

Attitudes on Gender Based Violence Among the Students of RAK Medical and Health Sciences University (RAKMHSU)

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Abstract:

Background: Gender is a major determinant of health and awareness and therefore, gender research is of pivotal importance in universities to create gender equality awareness and competence to transact efficiently in the society. A major issue regarding gender relations is the inequity delineated in the violence that people mete out to each other in a relationship. The manifestations are more obvious on women as victims of violence though the impact cannot be undermined among men. As extensive research literature points towards the trend that violent relationships are frequent and repetitive among young males and females this study researched on the attitudes of students regarding the situations in which violence according to them is justified. This study examined whether cultural norms and structural frameworks reflect their decision to be physically violent towards the other person and whether gender is a determinant.

Methods: The researchers administered a questionnaire to both male and female students for quantitative data. It was a cross sectional study with random sampling. Both male and female students with a sample size of 324 with ages between of 17-60 were selected.

Results: A Chi-square test was applied and a significant correlation between age, gender and nationalities was found in relation to the attitudes towards gender violence.

Conclusion: The study concluded that the attitudes of the students on gender-based violence endorse tolerance and positivity and show that the students in general are conscious of others' rights as people.

Keywords: gender violence, higher education, domestic violence, medical sciences, stereotypes.

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Introduction

As Gender is, a major determinant of health and wellbeing, Gender Research is of pivotal importance in universities to create gender equality awareness and competence. Awareness of gender equity and gender issues at an early stage of life helps students attain a balanced view of each other in future in personal as well as professional lives. The relevance of Gender studies to higher education is the exigent requirement in a world, which offers varied options of life experiences. Studies covering thematic and theoretical issues considered 'to provide relevant, critical and cross disciplinary knowledge and perspectives on social challenges.

This can prevent a major scourge that is prevalent in the world, the affliction in interpersonal relations which has become an international concern [1]. A major issue regarding gender relations is the inequity delineated in the violence that is meted out to each other in a relationship. The manifestations are more obvious on women as victims of violence.

What is violence? Any action that relates to the expression of power by inflicting pain on another person's body, it can be defined as violence. What causes violence? Politics of any kind, poverty, nationalism and neuropsychological factors may generate violence [2].

When we try to understand the concept of violence, it has to be discriminated as justified and unjustified violence. Violence, which becomes inevitable in defending oneself for example, is justified violence. Violence to defend the wellbeing of others is also justified violence. However, while opportunity to report violence to governing punitive bodies is unjustified violence.

Gender politics begets Gender violence. It persists as a major form of violence all over the world. Gender violence occurs not only in stable relationships as in marriages but also in sporadic relationships like dating and courtship. Extensive research literature demonstrates that violent relationships are frequent and repetitive among young males and females [3].

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The United Nations defines “violence” against women as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. In the factsheet of The world Health Organization updated in November 2016 concedes Violence against women - particularly intimate partner violence and sexual violence as major public health problems and violations of women's human rights [4] [5]. A Research conducted by a government agency in Nepal states that women experience violence at some time or other in their life [6]. The common presumption is that men are the perpetrators of violence against women.

However, to attribute male propensity for aggression to a biological tendency towards violence is biased as there are cultures that exist in which there are virtually no homicide or other forms of violence against other humans [7] [8].

Social psychologists study aggression in human beings from different perspectives. Studies on understanding human aggression as a social behaviour suggests that there are trigger factors within a person that can increase the possibilities of aggression [9] [10].

Gender based violence is not limited to only one gender, as it could be manifested in both male and female. Studies conducted on dating violence confirms that it is a significant problem on college campuses. It could include and not limit to physical violence, control between the partners, manipulation or emotional blackmailing. Sexism, stereotypes, inequalities, and gender discriminatory attitudes of inevitability of violence are the reasons for gender violence. Literature on gender violence confirms that violence takes a heavy toll on women's emotional physical and sexual wellbeing [11]. Gender studies place violence and all forms of abuse as about “power and control embedded in a patriarchal value system” [12] where both genders suffer when it happens.

Marital violence emanates from the pre-determinant roles for men and women. Men who might not show tendencies of violence toward siblings or other persons may find themselves in situations of aggression after marriage.

World Health Organisation and studies concerned with impact of alcoholism or substance abuse on families of people who are addicted point out that a major outcomes of a user under intoxication are behavioural consequences such as domestic violence [13].

This points towards social conditioning. Recognizing these situations is important for women to prevent further episodes of violence with serious repercussions, including dangers to their lives. This study stresses on the importance of creating opportunities within the education system for both men and women from a gender awareness perspective.

The awareness of gendered violence should inspire active interventions to prevent violence happening to girls and women around us [14]. It is imperative to analyse the perceptions of gender relations among the modern student generation and make available the relevant resources and

knowledge for the prevention of the social and psychological malaise and prepare them for a healthier society [15] [16].

Studies point towards awareness of gender violence and the effectiveness of formal instruction to prevent violence in life [17]. Research shows the use of critical communicative methodology helps young people to reflect critically about their violent identities in relation to their sexual and affective relationships [5].

Our study concerned how students justify the psychologically the reasons for such violence. Although psychological and mental violence could manifest in physiological changes in the body to cause anguish or pain can include in the definition of violence, this study limits itself only to “permissions given to self” as the psychosomatic approach is vast and complex a study at the moment. This study ventured to determine the tendencies and attitudes students had when faced with the common 'triggers' that could lead to aggression and violence. This study examined whether cultural norms and structural frameworks reflect their decision to be physically violent towards the other person and whether gender is a determinant.

This research aims to find the awareness of gender stereotypes among the students, the differences in the perception of gender roles between males and females, and the perceived factors of gender violence.

Methodology

A questionnaire was administered to both male and female students for quantitative data. The questions selected for the research indicate a discourse, which determines the reciprocity of the experience of tendency to violence. The nature of instigation for violence, the attitudes of one gender to another, the license to inflict violence towards the other in certain circumstances. Among the various possible forms of violence, which can be inflicted on persons, this study limited itself to 'hitting' another person.

The questions were hypothetical situations, which were given and had general possibilities or triggers on one form of violence, that is 'hitting'. The response to 'fully agree' meant it is perfectly O.K. to hit with degrees of agreement to disagreement as “it is really wrong”. It was a cross sectional study with random sampling both male and female students with a sample size of 324 with the ages between of 17-60.

Discussion

1. Demographic Details:

The demographic details of the participants are as follows:

The total respondents were 359. Out of the 359, students 35 (9.7%) did not accept consent and the 90.3 % took the survey with consent. The age of the participants ranged from 17 to 46 years, 255 (71%) were female and 104 (29%) males. Their religious background was Islam 289 (83%) followed by Religion Christianity, Roman Catholicism, and Protestantism 29 (8.1%) which was closely followed by Hinduism 27(7.5%). 28 Nationalities of the participants spread over our 7 academic programs as follows:

Table 1

Program	No. of Students	Percentage
BDS	87	24.2
BPharm	41	11.4
BSN	23	6.4
MBBS	164	45.7
MS Pharmacy	2	.6
MSN	4	1.1
RNBSN	38	10.6

The distribution of the academic years are as follows:

Table 2

Year	No. of Students	Percentage
I	116	32.3
II	151	42.1
III	40	11.1
IV	33	9.2
V	19	5.3

The parallel questions pointedly asked with reasons to 'hit' towards impulsive beating and showing remorse later, hitting for cheating, causing embarrassment, 'deserve to be hit', or hit back for whatever reason, or for being drunk.

Table 3

Questions	Female Responses "It is really wrong"		Male responses "It is really wrong"	
"Do you think it is OK for a woman to hit her partner/husband if SHE says she is sorry afterwards?"	195	84%	72	79%
Do you think it is OK for a man to hit his partner/wife if HE says he is sorry afterwards?	203	87%	67	74%
Suppose a woman cheats on her partner/husband with another man, do you think it is wrong for HIM to hit HER	101	43%	38	42%
Suppose a man cheats on his partner/wife with another woman, do you think it is wrong for HER to hit HIM?	95	41%	37	41%
Suppose a woman really embarrasses her partner/husband, do you think it is wrong for HIM to hit HER?	174	75%	63	69%
Suppose a man really embarrasses his partner/wife, do you think it is wrong for HER to hit HIM?	167	72%	66	73%
Do you think it is OK for a man to hit his partner/wife if HE thinks SHE deserves it?	187	80%	61	67%
Do you think it is OK for a woman to hit her partner/husband if SHE thinks HE deserves it?	184	79%	63	69%
Suppose a woman hits her partner/husband, do you think it is wrong for HIM to hit HER?	136	58%	51	56%
Suppose a man hits his partner/wife, do you think it is wrong for HER to hit HIM?	120	52%	48	53%
Do you think it is OK for a man to hit his partner/husband if HE is drunk?	188	81%	67	74%
Do you think it is OK for a woman to hit her partner/husband if SHE is drunk?	184	79%	68	75%

The above grid of responses clearly shows for whatever reason 'hitting' or hitting back is "really wrong"

1. Statistical Analysis:

Table -4

Gender * Do you think it is OK for a woman to hit her partner/husband if SHE says she is sorry afterwards?						
		I cannot decide	It is really wrong	It is sort of wrong	It is sort of OK	It is perfectly OK
Gender	Female	4	195	24	5	5
	Male	3	72	12	1	3
Gender * Do you think it is OK for a man to hit his partner/wife if HE says he is sorry afterwards?						
		I cannot decide	It is really wrong	It is sort of wrong	It is sort of OK	It is perfectly OK
Gender	Female	6	203	20	3	1
	Male	3	67	15	3	3
Suppose a woman cheats on her partner/husband with another man, do you think it is wrong for HIM to hit HER?						
		I cannot decide	It is really wrong	It is sort of wrong	It is sort of OK	It is perfectly OK
Gender	Female	29	101	44	32	27
	Male	8	38	19	14	12
Gender * Suppose a man cheats on his partner/wife with another woman, do you think it is wrong for HER to hit HIM?						
		I cannot decide	It is really wrong	It is sort of wrong	It is sort of OK	It is perfectly OK
Gender	Female	27	95	47	34	30
	Male	8	37	23	15	8
Gender * Suppose a woman really embarrasses her partner/husband, do you think it is wrong for HIM to hit HER?						
		I cannot decide	It is really wrong	It is sort of wrong	It is sort of OK	It is perfectly OK
Gender	Female	12	174	34	9	4
	Male	6	63	17	4	1
Gender * Suppose a man really embarrasses his partner/wife, do you think it is wrong for HER to hit HIM?						
		I cannot decide	It is really wrong	It is sort of wrong	It is sort of OK	It is perfectly OK
Gender	Female	11	167	39	9	7
	Male	3	66	17	3	2
Gender * Do you think it is OK for a man to hit his partner/wife if HE thinks SHE deserves it?						
		I cannot decide	It is really wrong	It is sort of wrong	It is sort of OK	It is perfectly OK
Gender	Female	10	187	25	8	3
	Male	8	61	12	6	4
Gender * Do you think it is OK for a woman to hit her partner/husband if SHE thinks HE deserves it?						
		I cannot decide	It is really wrong	It is sort of wrong	It is sort of OK	It is perfectly OK
Gender	Female	9	184	26	10	4
	Male	8	63	13	4	3
Gender * Suppose a woman hits her partner/husband, do you think it is wrong for HIM to hit HER?						
		I cannot decide	It is really wrong	It is sort of wrong	It is sort of OK	It is perfectly OK
Gender	Female	36	136	42	12	7
	Male	16	51	17	5	2
Gender * Suppose a man hits his partner/wife, do you think it is wrong for HER to hit HIM?						
		I cannot decide	It is really wrong	It is sort of wrong	It is sort of OK	It is perfectly OK
Gender	Female	36	120	45	17	15
	Male	14	48	16	6	7
Gender * Do you think it is OK for a man to hit his partner/husband if HE is drunk?						
		I cannot decide	It is really wrong	It is sort of wrong	It is sort of OK	It is perfectly OK
Gender	Female	12	188	17	11	5
	Male	9	67	4	9	2
Gender * Do you think it is OK for a woman to hit her partner/husband if SHE is drunk?						
		I cannot decide	It is really wrong	It is sort of wrong	It is sort of OK	It is perfectly OK
Gender	Female	14	184	19	11	5
	Male	9	68	5	6	3

From table 2 above, there was no significant difference between the genders. By applying chi-square test we found a significant correlation between:

Religion:

1. Do you think it is OK for a woman to hit her partner/husband if SHE says she is sorry afterwards?

Male acceptance is statistically significant response. (91 in Islam and 78 in Hinduism, 25 in Christian). They object to this idea of a woman to hit her partner or husband if she says she is sorry afterwards, they said it was wrong.

2. Suppose a woman really embarrasses her partner/husband, do you think it is wrong for HIM to hit HER?

There is a statistical significant by men. They said, "It is really wrong".

3. Suppose a man really embarrasses his partner/wife, do you think it is wrong for HER to hit HIM?

They agreed "it was really wrong", is statistically significant by both the genders. Both say, "it is really wrong".

4. Do you think it is OK for a woman to hit her partner/husband if SHE thinks HE deserves it?

There is a statistical significance by men, they said it was "really wrong".

Nationality:

Statistically significant for all nationalities as well as Statistically significant for men as the responses say "it is really wrong"

1. Do you think it is OK for a man to hit his partner/husband if HE is drunk?

Interestingly some women felt it is acceptable. Five (5) said it's perfectly ok, 11 said it is sort of ok. Statistically significant by both the genders, they said, "it is really wrong".

2. Do you think it is OK for a woman to hit her partner/husband if SHE is drunk?

Statistically significant by both the genders, they said, "it is really wrong".

Academic division:

Across all academia, men responded "it is really wrong".

1. Suppose a man cheats on his partner/wife with another woman, do you think it is wrong for HER to hit HIM?

95 women responded with, "it is really wrong". 47 respondents said, "it is sort of wrong". Each gender individually no significant difference. But it is Statistically significant, for both the genders and across all academia as they said "it is really wrong" for both the following questions

2. Suppose a woman really embarrasses her partner/husband, do you think it is wrong for HIM to hit HER?

3. Suppose a man really embarrasses his partner/wife, do you think it is wrong for HER to hit HIM?

4. Do you think it is OK for a man to hit his partner/wife if HE thinks SHE deserves it?

Across all academia, men said "it is really wrong", they did not accept it. It could be inferred that 20% women are more accepting or inclined towards accepting violence in certain contexts.

5. Do you think it is OK for a woman to hit her partner/husband if SHE thinks HE deserves it?

Interestingly, first instance of women being Statistically significant. 80% they object and said "it's really wrong".

6. Suppose a woman hits her partner/husband, do you think it is wrong for HIM to hit HER?

Remarkably, first instance of women being statistically significant. 58% "It is really wrong" which can be inferred as or not accepting that men can be beaten back.

7. Suppose a man hits his partner/wife, do you think it is wrong for HER to hit HIM?

53% of men objected or said "it's really wrong". It is between the age of 17-31. Younger years. A woman hitting back is unthinkable for the younger men.

By age:

1. Do you think it is OK for a man to hit his partner/wife if HE says he is sorry afterwards?

"It is really wrong". This was the opinion of 74% of men respondents who were less than 22 years of age. New generation of men are more aware and do not accept violence.

2. Do you think it is OK for a woman to hit her partner/husband if SHE says she is sorry afterwards?

72(79%) men said "It is really wrong". Early ages of the respondents, less than 22 years. Whereas 195(84%) women said "It is really wrong".

3. Suppose a woman really embarrasses her partner/husband, do you think it is wrong for HIM to hit HER?

174(75%) women said "it is really wrong". Younger generation is taking a stand.

Do you think it is OK for a man to hit his partner/wife if HE thinks SHE deserves it?

187(80%) women responded "it is really wrong". So it means if she deserves it assumes people can 'deserve' violence.

4. Do you think it is OK for a woman to hit her partner/husband if SHE thinks HE deserves it?

184(79%) female said "it is really wrong", where 26(11%) female said "it is sort of wrong", but 4(2%) said "it is perfectly OK", 10(4%) "it is sort of OK" and 9(4%) said "I cannot decide".

5. Suppose a woman hits her partner/husband, do you think it is wrong for HIM to hit HER?

Both 51 (56%) male and 136(58%) female said "it is really wrong".

6. Do you think it is OK for a man to hit his partner/husband if HE is drunk?

Both 188(81%) female and 67(29%) male said "it is really wrong".

7. Do you think it is OK for a woman to hit her partner/husband if SHE is drunk?

Both 184(79%) female and 68(75%) male said "it is really wrong".

Questionnaire responses and scoring

A high score on this measure indicated an attitude that is more accepting of domestic violence. This means that questions 3,4,5,6,9 and 10 (where questions are asking if something is wrong) are given values 1= it's really wrong, 2= it's sort of wrong, 3= it's sort of OK, 4=it's perfectly OK. In the case of questions 1, 2, 7, 8 11 and 12 (where the questions are asking if something is OK and the responsible scale is presented in the reverse order) the values are assigned in the order; it's perfectly OK =4, it's OK=3, it's sort of wrong =2, and it's really wrong=1. The sum score of each respondent is calculated as in [18].

Average score of Gender Violence



Fig. 1

From the fig.1, it is clear that the male score is higher in gender violence that is the capacity to (commit) gender violence.

Religion:

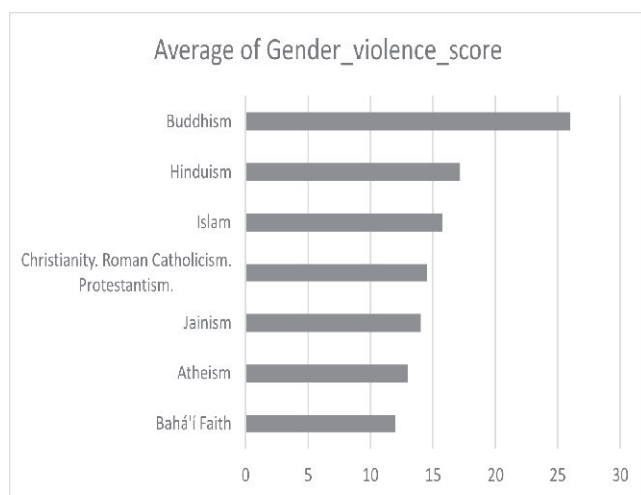


Fig-2

According to the calculated average score Buddhism score of gender violence is the highest followed by Hinduism and Islam as the fig.2 indicates. Although no religion encourages violence, followers still possess the capacity to be violent.

Nationality:

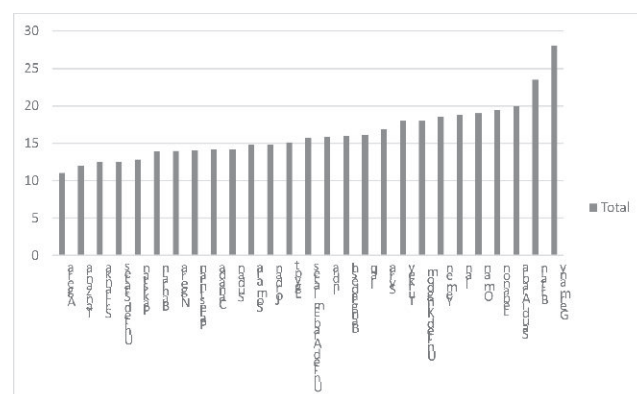


Fig-3

According to the calculated average score Germany, British and Saudi Arabia followed by Lebanon, Oman and Iran and others as depicted in the fig.3.

Program wise

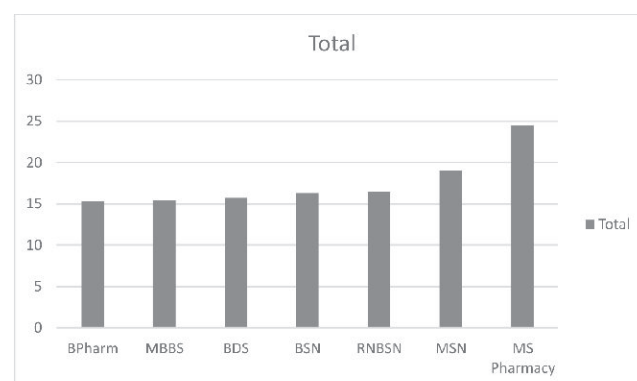


Fig-4

According to the calculated average score the highest rank MS pharmacy and MS nursing followed by RNBSN ranked high in gender violence score as shown in fig.4.

Conclusion:

Students of RAK Medical and Health Sciences University (RAKMHSU) in general are aware of gender equity, aware of violence and abjure it. We concluded that both genders agree that any type of violence irrespective of who is the perpetrator is "really wrong". This study concluded that the attitudes of the students on gender-based violence endorse tolerance and positivity and show the students of RAK Medical and Health Sciences University are in general conscious of others' rights as human beings. It is gratifying to understand that the education system is preparing future citizens in the areas of gender equity and to understand tolerance among other things. The inclusion of gender equity awareness in courses like Health Sciences Communication helps young people to reflect critically about their psychological processes during interaction with the other gender. As every nation aspires for their citizens, where the talents, abilities, potentials and resources of both men and women are facilitated to complement with each other there is naturally economic and social growth.

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