



College Students' Coping Strategies for Dating Violence: A Case Study in Padang City

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Abstract

Dating Violence is still a problem in relationships between men and female students. Its prevalence is increasing from year to year, especially among students. Usually, victims will use self-defense (coping) in dealing with this dating violence situation. This study aims to determine the description of coping strategies of students who experience dating violence in the city of Padang. This type of research is descriptive observational research. The population of the study was students who experienced dating violence in two leading institutions in the city of Padang. The sample was obtained using the lemeshow formula of 380 people with convenience sampling technique with criteria are willing, active, and have been in a relationship. The strategy questionnaire used The Ways of Coping the Revised Version, and dating violence used a questionnaire developed from the theory. The analysis used a frequency distribution. The results of this study indicate that respondents experienced dating violence in the moderate category (66.6%) in both institutions. The type of verbal dating violence that was widely accepted was in the moderate category (60%), while the type of physical dating violence was only in the mild category (64.5%). The coping strategy that was widely used by victims was emotional coping (66.8%). There is a need to develop effective interventions in accordance with the coping chosen to support the well-being of victims of dating violence.

Keywords: Coping Strategies, Dating Violence, Students.

INTRODUCTION

Dating is a crucial phase in the development of adolescents and college students, where individuals learn about emotional and social relationships. In this context, dating relationships not only function as a means to bond, but also as an arena for individuals to explore self-identity, activities to accommodate internal drives and external recognition (Damanik & Saliman, 2024). Currently, many teenagers are in romantic relationships just to fill their free time, follow trends, or for prestige, without thinking about marriage as the main goal (Utami et al., 2024). This condition is very different from the past, where dating was often considered an initial stage in the partner selection process supervised by parents, with a clear end goal, namely marriage (Santika et al., 2021). Several studies have shown that dating experiences can have an impact on an individual's mental health and well-being, both positively and negatively (Collins et al., 2009; Freeman et al., 2023; Gómez-López et al., 2019; Tartakovsky, 2023). According to Straus, the purpose of dating is as entertainment, socialization, status, a period of learning to understand others, learning to empathize, building affection and love with others and solving problems well (Wina Lova Riza et al., 2021).



In addition, phenomena such as violence in dating relationships and increasing social pressure are also increasingly receiving attention among students (Keçeci & Ümmet, 2025; Rusyidi et al., 2020). The National Commission on Violence Against Female (Komnas Perempuan) reported that violence in dating (VD) dominates the types of personal violence reported to service institutions, with 3,528 cases recorded. (Anita Permata Dewi, 2023). In 2019, data was obtained that 13 people were victims of dating violence and there was an increase in 2021, namely 23 people were victims of dating violence in the city of Padang.

Violence in dating can be in the form of physical violence, psychological violence and sexual violence (Tisyara & Valentina, 2024). Physical violence is violence using physical force intentionally resulting in physical injury or death (Wahyuni et al., 2020). This action can be in the form of slapping, punching or choking. Psychological violence in dating is in the form of verbal actions or behavior in the form of blaming, humiliating, dominating, intimidating or threatening. Actions taken such as verbal threats or limiting partners from interacting with family or friends. Sexual violence is an act in the form of sexual acts carried out without the consent of the partner (Ivanna J Manoppo, 2021; Safitri, 2019).

The impact of dating violence usually depends on the form of violence experienced. In general, the impact of dating violence will leave physical or emotional wounds, but it will also have an impact on the mental health and well-being of the victim. Long (Hawa et al., 2022; Ritter et al., 2022)-term impacts are also related to increased high-risk behaviors, such as marijuana and alcohol use, as well as negative impacts on mental health, even to the point of suicidal ideation (Piolanti et al., 2023).

Several studies have shown that the majority of adolescents do not have effective mechanisms to manage violence in their dating relationships, which are characterized by immaturity, lack of trust in their families, and unacknowledged violence in relationships (Pastor-Bravo et al., 2023). In fact, in situations like this, victims who experience violence in dating need coping strategies to minimize the impact on them (Safitri, 2019). Coping strategies are processes in which individuals attempt to manage the gap between the demands of stressful situations and their ability to meet those demands (Safrianty, 2019).

Broadly speaking, coping strategies are divided into 2, namely Problem Focused Coping and Emotion Focused Coping (Miranda et al., 2023). The Problem Focused Coping approach is an effort to change the stressful situation itself, including planning, seeking information, and taking direct action to solve the problem. While the Emotion Focused Coping approach is an approach that focuses on managing emotional responses to stress rather than changing stressors. This approach seeks to involve seeking emotional support, engaging in relaxation techniques, or reframing the situation positively. According to Lazarus' Theory, the selection of coping is used as an effort to manage stressful demands, regardless of the outcome. Therefore, no strategy is considered better than the other. Consequently, to understand and evaluate coping, we need to know what the person is facing (Lazarus, 2006; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Several studies have found that if adolescents use emotion focused coping, then this coping will hinder seeking help and obtaining information about healthy relationships and those that normalize violence, guilt, affection, fear, and anger (Pastor-Bravo et al., 2023; Shearly et al., 2024).

Dating violence also occurs among students in Padang City, both from state and private universities. Based on data from the Female's Empowerment and Child Protection, Population Control and Family Planning Service of West Sumatra Province, it was reported that throughout 2023 there were 268 cases of violence against Female with 22 cases in Padang City (Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Sumatera Barat, 2024). While throughout 2024 there were around 70 cases. Of these cases, many have been reported to the police, but some have not (Bernadette Sariyem, 2025). For cases of Dating Violence (VD), there are no exact figures in Padang City itself. This is because victim data collection and case documentation have not been running optimally (Novitri Selvia, 2023).

However, based on a preliminary study conducted by 20 state and private university students, it was found that 12 students experienced verbal violence in the form of physical insults, threatening to end relationships and prohibiting them from mixing with the opposite sex, 3 students 6 experienced physical violence such as being slapped, pulled by the hair and scratched, and had blue bruises on the victim's hands, 1 person experienced

sexual violence such as forced kissing and having video call sex by threatening their partner. None of these data were reported to the legal realm.

Based on the phenomenon of increasing violence in dating experienced by students above, this study conducted a case study aimed at determining the coping strategies used by students in dealing with violence in dating they experienced in Padang City.

METHODS

This type of research is descriptive observational research with a cross-sectional study approach. The population used in this study were students at two leading state and private universities in Padang City with a population of 33,919 students. The number of samples in this study was calculated using the Lemeshow formula with a confidence level of 95% with a precision value of 0.5, so that the number of samples was 380 people with a sampling technique using a non-probability sampling technique, namely convenience sampling. The sample criteria are willing, active, and have been in a relationship.

The instrument used to measure dating violence was questionnaire Ways of Coping the Revised Version by (Folkman et al., 1986). Questionnaire Ways of Coping the Revised Version consists of from 50 items with grouping type of strategy used by respondents to in problem focused of coping and emotion focused of coping. This grouping is obtained from the following calculation if the score obtained by the respondent is higher in problem focused of coping, then the subject uses problem focused of coping. Likewise, if the score obtained is higher in emotion focused of coping, then the subject uses emotion focused of coping. The maximum score in problem focused coping is 54, while the maximum score in emotion focused coping is 96.

The research instrument for the variable of Dating Violence was measured using a questionnaire compiled by Setyadi (2013). This questionnaire consists of 58 statements using a Likert scale consisting of 5 choices, namely never, almost never with a frequency of occurrence of 1-3x, sometimes with a frequency of occurrence of 4 - 6x, quite often with a frequency of occurrence of 7 - 9x, very often with a frequency of occurrence > 10x. This questionnaire is compiled based on aspects of the form of violence in dating, namely verbal or emotional violence, sexual and physical. The results of the score $x < 26$ obtained are stated as mild dating violence, a score of $26 \leq x < 92$ is stated as moderate dating violence and a score of $92 \leq x$ is stated as severe dating violence. Based on the results of the validity and reliability tests, the questionnaire has a cronbach alpha coefficient obtained for the questionnaire is 0.99 (Setyadi, 2013). Univariate data analysis using frequency distribution.

RESULTS

The research results will be outlined below.

Table 1. Age and Gender Distribution of Respondents (n=380)		
Characteristics	Frequency Respondents	
	f	%
Age (years)		
19	46	12.1
20	51	13.4
21	111	29.2
22	153	40.3
23	19	5
Gender		
Male	99	26.1
Female	281	73.9
Institutions		
Public	190	50
Private	190	50

Table 1 shows that based on age characteristics, the age range of respondents was mostly 22 years old (40.3%), with the majority of respondents being female (73.9%) and the rest being male.



Table 2. Distribution Frequency Violence in Dating (VD) in College Students (n=380)

Characteristics	Violence in Dating (VD)						Amount (%)
	Mild		Moderate		High		
	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Public Institution	43	22.6	122	64.2	25	13.2	100
Private Institutions	13	6.8	131	68.9	46	24.2	100

Table 2 shows that based on institutions, violence in dating (VD) experienced student public institutions more on category moderate (64.2%), while in private institutions violence in dating (VD) is also more many in the category moderate (68.9%) too.

Table 3. Distribution Frequency Violence In a relationship Which Experienced Student Based on The types (n=380)

Type Violence	Mild		Moderate		High		Amount
	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Verbal	88	23.2	228	60.0	64	16.8	100
Physique	245	64.5	99	26.1	36	9.5	100

Based on table 3 show that type violence in dating (VD) in the form of type verbal violence experienced by students is in the category moderate (60.0%), moderate type violence in dating (VD) in the form of type violence physique is in the category mild (64.5%).

Table 4. Distribution Frequency Strategy Coping Student Which Experience Violence in Padang City (n=380)

Strategy Coping	f	%
Problem focus coping	126	33.2
Emotional focus coping	254	66.8

Based on Table 4 shows that coping strategies students used student moment violence in in a relationship that is more on category *emotional focused coping* (66.8%).

Table 5. Distribution Frequency Strategy Coping Student Which Experience Violence In a relationship By Gender

Strategy Coping	Male		Female	
	f	%	f	%
Problem focus coping	43	43.4	83	29.5
Emotional focus coping	56	56.6	198	70.5

Table 5 shows that coping strategies students of various types sex male who experienced violence dating, more choose emotional focus coping (56.6%), as well as in students of the same type sex female more choose his coping strategy that is emotional focused coping (70.5%).

DISCUSSION

Violence in a Relationship

Based on the results of a study conducted on students at two leading institutions in the city of Padang, both students in public and private institutions, most of the students experienced moderate violence. This category is not far from several other studies (Ayun et al., 2018; Ontiveros et al., 2020). These results differ from other studies that found that dating violence was in the mild or low category (Hutami et al., 2022), even in the high category (Wahyu Pratiwi et al., 2020). The difference in this category is influenced by various factors, including differences in sociodemographic characteristics including variations according to culture (Ribeiro et al., 2024). In addition, there is no significant difference between men and women in cases of dating violence. Thus, it can be concluded that both men and women have an equal risk of becoming victims (Elmqvist et al., 2016a; Wahyu Pratiwi et al., 2020). But female tend to be victims of domestic violence, violence against intimate partners, and violence in relationships because female tend to have less power than men (Wulandaru et al., 2019). The

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perception that men do not experience dating violence may be rooted in gender stereotypes and cultural norms that associate masculinity with strength and control and that assume men are less vulnerable to abuse (Castillo-González et al., 2024).

Based on type violence in a relationship in form verbal is at category moderate, and violence in a relationship in form physique on category mild. Research in line with another study found that violence more dating dominant is verbal violence (Andayu et al., 2019). This form of violence is often not realized and is considered normal in a relationship. Although this gender often experiences verbal violence, the reasons for maintaining the relationship are not only psychological factors but also non-psychological factors, such as sociological factors, especially related to costs and benefits in a relationship (Tisyara & Valentina, 2024). Women who are victims tend to act irrationally by maintaining a relationship because they consider certain benefits, such as avoiding social bullying through the prestige of dating status and fulfilling the need for affection. However, this must be paid for with the sacrifice of time and being trapped in a violent relationship (Intan Permata Sari, 2018). The prevalence of physical violence in the whole was chosen because of difficulties in communicating so that physical self-defense was used as the main motive for violence in dating both by men and women (Elmqvist et al., 2016b).

Violence in dating occurs because of the motivation of the partner in undergoing a toxic relationship, which is based on five factors, namely the desire to have a partner completely and be the main priority, so that there is a prohibition on interacting with other people; the possessive nature of the partner (Rusyidi et al., 2020); individual understanding of dating relationships influenced by television shows; initially just joking, but then developing into serious behavior; family background; and the existence of trust issues (Qonitah et al., 2024).

Strategy Coping

Based on the results of the research conducted, the coping strategies used by students tend to be in the emotional focus coping category. Meanwhile, students who use emotional focus coping (Tisyara & Valentina, 2024). According to Lazarus and Folkman, coping is a way to overcome the perception gap between the demands of stressful situations and conditions and their ability to overcome the demands. Coping strategies themselves are defined as a process or effort to overcome to change behavior constantly in regulating and controlling internal and external demands and pressures that can burden and exceed the individual's defense capabilities (Putriana, 2018a).

The emotional focus coping strategy is more widely used by female students. This strategy contains more elements of emotional dependence (Castillo-González et al., 2024). Individuals who use this coping method tend to maintain their relationships because they are not ready for a new relationship, try to calm themselves down by keeping their feelings to themselves and try to look fine so that other people do not know that they have been victims of dating violence (Putriana, 2018b). In the emotion focused coping strategy, coping with conditions of denial, self-blame, despair, and even relief requires more social and religious support. (de la Villa Moral & Prieto, 2022; Lourdes et al., 2024).

In the category of coping strategies, namely problem focus coping, there are efforts made by individuals to solve the situation. Efforts made deliberately to focus on problems to change a situation, which are combined with an analytical approach to solving problems (Siti Maryam, 2017). They are more likely to end the relationship and leave their partner as a form of problem focused coping (Putriana, 2018b). They also leave a full relationship violence (Puente-Martinez et al., 2022). In addition, assertive techniques can also be developed to reduce violence in dating. (Hanindhya Syasti Pratita & Ike Herdiana, 2022).

CONCLUSION

The average violence experienced by students in Padang city is in the moderate category with the type of violence encountered being verbal violence, especially against women. The most widely used coping strategy by students who experience violence in dating is emotional focus coping rather than problem focus coping. It is hoped that students can choose the right coping strategy in dealing with the violence they experience as an effort to reduce the level of dating violence in Padang city. This finding highlights the importance of

understanding the coping strategies used by students who are victims of dating violence in order to develop effective interventions in accordance with the coping that has been chosen to support their well-being. In addition, there is a need to improve counseling services on campus, education about healthy relationships, or adaptive coping training.

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