Legal Education on Child Protection: Efforts to Reduce the Rate of Dating Violence among Adolescents

Nuraliah Ali1*, Thea Farina2, Mardan Umar3

1,2 Ilmu Hukum, Universitas Palangka Raya, Palangka Raya, Indonesia
3 Manajemen Dakwah, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Manado, Manado, Indonesia

A B S T R A K

1. INTRODUCTION

The escalation of violence among vulnerable child groups highlights the pivotal role of knowledge in addressing adversities. This study aims to utilize a Community Service Activity as external educational support to enhance teenagers' comprehension of dating violence and its legal aspects. Legal seminars engaged 88 adolescents from public and private schools in Palangka Raya city. Employing a pretest-posttest design, the intervention proved effective. Results showed a notable 63.63% improvement in adolescents' awareness of legal implications and understanding of potential criminal sanctions. However, marginal progress of 4.5% was observed in refining the definition aspect, indicating a basic understanding of unacceptable behaviors in dating relationships. The success of this initiative is evident in significantly enhancing adolescents' understanding of dating violence and its legal implications. These findings stress the need for tailored educational interventions to strengthen adolescents' legal awareness regarding dating violence. Implications suggest nuanced strategies to fortify understanding of legal protections within relationships, fostering safer environments for vulnerable groups.

*Corresponding author
E-mail addresses: nuraliahali@law.upr.ac.id (Nuraliah Ali)
same point was emphasized by previous study who stated that women often become the target of violence in dating relationships (Francis & Pearson, 2021). The increasing cases of violence against children and adolescents are a growing concern, with the incidence of violence rising, thus warranting serious attention.

The largest group of victims of violence is in the age range of 13-17 years or adolescents, accounting for 31.9% (Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPPA), 2022). The high incidence of sexual violence cases, especially against adolescent children, requires serious attention from all parties. Acts of violence constitute legal violations and directly harm children physically and psychologically (Humaira B et al., 2015; Katz et al., 2020). Consequently, this can have serious repercussions on the victims, including their education, and can cause long-lasting trauma that will adversely affect the child's daily life, moral, and mental well-being. Children may suffer from emotional distress, depression, loss of appetite, introversion, sleep difficulties, and so on (Chen, 2022; Yang, 2022).

Based on data from BPS (Central Statistics Agency) in 2017, the prevalence of violence against women in Indonesia indicates that 1 out of 3 women aged 15-64 experience physical and/or sexual violence by their partners or others. Physical and/or sexual violence tends to be higher among women living in urban areas. According to data from the National Women’s Life Experience Survey (SPHN) in 2016 and the Online Information System for the Protection of Women and Children (Simfoni PPA) in 2017, 42.7% of unmarried adolescent girls have experienced violence, with 34.4% experiencing sexual violence and 19.6% experiencing physical violence. Among 10,847 perpetrators of violence, 2,090 were boyfriends or partners (Endaryati et al., 2020; Ningsih et al., 2021). This is further supported by other research, which states that a negative consequence of romantic relationships is the occurrence of dating violence (Cava et al., 2020).

Dating is considered a period of searching for a partner and exploring and understanding various personalities among individuals. Dating relationships also represent a process where two individuals are searching for compatibility, eventually transitioning into a more serious relationship, namely a family through marriage (Dosil et al., 2020; Haris Muhammad, 2021). Romantic relationships should ideally be happy, involve sharing, affection, complementing each other’s shortcomings, and being able to commit before progressing to more serious commitments (Acker & Davis, 1992; Lewoleba & Wahyuningsih, 2022). According to previous study there are seven reasons why people engage in dating: due to environmental and introversion, the need to share with someone, seeking acceptance, getting to know and understand someone they love, building relationships, finding inspiration and mood boosters, and needing someone who is always there and reliable (Santika & Permama, 2021). Therefore, the reasons for dating do not predict negative outcomes; everyone hopes for positive experiences. This is why dating violence is something undesirable in the context of romantic relationships among adolescents.

Violence within a relationship often occurs, including among adolescents in what we call dating relationships. Dating violence, or DV, among teenagers, has been increasingly common recently. Dating violence is a deliberate behavior involving coercive tactics to gain or maintain control and power over a partner (Cuomo & Dolci, 2021; Mardiah et al., 2020). Physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual acts of aggression all fall under the umbrella of dating violence. Whether intentional or not, acts of violence can be carried out by teenagers with different perspectives within a dating relationship (Kurniasari et al., 2018; Matusov & Sullivan, 2020). This indicates that cases of violence encompass both physical and psychological aspects. Violence cases are on the rise, with adolescents being the highest group of victims (Anantri, 2016; Dosil et al., 2020; Indrayana, 2017). The importance of external influences such as social support in addressing dating violence is crucial, as evidenced by various research findings related to this issue.

The preceding discussion emphasizes the significant influence of external elements, such as social support, on an individual's inclination to become involved as either a perpetrator or a victim of dating violence. The prevalence of dating violence among adolescents highlights the critical need for comprehensive knowledge and insight into the characteristics of violence, its diverse manifestations, root causes, consequences, mitigation strategies, and legal safeguards. Consequently, advocating for proactive external assistance, particularly through Legal Education initiatives, becomes pivotal in fostering awareness and deep understanding. The study's objective is to highlight adolescents' comprehension of dating violence, as evidenced by the contrast between pre-test and post-test outcomes. Furthermore, it endeavors to equip adolescents with valuable insights and knowledge via legal education about dating violence. This endeavor is crucial since research on dating violence remains relatively scarce, with limited attempts to offer viable solutions to address this issue among adolescents.

2. METHOD

The community service activities outlined in this journal article can be broadly categorized into three stages: Preparation, Implementation, and Evaluation, as depicted in Figure 1.
In the initial stage of community service activities, contracts were established with high school students and youth groups who were prepared and invited to actively participate in terms of time commitments and willingness as participants. Other initial preparations included arranging all necessary facilities, equipment, materials and handling administrative permits from relevant authorities. The process was carried out according to the schedule that had been discussed and agreed upon by both participants and resource persons. The outreach session was divided into two main parts: the presentation of materials and a question-and-answer session, followed by a post-test at the end of the activity (Arikunto, 2009; Sharma, 2014).

In the initial phase, a pretest gauged adolescents’ baseline knowledge of dating violence. Following this, the program unfolded with comprehensive activities: resource persons delivered educational material, relevant videos were screened, and interactive sessions encouraged open discussions among participants. The final phase centered on a thorough evaluation encompassing structural, procedural, and methodological aspects. Structurally, the community service targeted adolescents aged 12 to 19 attending general high schools. The team allocated specific roles: two individuals facilitated the material presentation and video screenings during the outreach event. Additionally, one team member conducted pretests and post-tests around the presentation, while another documented the entirety of the community service initiative.

### Result and Discussion

#### Result

The implementation of community service activities in the form of legal education was conducted offline or face-to-face. The activities took place at the multipurpose hall of the Faculty of Medicine, Palangka Raya University. The event was attended by 88 students from several high schools in Palangka Raya City. The theme of this community service was Legal Education for Child Protection, aimed at reducing the increasing rate of violence in adolescent dating in the city of Palangka Raya. The implementation of legal counseling begins with the first stage, which is the pretest. The pretest is an initial measurement instrument conducted before the subjects receive treatment or intervention and aims to obtain the initial ability parameters of the subjects. The pretest given to students was in the form of an on-the-spot e-questionnaire through a Google Form e-questionnaire to determine the participants’ identity descriptions and their basic understanding of dating violence and the issues they have experienced during their dating relationships. From the pretest results, data on participant identities were obtained, consisting of 49 males and 39 females aged 16 to 19 years old.

In addition to identity data, data on participants’ prior knowledge were also obtained from the distributed questionnaire. It was found that 60.2%, or 53 individuals, had heard of dating violence but did not have a deep understanding of it; 21.6%, or 19 individuals, had never heard of it at all, and only 18.2%, or 16 individuals had heard of and understood dating violence. Regarding respondents’ understanding of legal sanctions against perpetrators of dating violence, it was found that 13.6% or 12 individuals stated that dating violence cannot be prosecuted because it involves mutually consenting partners, 33% or 29 individuals said they did not know, and 53.4% indicated that dating violence can be legally processed. The results of the pretest processed through Google Form can be seen in Figure 2.
The second stage is the material presentation session. In the material presentation session, two speakers discussed topics related to the definition of dating and dating violence, the factors causing dating violence, the forms of violence, prevention efforts, and the impact of dating violence on victims and perpetrators, as well as its legal protection. After the speakers finished presenting the material, the session continued with sharing and discussion. The documentation of community service activity is shown in Figure 3.

The third stage is Evaluation. In this community service activity, evaluation was conducted by administering a post-test. A post-test is a test given at the end of a program or activity and aims to determine whether the essential material has been well understood by the students. The post-test given to adolescent participants was in the form of an e-questionnaire through Google Forms. This post-test aimed to assess the improvement in participants' understanding of legal protection against dating violence. From the post-test results, information about the improvement in adolescents' understanding of various aspects, including the definition, causes, forms, prevention efforts, and legal consequences of dating violence, was obtained. The increase in participants' understanding obtained from the analysis of pre-test and post-test data is presented in Figure 4.
Based on the graph in Figure 4, it is evident that there was an increase in the knowledge and understanding of adolescents in each indicator in each aspect. This indicates that the community service activity has achieved its objectives, which were to enhance knowledge and understanding related to legal protection against dating violence. Table 1 presenting the evaluation of the comparison before and after the community service was conducted.

Table 1. Evaluation of Adolescents’ Increased Understanding of Dating Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correct Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Correct Score</th>
<th>% Increase</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition and Forms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>6.82% of participants did not know that Dating Violence is any effort to control or dominate a partner physically, sexually, or psychologically, resulting in harm or loss</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
<td>There was a 4.55% increase, with 97.72% of participants now understanding that Dating Violence is any effort to control or dominate a partner physically, sexually, or psychologically, resulting in harm or loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>17.05% of participants did not understand that using disliked/rude nicknames is a form of verbal violence</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>There was a 9.09% increase, with 92.05% of participants now understanding that using disliked/rude nicknames is a form of verbal violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>11.36% of participants thought that arguing in public is a normal behavior for couples</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>6.82%</td>
<td>There was a 6.82% change, with 94.32% of participants now knowing that arguing in public is not a normal behavior for couples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>10.23% of participants did not know that threatening to spread photos/videos is a form of threat in dating violence</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>6.82%</td>
<td>There was a 6.82% increase, with 96.59% of participants now knowing that threatening to spread photos/videos is a form of threat in dating violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>70.45% of participants believed that not going out/engaging in activities without their partner’s permission is normal</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20.45%</td>
<td>There was a 20.45% increase, with 90.91% of participants now understanding that not going out/engaging in activities without their partner’s permission is not normal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before Community Service | After Community Service
--- | ---
Correct Score | Correct Score | % Increase | Description
82 | 85 | 3.41% | Definition and Forms
93.18% of participants knew that forced touching is a form of sexual violence in dating | 84 | 2.27% | There was a 3.41% increase, with 96.59% of participants now knowing that forced touching is a form of sexual violence in dating
6.81% of participants believed that touching sensitive areas (chest & buttocks) without permission is normal because they are in a relationship | 84 | 2.27% | There was a 2.27% increase, with 97.73% of participants now understanding that touching sensitive areas without permission is not normal, even in a dating relationship

According to Table 1, there is an increase in adolescents’ understanding in terms of comprehending the definition and forms of dating violence. This indicates that some adolescents are beginning to grasp the meaning and examples of actions indicative of violence in dating relationships. Evaluation of adolescent understanding improvement regarding the effect of dating violence is show in Table 2.

Table 2. Evaluation of Adolescent Understanding Improvement Regarding the Effect of Dating Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before Community Service</th>
<th>After Community Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correct Score</td>
<td>Correct Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>Impact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12 | 21 | 10.23% | Only 13.63% were able to correctly classify that bruising from being hit is not a form of verbal and sexual violence |
84 | 88 | 4.55% | A significant majority, 95.45% of the participants, are aware that the effects of dating violence require a considerable amount of time for psychological healing |
82 | 86 | 4.55% | 93.18% of the participants understand that feeling insecure in public due to their partner constantly mocking their body is considered a form of dating violence |
78 | 87 | 10.23% | 88.66% of the participants are aware that limiting communication with family, friends, and the opposite sex because they have to spend time with their partner is considered inappropriate behavior |
86 | 86 | 9.09% | Similarly, 88.66% of the participants know that feeling stressed in a relationship is an effect of dating violence |

Data Source: Processed from the Google Form e-questionnaire
Table 2 shows the level of understanding regarding the effects of dating violence on adolescents, both physically and psychologically. Knowledge about the consequences of dating violence is crucial so that adolescents can avoid it as early as possible.

**Table 3. Evaluation of Adolescents' Improved Understanding Regarding the Factors Causing Dating Violence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causal Factors</th>
<th>Before Community Service</th>
<th>After Community Service</th>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Correct Score</strong></td>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td><strong>Correct Score</strong></td>
<td><strong>% Increase</strong></td>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Only 45.45% of the participants were aware that a lack of love and attention in the family was a contributing factor to dating violence</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>30.68%</td>
<td>There was an increase of 30.68%, with 76.13% of participants then understanding that a lack of love and attention in the family was a contributing factor to dating violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>A majority, 76.13% of the participants, knew that a lack of knowledge in respecting their partner was one of the contributing factors to dating violence</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>10.23%</td>
<td>There was an increase of 10.23%, with 86.36% of participants then understanding that a lack of knowledge in respecting their partner was one of the causal factors of dating violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>12.5% of the participants were unaware that growing up in a family accustomed to domestic violence (KDRT - Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga) could lead to the emergence of dating violence</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>14.77%</td>
<td>There was an increase of 14.77%, with 94.31% of participants then understanding that growing up in a family accustomed to domestic violence (KDRT - Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga) could lead to the emergence of dating violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>15.91% of the participants believed that excessive jealousy was not a characteristic of individuals who engage in dating violence</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
<td>There was an increase of 13.64%, with 97.72% of participants then understanding that excessive jealousy was a characteristic of individuals who engage in dating violence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data Source: Processed from Google Form e-questionnaire*

Table 3 shows an improvement in adolescents’ understanding that family, partners, and jealousy are contributing factors to the occurrence of dating violence. Evaluation of adolescents’ improved understanding regarding legal protection is shown in Table 4.

**Table 4. Evaluation of Adolescents' Improved Understanding Regarding Legal Protection**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal Protection</th>
<th>Before Community Service</th>
<th>After Community Service</th>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Correct Score</strong></td>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td><strong>Correct Score</strong></td>
<td><strong>% Increase</strong></td>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Only 53.40% of the participants believed that acts of dating violence could be legally prosecuted with sanctions according to the nature/type of behavior</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>31.82%</td>
<td>There was an increase of 31.82%, with 85.22% of participants then aware that acts of dating violence could be legally prosecuted with sanctions according to the nature/type of behavior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

This discussion on child protection law education serves as an effort to educate and provide support from external parties to equip teenage children with knowledge, enabling them to shield themselves and avoid forms of violence that may occur while they are in romantic relationships. However, the phenomenon and the increasing trend in the number of violence cases in romantic relationships cannot be detached from the understanding possessed by the victims and the strength of law enforcement to protect vulnerable groups from violence. A thorough understanding of the meaning and manifestations of violence will have a significant impact on the responses exhibited when facing any form of violent behavior. A teenager who does not comprehend the characteristics and signs of violence, whether physical or psychological, in romantic relationships may allow themselves to remain in an unhealthy relationship. As previously mentioned in a prior study, dating is a phase of getting to know each other to find compatibility (Haris Muhammad, 2021). The pursuit of compatibility before reaching the serious stage also allows for actions that may be affected by the surrounding environment.

Teenagers with limited experience regarding the forms and manifestations of violence in romantic relationships sometimes fail to realize that they have become victims of violence. Instead, they may perceive their partner's behavior as a manifestation of affection, even though it poses risks and has detrimental consequences (Sholikhah & Masykur, 2020; Utomo & Wasino, 2020). Moreover, children who lack knowledge that the violence encountered during dating can result in legal sanctions tend to conceal and not report the violence they experience, leading to trauma and other destructive psychological impacts (Hikmah, 2017; Widianto et al., 2019).

Community service in the form of legal education with the theme of child protection law to reduce the rising incidence of violence in romantic relationships has been successfully implemented. This community service has had a positive impact on enhancing the knowledge, understanding, and abilities of teenagers regarding violence in romantic relationships (Hilmansyah et al., 2019; Warwu et al., 2022). Through the provision of systematic and easily understandable materials, as well as the presentation of examples closely related to daily life, teenagers can grasp the essence of the provided content. They have demonstrated an improved understanding of the five established aspects, including the definition, forms, causative factors, mitigation efforts, and legal protection related to violence in romantic relationships.

The implication of this community service is that 88 teenagers now have a better understanding to prevent themselves and their peers from violence if they enter into romantic relationships in the future. The questions with the highest number of incorrect answers are related to the factors causing violence in romantic relationships, with a total of 48 wrong answers. This indicates that before the community service was implemented, more than half of the participants believed that the role of parents and the love given did not have an effect on whether teenagers would become perpetrators or victims of violence. This can provide valuable feedback for future community service projects that target parents to educate them about the importance of love and family support in preventing their children from becoming perpetrators or victims of violence. The questions with the highest number of improved correct answers, totaling 28, are related to the aspect of legal protection. This indicates that the most significant improvement after the provision of materials is in teenagers’ knowledge about legal protection against violence. They begin to understand that if violence occurs during their dating period, they can report and legally process such acts of violence. With this understanding, it is hoped that they can protect themselves and are less likely to engage in or become victims of violence, ultimately reducing the incidence of violence in romantic relationships among teenagers.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on this study it can be concluded that understanding and knowledge of the definition of violence in dating relationships becomes crucial in anticipating the occurrence of violence within dating as well as its impact in the law. This study indicates that a poor understanding of the definition of violence in a dating relationship will have an impact on increased rates of violence among students and adolescents. Initial findings revealed that only a few teenagers have at least heard of dating violence but do not have a precise and in-depth understanding of it. This is compounded by the lack of knowledge regarding the legal protection available to children when faced with violence during dating. Through a promotive educational approach delivered in the form of legal counseling, it has been successful in transferring knowledge and enhancing teenagers’ understanding as a preventive solution to prevent teenagers from becoming perpetrators and/or victims of violence while in a dating relationship. This, of course, is hoped to be one of the efforts to curb the increase in the number of cases of violence against children and teenagers.
5. ACKNOWLEDGE

This community service activity was funded by DIPA of Faculty of Law, University of Palangka Raya 2023. SK 1318/UN24.7/AL/2023, on August 24th, 2023.

6. REFERENCES


