Exploring Attitudes towards Intimate Partner Violence

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Abstract

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a significant societal problem which causes extensive costs, not only to the individuals involved but also to the wider community. Consequently a considerable amount of resources are invested into preventing and reducing the occurrence of IPV. Underpinning all of these initiatives is the focus on changing societal attitudes towards IPV, including attitudes of perpetrators and victims. Most of the focus thus far has been on changing attitudes towards male perpetrated physical IPV, and this continues despite the knowledge that psychological IPV is just as damaging as physical IPV and that IPV is perpetrated equally by males and females. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to identify what the New Zealand publics’ attitude towards IPV is, by looking at male and female perpetrated IPV and physical and psychological IPV. In addition, this study also explored the impact that gender, history of IPV, and age of the participant had on their attitudes towards IPV.

Results of this study established that generally participants had attitudes that were disapproving of IPV, although they were more tolerant of IPV when the perpetrator was female or when the IPV was psychological. In addition, participants younger than 46yrs had more accepting attitudes towards IPV than older participants. It was also found that participant gender and history of IPV did not significantly impact on participants’ attitudes towards IPV. The findings of this study provide important areas for future prevention and reduction initiatives to focus on. After all, it is important that the public develop an attitude that IPV is completely unacceptable, for as long as IPV is tolerated it will not be possible for the goal of eradicating the occurrence of IPV to be achieved.
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Contents

Abstract .................................................................................................................................. ii
Acknowledgements ............................................................................................................... iii
Contents ................................................................................................................................ iv
List of Figures ...................................................................................................................... vii
List of Tables........................................................................................................................ vii
Chapter 1: Introduction .......................................................................................................... 1
  1.1 Thesis structure ........................................................................................................ 3
Chapter 2: Overview of Intimate Partner Violence............................................................... 5
  2.1 Definitions .................................................................................................................... 5
  2.1.1 Intimate partner violence ................................................................................ 5
  2.1.2 Attitude ............................................................................................................. 6
  2.1.3 Physical abuse .................................................................................................. 6
  2.1.4 Psychological abuse ......................................................................................... 7
  2.1.5 Perpetrator ........................................................................................................ 7
  2.1.6 Victim ............................................................................................................... 7
  2.2 IPV research focus ................................................................................................... 7
    2.2.1 Preventative research .................................................................................... 9
    2.2.2 IPV reduction research ................................................................................ 10
    2.2.3 Attitude .......................................................................................................... 12
    2.2.4 Attitude of perpetrators ............................................................................... 13
    2.2.5 Attitude of victims ........................................................................................ 14
    2.2.6 Attitude of the general public ....................................................................... 15
  2.3 Critical analysis of IPV research .............................................................................. 16
2.3.1 Psychological IPV ................................................................. 17
2.3.2 Female perpetrated IPV ..................................................... 19

Chapter 3: Attitudes ............................................................................................................. 22
3.1 Attitude development ............................................................................................ 22
  3.1.1 Social norms ............................................................................................... 23
  3.1.2 Classical/Operant conditioning ................................................................. 24
3.2 How behaviour changes attitude ........................................................................... 25
  3.2.1 Cognitive Dissonance theory ..................................................................... 25
  3.2.2 Self Perception theory ................................................................................ 26
3.3 Changing attitudes ................................................................................................. 27
3.4 Factors influencing public attitudes towards IPV ................................................. 28
  3.4.1 Gender of perpetrator .................................................................................. 28
  3.4.2 Type of IPV ............................................................................................... 29
  3.4.3 Gender of participant ................................................................................... 30
  3.4.4 History of IPV ............................................................................................. 31
  3.4.5 Age ............................................................................................................. 32

Chapter 4: Present Study ...................................................................................................... 35
4.1 Hypotheses ............................................................................................................. 35

Chapter 5: Method................................................................................................................ 36
5.1 Research design ..................................................................................................... 36
5.2 Participants ............................................................................................................ 36
5.3 Measures ................................................................................................................ 37
  5.3.1 Demographic questions .............................................................................. 38
  5.3.2 Attitude questionnaire ............................................................................... 38
  5.3.3 Revised Conflict Tactic Scale (CTS2) .......................................................... 39
5.4 Procedure .......................................................................................................................... 41
  5.4.1 Recruitment of participants .................................................................................. 41
  5.4.2 Data collection ........................................................................................................ 42

Chapter 6: Results .................................................................................................................. 44
  6.1 Data analysis and preliminary analyses ................................................................. 44
  6.2 Hypotheses testing .................................................................................................... 47

Chapter 7: Discussion .......................................................................................................... 50
  7.1 Hypotheses ................................................................................................................ 50
  7.2 Practical implications ............................................................................................... 53
  7.3 Limitations ................................................................................................................ 54
  7.4 Recommendations ................................................................................................. 55
  7.5 Conclusion ................................................................................................................ 56

Chapter 8: References .......................................................................................................... 57

Chapter 9: Appendix .......................................................................................................... 69
List of Figures

Figure 1. IPV research relationship ................................................................. 8
Figure 2. Focus of IPV research and initiatives .............................................. 17
Figure 3. ABC model of attitude ..................................................................... 23
Figure 4. Mean difference in attitudes towards IPV across age groups .......... 49

List of Tables

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the sample ..................................... 37
Table 2. Bivariate correlation matrix ............................................................... 45
Table 3. Mann-Whitney U test results ............................................................. 48