn" (Schutz, p.25). This person wishes to avoid interactions with others, thus avoiding any potential rejections by others, but unconsciously he or she wishes to join in and be one of the crowd. The counterpart of the undersocial person, the oversocial person, appears on the surface to be the complete opposite of the undersocial person for this individual clearly desires to be with others. On observing this person we assume that he or she has met the need for inclusion as is evidenced by the degree of interpersonal interactions with others; however, this desire for inclusion is taken to the extreme. This individual must be the center of attention in order to avoid anxiety. Although they may

appear, at first, to have entirely opposite requirements for inclusion, both the undersocial and the oversocial persons have at the heart of their problem, the fear of being rejected by others. They simply approach that fear in different ways, with the undersocial person withdrawing socially and the oversocial person overcompensating for the need. A healthy equilibrium can be found in individuals who have achieved a balance between wanting to be alone and wanting to be with others. This person, the social person, has met his or her need for inclusion and realizes the need for time alone as well as time with others (Schutz).

The need for affection can also be seen through the examination of three personality types: the underpersonal, the overpersonal, and the personal. The underpersonal style involves the active avoidance of close relationships with others. He or she is most comfortable when relationships with others are maintained on a superficial level and desires that others do the same. He or she appears to have a low desire for the affection of others, while in reality, the fear of rejection is too great for the individual to allow himself become vulnerable by letting show a need for others. In contrast to this type is the overpersonal type who “attempts to become extremely close to others. He definitely wants others to treat him in a very close, personal way” (Schutz, 1966, p. 31). This person so desires close relationships that he or she begins to make others around him feel uncomfortable. This person may appear to attribute more significance to casual relationships than actually exists, while seemingly not realizing the need for cursory relationships with others. Once again, there is a balance between underpersonal and overpersonal; the personal type is the balance between the two. This person has met his or her need for affection, realizes that it is not necessary to have a close relationship with every acquaintance, and can accept whether he is liked or disliked by others (Schutz).

In this Three-Dimensional theory, Schutz addresses the individual's need to control, which he defined as a person's "need to establish and maintain a satisfactory relation with people with respect to control and power" (Schutz, 1966, p.18). The need for control is expressed in the individual through three personality types: the abdicrat, the autocrat, and the democrat. The abdicrat is a person who assumes a passive role in interpersonal relationships. He or she refuses to take control in virtually any situation because it is safer to let others assume the responsibility associated with having control of a situation. In contrast to the abdicrat is the autocrat who consistently assumes the dominant position in interpersonal relationships. This person is afraid to let someone else have control because of the fear that others will dominate him or her. The idea of allowing someone else to have control in a given situation is unbearable and completely unacceptable; thus, the person overcompensates by always striving for control in order to maintain the dominant position. The third personality type is once again a healthy balance between the above two extremes. This person, the democrat, has achieved a balance between the need to control and the ability to be controlled by others. He or she recognizes the importance of being able to lead if the situation calls for leadership, but also being able to stand back and allow another person to assume control when necessary. This person has satisfactorily met his or her need for control.

The need for control in a relationship "manifests itself as the desire for power, authority, and control over others and therefore over one's future" (Schutz, 1966, p.22). This need to control often becomes a personality characteristic of the individual who cannot tolerate others' control and is manifested by a displacement of control into other areas in a consistent attempt to dominate others (Schutz). This need is commonly a precursor to violence within dating couples (Felson & Messner, 2000). If one of the members of a couple is an autocrat, he or she will

attempt to control various aspects of the partner's behavior. If that sense of control is threatened the individual would be more likely to resort to whatever measures are necessary to maintain that sense of control (Rouse, 1990).

Attachment Theory

Bowlby (1982, 1984) proposed attachment theory as a way to explain some of the violence found in familial relationships. As children we form attachment bonds to another individual whom we believe is better able than we to cope with the world. This belief in the other person's ability helps us to feel secure; therefore, we form and wish to maintain a close relationship with that person. According to Bowlby this process, which is within the normal course of development and is engaged in by all humans, functions to protect more vulnerable individuals from potential harm. However, problems result whenever this relationship is perceived to be threatened. The threat might be in the form of a parent who threatens to abandon, or actually does abandon, the child (by leaving or by committing suicide, for example). On the other hand the child might only perceive that this relationship is threatened because of the arrival of a new person in the life of the one on whom he or she is dependent (e.g. the birth of a new child). The threats of abandonment create intense anxiety and may also arouse anger, which may be powerful in older children and adolescents. This anger serves the function of keeping the attachment figure from carrying out the intended threat, but it can easily become dysfunctional.

Bowlby discusses the possibility that these same attachment bonds form between adults in romantic relationships. This is the reason behind why lovers quarrel when they think their partner is looking elsewhere – their relationship is threatened. This explanation, according to Bowlby, is why much of the violence found in couples occurs. Bowlby purports that much of

the violence found in families can be attributed to maladaptive exaggerations of potentially functional behavior, such as attachment behavior (Bowlby, 1984). We form attachment bonds with another person, and when these bonds are threatened we take whatever measures we feel are necessary to maintain that relationship, even if it means the use of violence.

Attachment theory offers an explanation for one source of dilemma in courtship violence research, that of a violence-intimacy paradox where courtship, which is normally perceived as a loving, accepting relationship, coexists with violence, which evokes images of anger and animosity (Maysel, 1991). Attachment theory views an expression of anger in an already threatened relationship as a manifestation of caring about the other person in an effort to maintain that relationship; however, for some individuals in certain circumstances (e.g. when there is a threat of unavailability of the partner), the normal reaction of anger becomes exaggerated and the partner becomes violent in an attempt to maintain the relationship (Maysel).

Feminist Theory

Feminist theory in the United States generally consists of three main areas: liberal feminism, socialist feminism, and radical feminism (Mooney, 2000). The central premise of liberal feminism is equal rights with men. Because women are capable of performing equally within society, they should have the same legal, political, and educational rights as their male counterparts (Mooney). This theory challenges the idea that men are superior to women on the basis of biological sex. Thus, women should not allow themselves to feel inferior to men because both men and women are equivalent in all areas of importance. This subset of feminism does not question the existing societal structure; instead, it attempts to obtain equality within the

existing framework (Mooney). It purports that women can be equal to men regardless of their position in society. It does not recognize gender roles or attempt to affect the existing social structure. It sees more similarities between men and women than differences and envisions a world of equal opportunity to both sexes (Harlan, 1998).

Social feminism maintains the belief that women are placed in a position subservient to men because of existing socio-economic factors. Women are exploited as a gender and a class by a society that dictates social roles and norms (Harlan, 1998). In short, capitalism and patriarchy are viewed as two mechanisms that interact to keep women oppressed (Mooney, 2000). Most proponents of this group attempt to combine Marxist theory with feminism. They explain feminism within the framework of a capitalist class struggle that will eventually result in an egalitarian society (Mooney). This illustrates a gender-class struggle in which women constitute a large percentage of the low paid, menial workforce due to society placing them in a subservient position to men. Their view is that men are the primary breadwinners and women are working to fill spare time or to earn pocket money, which serves to reinforce women's second class position in society (Mooney). Thus, women are largely unable to move out of this position because of a male-dominated capitalistic society. This society cannot function according to design without having a class of individuals that form the foundation on which the remainder of society is based. Socialist feminism maintains that women form the basis for this society and that they perform the necessary function of acting as a scaffold for the larger society.

Radical feminism maintains that women's position in society is due to oppression by a patriarchal society (Mooney, 2000). Women are suppressed by men and not by a societal organization. Men and women are seen as belonging to two separate classes within society. "Men as a group are seen to dominate women as a group and are the beneficiaries of women's

continued subjugation” (Mooney, p.86). Central to this view is the idea that women are dominated in all aspects of their lives, both public and private. Control is essential to maintaining this dominance and keeping women where they belong, and violence is a means of sustaining this control. Radical feminists view male violence against women as serving a purpose. By acting as a means of social control to force women into modification of their behavior to suit the man’s purpose, the man is able keep the woman in her place (Mooney). Violence then serves as a mechanism for maintaining control.

Social Learning Theory

Bandura’s Social Learning Theory places emphasis on the importance of observing and modeling behaviors and attitudes of others. Bandura contends that we are born with genetic predispositions and innate biological factors that contribute to the acquisition of new material, but ultimately, our behavior is the result of learned experiences. Therefore, we are not entirely influenced by environment, nor are we wholly influenced by inner drives; instead, psychological functioning is a product of the interaction between behavior, cognitive processes, and the environment (Bandura, 1977). Over time we learn which behaviors are successful and which ones are to be discarded based on the effects produced by those actions. Some behaviors result in rewards while others result in no consequence or punishment. Those behaviors that are rewarded are likely to be repeated while those that are punished will likely be discarded. However, not all of this learning needs to be experienced directly. According to this theory, virtually all learning occurs through vicarious means. This idea, known as observational learning, concludes that an individual does not have to directly experience an event in order to learn something from it. Through observing another individual and modeling the observed

behavior, acquisition of that behavior can occur more quickly than if the behavior had been obtained through some other means. Observational learning is regulated by four components: (1) Attention: the person observing a behavior must be attentive to and accurately perceive the behavior to which he or she is a witness, (2) Retention: the observer must remember the modeled behavior in order to be influenced by it, (3) Motor Reproduction: the observer begins to convert the behaviors observed into the correct actions, and (4) Motivation: the observer will only adopt a modeled behavior if it results in rewarding effects (Bandura). Behavior can be enhanced or subdued by observed consequences (Bandura). When an observer witnesses a behavior being reinforced, this will often increase the likelihood that modeling of the behavior will occur. Modeled behavior that is rewarded is often more effective than modeling alone in the promotion of similar behavior patterns (Bandura).

The concept of observational learning, or modeling, is often used by social learning theorists to explain the occurrence of aggressive behaviors, as aggressive behaviors can be modeled the same as any other behavior. These theorists maintain that observational learning is the primary means through which aggressive behaviors are acquired. Just as witnessing reinforcement of aggression can increase the likelihood that the behavior will occur, “[w]itnessing aggression punished usually produces less imitative aggression than seeing it rewarded or unaccompanied by any evident consequences” (Bandura, 1973 in Bandura, 1977, p.119). According to this theory, whether or not a person learns to use aggressive behaviors in his or her interpersonal interactions depends on the degree to which any observed aggression was reinforced.

Empirical Findings

Marital violence is a subject that has received much attention in the literature for the last few decades. It was recognized as a problem, that problem was researched, and as a result much has been learned about marital violence and why it occurs. Courtship violence, on the other hand, had been largely overlooked until one researcher examined the roles dating couples assume and how similar those roles were to their later marital roles (Makepeace, 1981). Makepeace also began to realize that if the partners in a dating couple fall into violent roles then they are likely to remain in those roles throughout the remainder of their relationships. Such processes generated Makepeace's 1981 study where he attempted to uncover the incidence of courtship violence. This study examined 202 participants and their experience with dating violence. It investigated the incidence of actual and threatened violence as well as whether the participant had ever experienced violence directly or whether they knew a person who had been a victim of dating violence. The results of this study were that 61.5% of the participants had personally known someone who was a victim of courtship violence, while 21.2% had had at least one direct experience with this type of violence on a personal basis. Of the 39 students who had been personally involved, 25 had experienced violence on only one occasion, while one person had experienced violence on eight separate occasions.

Another study attempted to examine the prevalence of courtship violence among college students. Bogal-Allbritten and Allbritten (1985) examined 510 respondents and found that 61% personally knew someone who had been a victim of courtship violence, while 19% reported at least one first-hand experience. "Less extreme forms of violence, such as threats of violence, pushing, or shoving and slapping were much more common than were more extreme kinds of violence" (p.203).

Based upon earlier research, Makepeace (1986) attempted to determine the prevalence of courtship violence through the use of a large sample of college students (n=2338) from several colleges and universities. The results of this study further confirmed the existence of dating violence among the college student population. Findings were as follows: 16.7% of the respondents reported having had experience with courtship violence, and more often by females than by males. Males sustained lower level violence (such as pushing, slapping, biting, etc.), while females reported more high-level violence (beaten up, hit with an object, other). Further findings of this study indicate that females perceived their violence more often as self-defensive than did males. Males, on the other hand, perceived their violence as intimidative and few of them had conscious intentions of injuring their partners. “More often, males interpreted their violence as intimidative, self-defensive, retaliative, or due to uncontrollable anger” (Makepeace, 1986, p. 385).

Over time as the focus has shifted from the prevalence of courtship violence to the motives behind why it occurs, some researchers began to consider the possibility of a dominance or control motivation in the personality of the aggressor. One such study proposed the use of a dominance motive in individuals who use violence in their relationships (Rouse, 1990). Rouse attempted to design a scale that could measure a dominance motive in individuals, and at the same time, examine dominance as a motive for violent behavior in abusive partners. The results of this study concluded that a dominance motive is a significant correlate with the use of physical force in a relationship ($r=.36$, $p<.001$) and that individuals who have a need to be in control in a relationship are at a higher risk of violence when that dominant position is threatened.

A study by Stith, Jester, and Bird (1992) investigated 479 college students who reported currently being in a serious dating relationship in order attempt to develop a “typology” of

students who use violence in their dating relationships. This study concluded that there are four types, or clusters, of dating partners ranging from those who never use physical or emotional abuse in their relationships to those who frequently use either physical or emotional abuse to resolve conflict in their relationships. It was found that the students more likely to use emotional abuse as a conflict tactic (labeled Hostile Persuers) reported a high level of relationship conflict, a high ambivalence about continuing their relationship, but a lot of energy expenditure to maintain their relationship. Students more likely to use physical violence in their relationships (labeled Hostile Disengaged) reported high levels of conflict in the relationship, strong feelings of ambivalence toward the relationship, little love for their partner, and few efforts to maintain the relationship.

Additional researchers have attempted to recognize dominance as a motive for abusive partners. Felson and Messner (2000) found that the need for control might often be revealed in the form of threats toward the partner, which may be overt or covert. These threats communicate to the partner that he or she will be harmed unless compliance is obtained. Felson and Messner's study indicated that men who assault their female partners are more likely to issue threats before the actual violence takes place than are offenders in assaults involving other relationships. This evidence is highly supportive of a control motive in courtship relations.

Statement of the Problem

Since the initial work of Makepeace (1981) courtship violence has become recognized as a problem that is relative in magnitude to that of domestic violence. Until approximately 20 years ago investigation into violence between romantic partners was limited to marital aggression and its possible causes as well as the possible consequences of such abuse on the partners. Since

then the incidence of courtship violence has been supported by the relevant literature and has gradually begun to receive more attention from investigators who attempt to explain the causes of violent behaviors within the context of a non-marital romantic relationship. The investigations that have been conducted into the causes of courtship violence have offered no consensus or general theory that might be used as an explanation for why such violence occurs (Thompson, 1997). Schutz (1966) proposed, in his three-dimensional theory of interpersonal behavior that each individual has a series of needs that must be met in order for us to be satisfied in a relationship and that if these needs are not met the individual will begin to feel inferior. These inferiority feelings may well have a dramatic impact on the interpersonal behavior of the individual, which may, in turn, lead to violence.

Bowlby (1982) proposed that violence is a disorder of the attachment bonds we form with those who we feel are better at coping with the world. When this relationship is threatened, either real or imagined, the person becomes defensive and angry in an attempt to maintain that relationship. This anger may lead to violent behaviors in some individuals.

Feminist theory explains violent behavior in terms of a patriarchal society. Men are violent in order to keep women in their proper place in society. According to this theory men believe that they should be the breadwinners who provide for the family while women fulfill their domestic duties. It is when this social structure is threatened that men may become violent in an attempt to maintain the existing structure. Violence is viewed as a functional way for men to retain control in “their” society (Mooney, 2000).

Another theory attempted to explain violent behaviors as learned through either direct or vicarious reinforcement (Bandura, 1977). If an individual engages in or witnesses a violent behavior, and that behavior is rewarded, there is an increased likelihood that this behavior will

occur again. If a violent behavior is continually reinforced the individual will continue with that behavior; however, if the violent behavior is not rewarded, or if there is some form of punishment as a result of that behavior, the behavior is not likely to be repeated. According to social learning theory, a person becomes violent as a result of some violent behavior that has received reinforcement over time, which has served to maintain the violent behavior.

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the need for control and physical violence that occurs within the context of a dating relationship. Results of one study that investigated male abusers and their need to control showed that these men feel powerless within the context of their relationship, have a low tolerance for being controlled, and, consequently, feel it necessary to control their partners (Petrik, Olson, & Subotnik, 1994). Felson and Messner (2000) found that assaults by the male partner toward the female partner were most likely to involve a control motive. Other researchers, who found that control is a significant factor in courtship aggression, hypothesized that the interaction between control and violence differed between the genders: female partners were more likely to perceive themselves as not being in control and to use aggression as a way to achieve control while their male counterparts may use violence as way to maintain their perceived control in the relationship (Stets & Pirog-Good, 1990).

Hypotheses

Design 1:

1. Men and women would differ on control with men being higher as measured by FIRO-B expressed control scores.
2. Violent and nonviolent participants would differ on control scores with violent participants being higher as measured by FIRO-B expressed control scores.
3. Violent men would have the highest expressed control scores.
4. Men and women would differ on control scores with women being higher as measured by FIRO-B wanted control scores.
5. Nonviolent women would have the lowest expressed control.
6. Violent and nonviolent participants would differ on control scores with nonviolent participants having higher scores as measured by FIRO-B wanted control scores.

Design 2:

1. Men would show more approval for both physical and verbal violence than women.
2. Groups with high expressed control would show greater approval for violence than groups with lower expressed control.
3. Men with high expressed control would show greater approval for violence than men with lower expressed control.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Participants

Participants consisted of 175 college students enrolled in undergraduate classes at East Tennessee State University. Data from 11 participants was excluded due to incomplete questionnaires, leaving 164 remaining participants, consisting of 102 females and 62 males ranging from 16 to 54 years of age. Upon agreement with the instructor students were offered extra credit in exchange for their participation in the study. Students were informed of the nature and intent of the study and were be given the option to participate. Data collection was conducted during the scheduled class time and took approximately 20 minutes.

Measures

The measures used in this experiment included the Conflict Tactics Scale-Revised (CTS2) (Straus, Hamby, McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996), the Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation-Behavior scale (FIRO-B), and a Likert-type scale ranging from one to six indicating the participant's tolerance for a particular scenario, with "1" being not accepting at all and "6" being very accepting (See Appendix B). In addition, a demographics scale (See Appendix A) was used to assess areas such as gender, age, class standing, relationship status, and length of relationship. The data obtained from this scale were used to describe the study participants.

The CTS is a 78-item scale designed to measure the incidence of physical and psychological violence between members of a married, dating, or cohabitating couple as well as the strategies each partner might use to negotiate with the other partner to resolve interpersonal conflict (Straus

et al., 1996). This scale examines the behavior of not only the respondent but also that of the respondent's partner in order to obtain data in various areas associated with relationship conflict. These areas are represented in the CTS2 as five scales: a negotiation scale (6-items), a psychological aggression scale (8-items), a physical assault scale (12-items), a sexual coercion scale (7-items), and an injury scale (6-items); the latter four of which are divided into minor and severe levels (Straus et al., 1996). The five scales are described by Straus et al. (1996) as follows: the negotiation scale measures the degree to which one or the other partner attempts to resolve conflict through means of discussion. The psychological aggression scale examines the occurrence of both verbal aggression and non-verbal acts, such as slamming a door or refusing to speak to the other partner. The physical assault scale looks at actual physical assaults performed on a partner. The injury scale looks at physical injury inflicted by the partner to the degree that medical intervention is necessary or there is continued pain for a short while after the injury. Finally, the authors define the sexual coercion scale as one partner using some means to pressure the other partner into undesired sexual activity. This study was concerned exclusively with the physical injury scale.

The CTS2 is scored by adding the midpoints for the seven response categories the participant may choose. The midpoints for each category are as follows: Categories 0, 1, and 2 have midpoints of 0, 1, and 2, respectively. The midpoint for Category 3 (3-5 times) is 4, for Category 4 (6-10 times) is 8, for Category 5 (11-20 times) it is 15, for Category 6 (more than 20 times in the past year) the midpoint is 25. Response category 7 (not in the past year, but it did happen before) can be used in two ways: (a) When the purpose of using the CTS is to gain data for the previous year, or (b) to obtain data on the overall prevalence of physical assault in the

relationship (Straus et al., 1996). A participant is considered violent if the score is greater than 0 for the physical assault scale.

The CTS2 shows good internal consistency reliability with coefficients ranging from .79 to .95 for the individual scales. There is also evidence of construct and discriminant validity. In the present study the CTS2 was not scored but was used to classify participants into “violent” and “nonviolent” groups. Questions from the physical assault scale on the CTS2 were used for classification purposes based upon whether the participant answered a 0 or higher on subject to partner items. Participants who scored a 0 on all the items in the physical assault scale were classified as nonviolent, while participants who scored a 1 or higher on any of the items were considered violent.

The FIRO-B is a 54-item instrument designed to measure ways in which an individual “characteristically relates to other people” (p.58), through measurement of the individual’s behavior in interpersonal situations, and to ultimately be able to make predictions about the individuals interpersonal interactions based on the data obtained from the measuring instrument (Schutz, 1966). Specifically, this scale measures an individual’s behavior toward others (expressed behaviors – e) as well as the types of behaviors he or she desires from others (wanted behavior – w) in the three areas of Inclusion, Control, and Affection (Schutz, 1966).

This measure leads to six scores: expressed inclusion behavior (e^I), wanted inclusion behavior (w^I), expressed control behavior (e^C), wanted control behavior (w^C), expressed affection behavior (e^A), and wanted affection behavior (w^A). (Schutz, 1966, p.58).

For each of the six subscales a respondent is assigned a scale score equal to the number of items accepted. This score can range from 0 to 9. Each participant’s total FIRO-B result is

given as a set of six numbers, ranging from 0 to 9, presented in the order e^I , w^I , e^C , w^C , e^A , and w^A (Schutz, 1966). This particular study was concerned with scores obtained only from the expressed and wanted control scales.

Reliability and validity information for the FIRO-B indicates that it is both reliable and valid. Test-retest reliability is satisfactory, with a coefficient of .70. Internal consistency reliability coefficient is .94. Content validity is satisfactory as are predictive and construct validity (Schutz, 1966 p.66-80).

The following scenario was accompanied by three questions, each of which used a Likert scale ranging from “1” to “6” to measure the degree of acceptance the participant had for the scenario based upon various additional information provided about the situation depicted in the scenario.

Physical Violence Scenario

Steve walked into the room as Mary was getting off the phone. “Who were you talking to?” he demanded. Mary snapped back, “No one. It was the wrong number!”

“You’re lying!” He slapped the receiver out of her hand. “I know all about you. You just wait until my back is turned and you’re going after somebody else! Now, who was that on the phone, and don’t tell me nobody!” With that he pushed the phone off the table. “What do you think you’re doing?” yelled Mary as she picked up the phone. “I told you the truth. Why do you always have to think I’m fooling around on you?” Steve reached out and hit her across the face.

Procedure

An approval was granted from the Institutional Review Board at East Tennessee State University because this was a survey, and presented no potential harm to the participants. Permission was then gained from social science instructors to distribute the questionnaires to students in their classes.

Students were asked to participate and were assured that all of their answers would be anonymous. They were asked not to place any identifying information on the test materials. Additionally, they were informed that they would have access to the results of the study upon its completion and were told how they can obtain those results. Finally, the participants were told that they are free to withdraw from the experiment at any time without any penalties.

Questionnaire packets were handed out which included a demographics sheet, the FIRO-B, a scenario depicting physical violence, and the CTS-2. The contents of each packet were ordered in one of the following four ways: (1) Demographics sheet, FIRO-B, CTS-2, Scenario; (2) Demographics sheet, CTS-2, FIRO-B, Scenario; (3) Scenario, FIRO-B, CTS-2, Demographics sheet; (4) Scenario, CTS-2, FIRO-B, Demographics sheet.

After completion of the questionnaires, students were informed of the nature and intent of the study and were reminded that they would have access to the results at a later time.

Experimental Design

This study used two separate designs. The first incorporated a 2 (male vs. female) X 2 (violent vs. nonviolent) between subjects factorial with unequal cell sizes. The dependent variable was the expressed control score obtained from the FIRO-B, which was used to examine

the degree of control a participant desires over his or her partner. The CTS-2 was used to group the participants as violent or nonviolent.

The second design used data obtained from the scenario to determine a participant's level of acceptance of a particular form of violence. Data from the scenarios was combined with data from the FIRO-B in a 2 (male vs. female) X 2 (hi FIRO control vs. low FIRO control) between subjects factorial with unequal cell sizes to determine if an individual's desire for control predicted his or her tolerance for a violent scenario. The dependent variables were scores obtained from three questions on the scenario. Data from these two designs were analyzed using a MANOVA.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Descriptive Results

The participants had a mean age of 24.9 years, with an age range of 16 to 54 years. Most of the participants were Caucasian (87.8%, $n = 144$) and not married (78.7%, $n = 129$). A large percentage of the participants were not involved in a romantic relationship at the time of data collection (34.8%, $n = 57$). Of those who were in dating relationships at the time of this study, 28.0% ($n = 46$) were not currently living with their partner while only 3.0% ($n = 5$) were living with his or her partner.

Additional data analysis indicated that 32.3% ($n = 53$) of participants had experienced courtship violence at some point in their lives. Of these, 14% ($n = 23$) reported having received verbal violence, 4.9% ($n = 8$) reported having experienced physical violence, and 14.0% ($n = 20$) reported having experienced both physical and verbal violence at the hand of a partner. A large percentage of participants (88.4%, $n = 145$) indicated that they had never inflicted any type of violence on a partner while in a relationship, while 11.6% ($n = 19$) reported that they had inflicted violence on a partner. Of those who reported having perpetrated violence on a partner, 8.5% ($n = 14$) reported using verbal violence, 0.6% ($n = 1$) reported having used physical violence, and 2.4% ($n = 4$) reported having used both physical and verbal violence during a conflict with a partner.

TABLE 1

Demographic Information – Frequency Distribution

Variables	%	N
Gender		
Male	62	37.8
Female	102	62.2
Ethnic Background		
African American	5	3.0
Asian	4	2.4
Caucasian	144	87.8
Hispanic	2	1.2
Native American	4	2.4
Other	5	3.0
Marital Status		
Never Married (only answer given)	11	6.7
Currently Married	35	21.3
Separated	1	0.6
Divorced	7	4.3
Widowed	2	1.2
Dating, not living with partner	46	28.0
Dating, living with partner	5	3.0
Not currently in romantic relationship	57	34.8
Ever Inflicted Violence on a Dating Partner?		
Yes	19	11.6
Physical	1	0.6
Verbal	14	8.5
Both	4	2.4
No	145	88.4
Ever Received Violence from a Dating Partner?		
Yes	53	32.3
Physical	8	4.9
Verbal	23	14.0
Both	23	14.0
No	110	88.4

Hypotheses Results

Design One – Hypothesis one

Hypothesis one dealt with possible gender differences in the need to control others. This hypothesis specifically stated that men and women would differ on control scores with men having higher scores. Men were not found to score higher on the expressed control scale.

Design One – Hypothesis two

Hypothesis two dealt with violent and nonviolent participants in relation to the need to control others. This hypothesis stated that violent and nonviolent participants would differ on control scores with violent participants having higher control scores. Analysis of the data found that there was no significant difference between violent and nonviolent participants in their control scores.

Design One – Hypothesis three

According to this hypothesis violent men would have the highest expressed control scores. Based on the analysis this was not found to be the case. There did not appear to be any difference between groups in this analysis.

Design One – Hypothesis four

This hypothesis predicted that women would have higher wanted control scores than men. The data did not appear to support this conclusion. There did not appear to be any difference between males and females in wanted control scores.

Design One – Hypothesis five

The fifth hypothesis was once again concerned with gender and expressed control scores. This hypothesis specifically stated that nonviolent women would have the lowest control scores;

however, there did not appear to be any difference between males and females on expressed control scores.

Design One – Hypothesis six

This hypothesis predicted that there would be a difference between violent and nonviolent participants on their wanted control scores. Specifically nonviolent participants would have higher wanted control scores than violent participants. Analysis of the data, however, indicated that violent and nonviolent participants had similar wanted control scores.

Design Two – Hypothesis one

This hypothesis stated that men would indicate higher approval for both physical and verbal violence than would women. The data supported this statement $F(3) = 3.257, p < .05$. Men were found to show more approval for a violent scenario when the situation was apparently justified. There was significance found for scenario number three, $F(1) = 8.983, p < .05$. The data did not support this hypothesis for scenarios one and two.

Design Two – Hypothesis two

This hypothesis predicted that groups of participants with higher expressed control would indicate a greater approval for violence than groups with lower expressed control scores. The data supported this hypothesis on question 3 which read “The day before this incident, Steve found Mary in bed with another guy. Given this information, how acceptable is Steve’s behavior”, $F(3) = 4.141, p < .05$. Specifically, the data appeared to support this hypothesis on scenario number three, $F(1) = 4.825, p < .05$, but showed no support for scenario one or scenario two.

Design Two – Hypothesis three

Hypothesis number three stated that men with higher scores on expressed control would show greater approval for violence than men with lower control. The data did not support this assumption. There appeared to be no significant interaction effect for gender and control on approval for violence.

Additional Statistical Information

Analysis of the study participants revealed the frequencies of individuals who had previously engaged in physically violent behavior toward a partner (30.5%, $n = 50$). Further analysis yielded the number of individuals who indicated a high need to control the behavior of others (41.5%, $n = 68$).

Crosstabulation of gender and violence revealed no significant relationship between the two variables. An additional crosstabulation of gender and high/low control scores again indicated no significant association between these two variables. An analysis was performed in an attempt to determine whether or not there was a link between education level and violence; however, no relationship was found. Another analysis was performed to investigate a possible connection between education level and high levels of expressed or wanted control. In this case education level did not appear to have any impact on the degree of control a particular individual might have.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

The lack of an agreed-upon explanation for the occurrence of courtship violence has prompted numerous researchers to seek some fundamental origin of the problem. The hope is to identify those individuals who may become violent so that a possible treatment may be investigated. But first, we must discover why such violence occurs. The search for such an explanation was the rationale behind this study where an individual's need for control in interpersonal relationships was explored. Thus, the primary design of this study dealt with the assumption that a need for control influences the level of physical violence within a relationship. It began with a basic hypothesis that stated there would be gender differences in the degree of controlling behavior exhibited by participants, more specifically, that men would have higher expressed control scores. This assumption was found to be inaccurate, as the analysis did not support the supposition. Because men have, historically, been the more powerful figure in a relationship, and because traditional gender roles continue to influence our interpersonal interactions, it was assumed that men would score somewhat higher on measures of expressed control. However, because the study participants were exclusively university students the results of this analysis were not entirely unexpected. Many women in college may consider themselves feminists and may not be as willing as non-college educated women to accept traditional gender roles. Furthermore, these women may be more willing than others without the benefit of broader experiences to take a more active stance in their relations with others. On the other hand, perhaps college students have come from more nurturing homes where strong attachment bonds

were formed with their caregivers, which would lessen the need for control within an intimate relationship.

The second hypothesis was concerned with level of control and violence. Specifically, it was assumed that more violent participants would score higher on expressed control measures. Again this relationship was found to be nonsignificant. Based on this particular sample it is apparent that control is not a motivating factor in individuals who use violence. This does not mean that control can be ruled out because the literature suggests that control is, indeed, a causative factor for violence within the context of a romantic relationship (Felson & Messner, 2000; Petrik, et al., 1994; Stets, 1993, 1995; Stets & Pirog-Good, 1990). While one person may turn to violence in order to gain or maintain a perceived level of control in a relationship (Stets, 1995), another person might become violent in response to a stressor because that is the way that he or she has learned to react to such a situation. If an individual learns to react violently to certain situations the need for control might not be a factor in his or her violence. These results could be due to the possibility that the individuals sampled in this study were using violence for some other reason. On the other hand the results could be due to the relatively small sample size of participants, an individual's willingness to answer in a socially desirable fashion, or a lack of care taken in the answering of questions. Because approximately one third of the questionnaire packets were given to participants at the end of class the latter explanation may have some validity.

The third hypothesis investigated the interaction between gender and violence and that affect on control scores. It stated that of all the participants, violent men would have the highest expressed control scores. Once again, the data did not support this assumption as control scores did not appear to differ between various groups of individuals. Because this hypothesis was

designed as a combination of hypotheses one and two, the results of its analysis would be dependent on the results of the other two. In order for this hypothesis to be supported the first two hypotheses would have needed to be supported. Because there was no support for either of the first two hypotheses then this hypothesis cannot be substantiated. Once again, the lack of support for this hypothesis may be due to violent individuals using violence for purposes other than control. Perhaps the person has seen violent behavior reinforced in specific situations and has learned that violence achieves a desired result. Or the results may be attributed to any of the other reasons stated for the first two hypotheses.

The next hypothesis once again dealt with gender and control scores. This time it was hypothesized that women would have higher scores than men on wanted control measures. However, it was found that there was no significant difference between males and females on this particular measure. The assumption that women would have higher scores on this variable was made based on the supposition that gender roles influence interpersonal relations in such a way that traditional roles are carried out in a large majority of intimate relationships. According to conventional gender roles the female assumes a more passive role in the relationship, while the male is a more dominant figure. Because this assumption was not supported, it is apparent that, at least in this particular sample, women are no more tolerant of being controlled than men. As in the first hypothesis, the results of this analysis were not altogether unanticipated given that many women have become increasingly more independent and less disposed to tolerate others being in control. Again, many of the female participants may consider themselves strong-willed and independent. As such, the idea of allowing someone else to make his or her decisions would be unpleasant if not intolerable.

Continuing along the same lines, hypothesis five stated that nonviolent women would have the lowest expressed control scores, and thus the lowest need to control. Data analysis indicated that there was no significant interaction between violence and gender as it relates to expressed control scores. As in the previous hypothesis it may be possible that the results obtained from this analysis are due to a lack of traditional gender role identification on the part of the female. Or the results may be attributed to a reduced need to control on the part of the male participants. This explanation may be due to strong attachment bonds early in life, which would result in a lower need to control. Alternatively, both the male and female participants may have achieved a balance between the desire to control and the need to control others. This possibility, if supported, would yield more neutral control scores on the part of the participants.

The final hypothesis in the first design predicted that nonviolent participants would have higher wanted control scores than violent participants. No significance was found to support this statement. This hypothesis was based on the idea that if an individual uses violent behavior as a means to regain some loss of control, as is supported by Stets (1995), then it should be reasonable to presume that nonviolent participants would have lower levels of expressed control. However, lower levels of expressed control might not directly translate into a higher wanted control score. Therefore it may be erroneous progression to assume that lower levels of expressed control automatically indicate higher levels of wanted control. Nevertheless, there appeared to be no difference between violent and nonviolent individuals on the level of control desired within a relationship.

The secondary design of this study used control scores in a different manner. In this design a participant's acceptance of a violent scenario was the variable of interest. Associated with the scenario were three questions, each providing increasingly more information to the reader

concerning the events leading up to the violent episode. The first hypothesis in this design stated that men would show greater approval for violence than women. Results indicated that there was a significant difference between males and females in overall approval of violence. However, significance was only found for the third scenario question. Question three provided a rationalization that could be interpreted as an excuse for the violent behavior that occurred in the scenario. As was expected, males tended to show greater approval for the scenario when given some justification for the events rather than when presented with violence in the absence of some context. However, a lack of significance for the first two scenario questions leads one to question the strength of this conclusion. Are males necessarily more tolerant of violence than females or are they more tolerant when there is some alleged reason provided for the violent behavior? Results from this study suggest the latter question may have some validity. Males in the study did not appear to accept violence more readily than females until a question was posed that may have provided some insight, or vindication, into the events prior to the violent episode.

The next hypothesis predicted that individuals with higher expressed control scores would show support for violence more readily than groups with lower control scores. Data analysis supported this claim. Perhaps a possible explanation could be the idea purported by Stets (1995), who stated that a perceived lack of control in a relationship is an underlying cause of violence within relationships. It is reasonable to assume that individuals who believe they have a certain degree of control within a relationship desire to maintain that level of control. If a person believes his or her control is threatened, then he or she would want to defend that control using whatever means deemed appropriate. For some individuals the level of action that becomes necessary may be violent behavior. Violence may be an especially functional tool for individuals who have a higher need to control others.

Another explanation for the use of violence by individuals who have a high need to control may be in the area of attachment bonds. If an individual did not form strong attachment bonds with the primary caregiver early in childhood, there would be a greater perceived need for control in that person's relationships. The high level of control would be necessary to ensure that their significant other would not leave them. If an intimate relationship became threatened the individual would likely use violence in an attempt to prevent the dissolution of the relationship.

The final hypothesis in this design, and in this study, suggested that men with high levels of expressed control would show greater approval for violence than men with a lower need to control. Although the two individual areas of gender and control were significantly associated with acceptance of violence, the interaction between the two variables did not yield significant results. This could be due to the questionable nature of the relationship between gender and approval for violence. Given that men were only found to be tolerable of violence under certain conditions, it remains to be discovered whether there is some intrinsic explanation for this result. Such an explanation might be that tolerance of violent behavior is a result of male socialization. Feminist theory would argue that males are violent toward females as a result of a patriarchal society. They are taught to believe that they are superior to females and violence is used as a means to maintain that superiority.

The lack of significance found in this particular study could be due to several factors. In the first design several hypotheses were interrelated so that if significance were not found for the first hypothesis then the related hypothesis would likely not be significant. This could be remedied by a more efficient design with hypotheses that were more independent of one another.

Another design flaw was discovered during data analysis that may have had an impact on the demographics information provided by the participant. Because this study was primarily concerned with the occurrence of violence within the context of a dating relationship, demographics questions were designed for unmarried individuals without taking into account that there would likely be participants who were married. In fact 21.3% ($n = 35$) of participants were married at the time of this study. One demographics question of particular concern asked if the participant had ever inflicted violence on a dating partner. Only 11.6% ($n = 19$) reported that they had inflicted either physical or verbal violence on a dating partner, while results from the CTS physical violence items indicated that 30.5% ($n = 50$) had used physical violence against a partner in the past.

This discrepancy may be due to a lack of willingness on the part of the participant to overtly disclose having been the perpetrator of violence on a demographics sheet but more willing to reveal this violence within the context of a scenario. Or the inconsistency may be the result of denial on the part of the participant that the act he or she performed was “violent”. While these other explanations may have some validity, poor question design is likely to have influenced direct versus indirect reports of violence. Some of the participants may have never executed a violent act on a *dating* partner but may have done so within the context of a marital relationship. Because the question specifically dealt with violence directed toward a dating partner then the answer in this case would be “no”. As a result, it is impossible to know for certain what reason, or combination of reasons, may have contributed to the lack of consistent answers given by some participants.

Perhaps more significant findings would be have been achieved if the sample size were increased and participant pool was expanded. Data collection for this study took place during the

summer term, which automatically limits the number of accessible students. Additionally, there was an inordinately high percentage of data collected from junior and senior students, in upper level classes, which may also have contributed to a pattern in the data. The original design was to include a fairly equal representation of lower level and upper level classes; however, this could not be achieved due to the limitations of the summer term. It may be possible that an entirely different set of results could have been obtained if data had been collected during the course of a regular semester given that some students actively choose to attend summer classes and some do not, while others find they must attend for various reasons. These factors may represent individual differences in students, which, once again, may have contributed to more significant data.

The use of another, more concise, measure of control may have significantly altered the data. Research for a valid measure of controlling behavior yielded few options from which to choose. The FIRO-B has good validity and reliability scores but is necessarily a long measure because it not only measures the need for control but also the need for affection and the need for inclusion. This measure when placed in a packet with the CTS, a demographics sheet, and a scenario makes up a rather lengthy packet of information and some individuals may not have been willing to invest the time necessary for thorough responses.

Though the findings of this study yielded few significant conclusions, the control motive remains a valid theme of future research. Several factors could have been altered in this study to increase the possibility of finding significance, and future research could be conducted that would likely find a significant relationship between these two variables.

Suggestions for Future Research

There are many possibilities for future research in the area of courtship violence, and revisions to the current research study seem to be a good place to start. A revised version of this study could be conducted during a regular semester in order to obtain a more diverse group of students at various points along in their educational career. Or perhaps a revised version of this study might be conducted using individuals outside of the university setting so as to not limit the scope of the project to university students. A good starting point might be to select a group of students who are seniors in high school and compare them to a group of university seniors. Further comparison could be made by including a group of participants outside of an academic setting; however, the recruitment process may be too prohibitive to make this possibility a reality.

Additional study could be conducted in this same area. Possible questions that might be asked are: is there a relationship between the level of control an individual desires over his or her partner and the level of violence that he or she finds acceptable? Are there differences between age groups concerning the level of violence that exists? Are there other personality factors that might influence whether a person uses violence?

Further study could be done on the relationship between gender and perpetration of violent behavior. The question might be asked; do males and females differ in personality factors that might contribute to violence? Alternatively, do males and females differ in the actual commission of violent acts toward a partner? Given that traditional gender roles are continuing to become more modified, is there a trend to be found in increasing violence by the female in a relationship? Is there a causal relationship between being more independent and becoming more violent, or could the opposite be true?

As stated earlier, the boundaries for this area of research are nearly nonexistent. There is much that needs to be done in an attempt to discover what causes someone to become violent toward another individual. The research must continue if we ever hope to detect potentially violent behaviors before they can metastasize into larger social problems. If we can detect these individuals early on then perhaps we can alter the course of events by offering treatment for those particular individuals, which will, hopefully provide us with the potential to impact the problem of violence on a larger scale.

REFERENCES

- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Bernard, M.L., & Bernard, J.L. (1983). Violent intimacy: The family as a model for love relationships. *Family Relations*, 32, 283-286.
- Bogal-Allbritten, R., & Allbritten, William L. (1985). The hidden victims: Courtship violence among college students. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 26, 201-204.
- Bowlby, J. (1982). Attachment and loss: Retrospect and prospect. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 52, 664-678.
- Bowlby, J. (1984). Violence in the family as a disorder of the attachment and caregiving systems. *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 44, 9-27.
- Cate, R., Heaton, J., Koval, J., Christopher, F.S. & Lloyd, S.A. (1982). Premarital abuse: A social psychological perspective. *Journal of Family Issues*, 3, 79-90.
- Deal, J.E., & Wampler, K.S. (1986). Dating violence: The primacy of previous experience. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 3, 457-471.
- Felson, R., & Messner, S. (2000). The control motive in intimate partner violence. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 63, 86-94.
- Gelles, R., & Cornell, C. (1990). *Intimate violence in families*. London: Sage publications.
- Gyrl, F., Stith, S, & Bird, G. (1991). Close dating relationships among college students: Differences by use of violence and by gender. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 8, 243-264.
- Hanley, M., & O'Neill, P. (1997). Violence and commitment: A study of dating couples. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 12, 685-703.

- Harlan, J. (1998). *Feminism: A reference handbook (contemporary world issues)*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.
- Heaton, J., Cate, R., Koval, J., Lloyd, S., & Scott, C. (1983). Romance and violence in dating relationships. *Journal of Family Issues*, 4, 467-482.
- Lloyd, S., & Emery, B. (2000). The context and dynamics of intimate aggression against women. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 17, 503-521.
- Makepeace, J. (1981). Courtship violence among college students. *Family Relations*, 30, 97-102.
- Makepeace, J. (1986). Gender differences in courtship violence victimization. *Family Relations*, 35, 383-388.
- Mayseless, O. (1991). Adult attachment patterns and courtship violence. *Family Relations*, 40, 21-28.
- Mooney, J. (2000). *Gender, violence and the social order*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Petrik, N., Olson, R., & Subotnik, L. (1994). Powerlessness and the need to control. The male abuser's dilemma. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 9, 278-285.
- Rouse, L. (1990). The dominance motive in abusive partners: Identifying couples at risk. *Journal of College Student Development*, 31, 330-335.
- Schutz, W. (1966). *The interpersonal underworld*. Palo Alto, CA: Science & Behavior Books.
- Stets, J.E. (1993). Control in dating relationships. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 55, 673-685.
- Stets, J.E. (1995). Modelling control in relationships. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 57, 489-501.

- Stets, J.E., & Pirog-Good, M.A. (1987). Violence in Dating Relationships. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 50, 237-246.
- Stets, J.E., & Pirog-Good, M.A. (1990). Interpersonal control and courtship aggression. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 7, 371-394.
- Stets, J.E., & Henderson, D.A. (1991). Contextual factors surrounding conflict resolution while dating: Results from a national study. *Family Relations*, 40, 29-36.
- Stith, S., Jester, S., & Bird, G. (1992). A typology of college students who use violence in their dating relationships. *Journal of College Student Development*, 33, 411-421.
- Straus, M.A., Gelles, R.J., & Steinmetz, S.K. (1980). *Behind closed doors: Violence in the american family*. New York: Anchor Press.
- Straus, M.A., Hamby, S.L., McCoy, S. & Sugarman, D.B. (1996). The revised Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS2). *Journal of Family Issues*, 17, 283-316.
- Thompson, V. (1997). *Interpersonal needs as causative factors of courtship violence*. Unpublished manuscript, East Tennessee State University.

Appendix A

Participant Information

Age _____

Gender (Circle one) Male Female

Class Standing (Circle one) Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Other (specify)

Ethnic/Racial Background (Circle one)

- 1. African American
- 2. Asian
- 3. Caucasian
- 4. Hispanic
- 5. Middle Eastern
- 6. Native American
- 7. Other _____

Marital Status (Circle one or more)

- 1. Never Married
- 2. Currently Married
- 3. Separated
- 4. Divorced
- 5. Widowed
- 6. Dating, not living with partner
- 7. Dating, living with partner
- 8. Not currently in a romantic relationship

If currently in a romantic relationship, Length of Current Relationship _____

Length of Longest Relationship _____

Have you ever inflicted violence on a dating partner? (Circle answer)

Yes No

If yes, Physical Violence Verbal Violence

Have you ever been the victim of violence by a dating partner (Circle answer)

Yes No

If yes, Physical Violence Verbal Violence

Appendix B

Physical Violence Scenario

Steve walked into the room as Mary was getting off the phone. “Who were you talking to?” he demanded. Mary snapped back, “No one. It was the wrong number!”

“You’re lying!” He slapped the receiver out of her hand. “I know all about you. You just wait until my back is turned and you’re going after somebody else! Now, who was that on the phone, and don’t tell me nobody!” With that he pushed the phone off the table. “What do you think you’re doing?” yelled Mary as she picked up the phone. “I told you the truth. Why do you always have to think I’m fooling around on you?” Steve reached out and hit her across the face.

How acceptable is Steve’s behavior?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Not Acceptable At All					Very Acceptable

How Acceptable is it for Mary to hit Steve back?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Not Acceptable At All					Very Acceptable

The day before this incident, Steve found Mary in bed with another guy. Given this information how acceptable is Steve’s behavior?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Not Acceptable At All					Very Acceptable

VITA

MARCELLA H. DUNAWAY

- Personal Data: Date of Birth: August 4, 1975
 Place of Birth: Tazewell, Virginia
 Marital Status: Married
- Education: Private High School: Richlands, Virginia
 Southwest Virginia Community College, Richlands, Virginia;
 Liberal Arts, A.A.& S., 1994
 Southwest Virginia Community College, Richlands, Virginia;
 Education, A.A.& S., 1994
 Southwest Virginia Community College, Richlands, Virginia;
 General Studies, A.A.& S., 1994
 Southwest Virginia Community College, Richlands, Virginia;
 Science, A.S., 1996
 Radford University, Radford, Virginia;
 Psychology, B.A., 1996
 East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee;
 Psychology, M.A., 2002
- Professional
Experience: Practicum Student, Southwestern Virginia Mental Health Institute,
 Marion, Virginia, 2000-2002
 Volunteer Group Activities Leader, Indian Path Pavilion, Kingsport,
 Tennessee, 1997-1998.
- Honors: Member: Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society