

# A Comprehensive Literature Review on Dating Violence Among University Students: Prevention's Policies and Recommendations for Vietnam

Nguyen Le Hoai Anh<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

Dating violence (DV) represents a critical public health and safety concern and is global pervasive across diverse populations. It affects individuals irrespective of ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, occupation, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Notably, youths are particularly vulnerable to experiencing dating violence compared to other demographic groups. Additionally, students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ), or those uncertain about their gender identity, face higher incidences of physical and sexual dating violence compared to their heterosexual peers. The repercussions of dating violence are profound, encompassing numerous adverse physical and psychological consequences for its victims. Despite the severity of this issue, research on DV, especially regarding prevention policies, remains insufficient in Vietnam. To enhance the well-being of DV victims, comprehensive research on their experiences and the development of effective prevention policies are imperative for Vietnamese universities.

**Keywords:** Dating violence, University students, Policy, Vietnam

## Background

Dating violence (DV) has been a significant topic of interest in public health and social sciences (Jennings, 2017). DV is defined as “the display of behaviors by couples towards each other, including verbal, sexual, emotional, and physical violence in dating relationships, and imposing social restrictions on each other's lives” (Yilmaz et al., 2021). University students, who frequently develop intimate romantic relationships are particularly affected by DV (Sabina, 2008). The prevalence of DV among youth and young adults ranges from 21.8% in young men and 37.2% in young women to as high as 66.5% (Jennings, 2017). Studies show that young sexual minorities are more at risk of DV and experience higher rates of intimate violence and sexual assault than heterosexual college students (Olavarrieta, 2023; Edwards et al., 2016). These individuals experience significantly higher rates of intimate violence and sexual assault compared to their heterosexual counterparts. For instance, a study involving 4,129 college students in New England found that LGBTQ+ students reported substantially higher six-month incidence rates of sexual assault/coercion (heterosexual: 10.9%; LGBTQ+: 24.3%), physical IPV (heterosexual: 18.4%; LGBTQ+: 29.8%), and unwanted pursuit (e.g., stalking; heterosexual: 32.1%; LGBTQ+: 47.6%) victimization (Edwards et al., 2016).

DV can lead to serious, lifelong problems affecting the physical, psychological, and social functioning of young individuals. Victims often exhibit symptoms of depression and anxiety at higher rates, have an increased propensity for self-harm and suicide, and are more likely to engage in alcohol

<sup>1</sup> PhD., Faculty of Social work, Hanoi National University of Education, Hanoi, Vietnam  
Email: anhnlh@hnue.edu.vn

and substance use as well as risky sexual behaviors (Hinduja, 2020). Furthermore, negative psychological, physical, and academic outcomes are more prevalent among LGBTQ+ IPV victims compared to heterosexual victims (Edwards et al., 2016). Specifically, transgender young adults, particularly male-to-female transgender individuals, are at higher risk of DV compared to their cisgender peers (Reuter et al., 2017).

In Vietnam, research on DV, especially among women students, is limited. The 2019 Vietnam National Survey on Violence Against Women reported that young women aged 20-24 experienced high rates of sexual violence, with 7.4% experiencing it in the past 12 months and 15.2% over their lifetime (MOLISA, 2019). A 2023 UN Women study with 1809 female Vietnamese students found that 64% of young people aged 18-35 had experienced dating violence, comparable to national research on women's IPV experiences.

### **Prevalence of dating violence among university students**

DV is a serious issue affecting approximately 20%–30% of college students in the United States (Brewer et al., 2018; Wood et al., 2020). Data from a nationally representative sample of 85,071 U.S. college students showed that 20% had experienced at least one form of IPV, including emotional, physical, sexual violence, or stalking (Brewer et al., 2018).

Regarding physical violence, Gover et al. (2008) found that 29% of participants at two U.S. universities had perpetrated physical violence against an intimate partner while 20% reported being victims. Comparable rates of emotional violence were observed by Gidycz et al. (2007), who found that approximately 25% of 425 male students perpetrated moderate verbal aggression and 60% perpetrated physical aggression towards their dating partners. Similarly, Gover et al. (2008) reported that approximately 54% of students had experienced psychological abuse within the previous 12 months, with 52% being victims of such abuse. In terms of sexual violence, Bhochhibhoya et al. (2019) found that 35% of 361 college students had been sexually abused by their dating partner at least once, while Gidycz et al. (2007) reported that 17% of participants had perpetrated some form of sexual abuse against intimate partners. Given the stigma associated with sexual violence, it is likely that participants underreported their behavior. Additionally, data from the CDC's 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey indicated that, among U.S. high school students who reported dating during the 12 months before the survey, female students experienced higher rates of physical and sexual dating violence than male students.

In Vietnam, although domestic violence is a well-researched topic, studies specifically focusing on dating violence are limited. Nevertheless, these studies indicate that acts of dating violence are quite common. Nguyen Thi Huong (2014) reported a relatively high rate of students experiencing violence, with mental abuse being the most prevalent, followed by physical abuse. Sexual and economic violence demonstrated lower rates of occurrence. Students living with a partner or in a dormitory or boarding house were at greater risk of experiencing physical, mental, and sexual violence compared to those living with parents, siblings, or friends (Nguyen Thi Huong, 2014). A 2016 study by the Y. Change group surveyed 569 girls aged 18-30 and found that 64% had experienced at least one of six types of violence by their lover. Nearly 59% reported mental abuse, 23% experienced online harassment and violence, and 24% were victims of harassment and stalking after breaking up (Y. Change, 2016).

Recent research indicates that dating violence among young people is increasingly common. Survey results show that young people are quite aware of dating violence, with 94.1% recognizing sexual coercion, 93.1% recognizing physical violence, 88.4% recognizing threats, and 85.5% recognizing verbal abuse. Among respondents, 23% admitted to throwing objects at a partner, and 19% reported breaking or destroying things their partner liked, which is classified as object-related violence. This form of violence occurs more frequently than physical violence (Nguyen Khanh Huyen et al., 2022). In this study, 12.3% of young people admitted to forcing their partner to engage in unwanted sexual activity, and 12.7% reported experiencing technology-related violence. Emotional violence was reported by 22% to 33% of young people, economic and relationship violence by 20% to nearly 50%, and sexual and physical violence by 20% to 30%. Women were the group least likely to commit acts of violence, while men often reported being slandered, having their relationships controlled, and being made jealous. Notably, over 90% of respondents believed that verbal aggression during anger was harmless, and 26% felt that retaliation was necessary for respect (Nguyen Khanh Huyen et al., 2022).

More recent research by UN Women in 2023 involving 1,809 students and 350 staff and lecturers from three universities—Hanoi University of Education, Hong Duc University, and Thai Nguyen University of Education—revealed that 51.8% of students and 30.2% of staff and lecturers had experienced sexual harassment during a school year. The most common forms of harassment included verbal sexual harassment, such as flirting, making sexually suggestive comments or jokes, and making others feel uncomfortable. The survey highlighted that 64% of young people aged 18 to 35 had experienced dating violence (UN Women, 2023).

Rates of dating violence are significantly higher among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth than among non-LGBT youth. While 29% of heterosexual youth surveyed reported experiencing physical violence by an intimate partner, 42.8% of LGBT youth reported the same. The rate of sexual victimization among LGBT individuals was 23.2%, nearly double that of heterosexual youth, with 12.3% reporting sexual coercion. Additionally, students who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ) or those unsure of their gender identity experienced higher rates of physical and sexual dating violence compared to their heterosexual peers (CDC, 2021). Rates of intimate violence among LGB college students are as high as 50%, and nine times greater among transgender students compared to their cisgender peers.

The issue of violence and dating violence against LGBT groups is also gaining attention from researchers. A study by Luong The Huy and his team in 2016 found that due to non-conformity with traditional gender norms, LGBTIQ+ students faced high rates of violence, harassment, punishment, discrimination, and exclusion at school, higher than other student groups (Luong The Huy et al., 2016). Similarly, research by the Hai Dang Community Support Center found that schools were the most common locations for gender-based violence (SGBV). Over 60% of psychological violence victims reported experiencing it at school, followed by 59.1% at home. Schools were also recorded as the place where the most physical violence incidents occurred (65%). More than 36% of sexual violence victims reported experiencing violence at school, with friends/classmates being the most common perpetrators (Hai Dang Community Support Center, 2023).

### **Risk factors for university dating violence victimization**

The causes of dating violence (DV) are complex and multifaceted, encompassing various risk factors including individual characteristics (such as substance use, high-risk sexual behavior,

personality traits, and attitudes), family-related factors (such as a history of violence or child abuse), and other peer and social risk factors (including the type of couple relationship and sports team membership) (Duval et al., 2018). In Vietnam, research by Ychange did not specifically address the causes of dating violence. However, reviews of other studies suggest that the causes of violence are associated with ideological factors, gender stereotypes, and societal belief systems (Nguyen Thi Hieu et al., 2010).

### ***1. Individual risk factors***

Substance use is a significant risk factor for dating violence, affecting both perpetrators and victims (Duval et al., 2018). This is corroborated by research on male perpetrators of dating violence (Malhi, 2020) and studies on young women at high risk of dating violence (Joly, 2016). University students' substance use is one of the most common correlates of college dating violence experiences (Baker & Stith, 2008; Shorey et al., 2011). Shorey et al. (2015) found that alcohol use was significantly associated with all forms of violence (physical, psychological, and sexual), while illicit drug use was associated with an increased risk of physical and psychological victimization (Duval et al., 2018).

Gender and self-control are personal characteristics closely linked to dating violence. Women are at a higher risk of being victims of dating violence than men, with female students being 2.2 times more likely to be victimized than males (Crane & Eckhardt, 2013). They also represent the most severely and frequently traumatized group of victims (Taquette et al., 2019). Male perpetrators of dating violence often operate under beliefs and attitudes about masculine norms, traditional gender roles, and male privilege (Malhi et al., 2020). These beliefs lead to power imbalances in relationships and negative health outcomes such as unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, mental health issues, and the perpetuation of gender inequality (Nydegger et al., 2017; Russell et al., 2014). Adolescent males who endorse unequal gender norms are at a higher risk of committing dating violence, including date rape, compared to those who do not hold these beliefs (Nydegger et al., 2017).

The ability to control emotions is a protective factor against dating violence. Students with psychological states such as anger, anxiety, and sadness are at a higher risk of violence and are more likely to become victims. Conversely, students with higher self-confidence are less likely to experience physical violence than those with low self-esteem (Duval et al., 2018).

### ***2. Family risk factors***

Experiencing or witnessing violence in the family is associated with being a victim or perpetrator of dating violence among students (Maldonado et al., 2014). In a survey conducted at a large public university, both men and women who experienced violence as children were more likely to experience or perpetrate some form of dating violence later in life. Female students who witnessed violence between parents were 72% more likely to experience physical violence than those who did not witness such violence (Gover et al., 2008).

### ***3. Peer and social risk factors***

College students are particularly vulnerable to sexual and dating violence due to their involvement in campus social activities, such as parties, "hookup" culture, and initiation into the Greek system (Jozkowski & Wiersma-Mosley, 2017). The Greek system, in particular, fosters an environment where sexual and dating violence are common, with fraternity members more likely to engage in acts of sexual violence than non-members (Loh et al., 2005). Fraternity members also tend to endorse traditional gender norms, hostility toward women, and see themselves as less culpable, creating an

environment conducive to sexual and dating violence (Canan et al., 2018; Seabrook & Ward, 2019; Seabrook et al., 2018). A survey at the University of Western Sweden showed that female students involved in the Greek system had 5.74 times more experiences of rape than those not involved in the system (Franklin, 2010).

Gender-based violence, including early marriage, sexual abuse, unemployment, and inheritance issues, is less recognized in certain cultures, leading to less frequent reporting of dating violence. Racism, poverty, and sexism are significant gaps in the literature on dating violence. The World Conference against Racism in Durban in 2001 emphasized the importance of addressing sexism, racism, homophobia, and class exploitation in the context of globalization. Alleyne-Green et al. observed that dating violence is more likely among girls of color. Higher rates of dating violence among non-whites were also found by Earnest et al. in a study of 75,590 students. Studies have shown that dating violence is more prevalent in poverty settings, particularly among African Americans and sexual minority couples. Higher rates of violence are reported among same-sex couples, with heterosexism and homophobia strongly associated with dating violence (Taquette et al., 2019). A study of 10,500 students from Massachusetts found higher rates of dating violence among sexual minority students (Martin-Storey, 2015). Bisexual youth are particularly vulnerable, with bisexual men at risk for all types of dating violence and bisexual women at greater risk for sexual violence compared to heterosexual youth (Freedner et al., 2002; Messinger, 2011). Research in Mexico showed that most gay men experienced dating violence (83.8%), though only 29.5% recognized these acts as violence (Alderete-Aguilar et al., 2021). A study of 50 gay students found higher prevalence of psychological, physical, and sexual violence among gay men than lesbians (Robles & Toribio, 2017).

#### ***4. Context in Vietnam***

In Vietnam, the primary causes of dating violence include gender inequality and prejudice, exposure to parental violence, poor emotional control, substance use, and economic difficulties. Many young people do not recognize or understand the nature and consequences of dating violence, often justifying it as part of being in love. This lack of awareness leads to situations where individuals do not realize they are being abused or inflicting abuse on their partners (Nguyen Khanh Huyen et al., 2022).

### **Consequences of dating violence among university students**

The impact of dating violence on university students is profound and multifaceted, encompassing physical, psychological, and academic dimensions. Victims often experience a range of immediate and long-term effects, which can significantly disrupt their lives and academic pursuits.

#### ***1. Physical and psychological consequences***

Victims of dating violence frequently face physical injuries such as sprains, bruises, and black eyes, as well as chronic conditions like back or neck pain, frequent headaches, and sexually transmitted diseases (Amar & Gennaro, 2005; Coker, 2000). Additionally, dating violence is associated with severe psychological impacts, including an increased risk of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Choi et al., 2017). According to a Vietnamese study by Ychange, 21% of respondents reported physical or mental injuries due to dating violence, and over 6% expressed suicidal ideation (Ychange, 2016).

The negative effects on the physical, mental, and emotional health of women experiencing dating violence are particularly pronounced in a university setting, where the unique conditions can exacerbate these issues. Consequences include substance abuse, eating and sleep disorders, lack of physical activity, low self-esteem, PTSD, smoking, unsafe sex, self-harm, and suicide. Moreover, the impact extends beyond the individual to the broader campus community, potentially fostering an environment where violence is perceived as tolerated, if not adequately addressed (World Health Organization, 2019).

## ***2. Academic Consequences***

Dating violence can severely affect academic performance. Brewer et al. (2018) found that students who experienced stalking or emotional, physical, or sexual abuse by an intimate partner were at increased risk of poor academic performance. This finding is consistent with Brewer and Thomas (2019), who reported that abuse and subsequent physical or mental health symptoms negatively affected students' academic achievements. Additionally, Wood et al. (2020) identified that physical, psychological, sexual, and cyber abuse were significant predictors of lower academic performance.

## ***3. Institutional impact***

The repercussions of dating violence extend to the university institution itself. Inadequate prevention and response measures can perpetuate the problem, putting other students at risk and fostering a culture of tolerance towards violence. The lack of appropriate action not only endangers victims but also contributes to an environment where perpetrators may feel their behavior is acceptable, further increasing the likelihood of violence against women (World Health Organization, 2019).

In conclusion, dating violence among university students leads to significant adverse effects on physical health, mental well-being, and academic performance. Addressing this issue requires comprehensive prevention and intervention strategies to ensure the safety and well-being of all students, and to maintain a supportive and conducive academic environment.

## **University dating violence prevention policies**

While substantial research has been conducted on sexual violence prevention at universities, dating violence has received comparatively less attention. Studies specifically examining university policies to prevent dating violence are particularly scarce, focusing minimally on the university student population (Wong et al., 2021).

The introduction of the Campus SaVE Act in 2013 in the United States marked a significant step in addressing this gap. The Act mandated that all postsecondary institutions implement prevention education policies targeting sexual assault, domestic violence, and dating violence, among others. This legislation has led to increased prevention programming across campuses and spurred research into the effectiveness of these initiatives. Several meta-analytic reviews have examined sexual violence prevention policies (Jouriles et al., 2018; Katz & Moore, 2013; Kettrey & Marx, 2019); however, reviews specifically focusing on the prevention of dating violence among university students remain absent. The current study aims to synthesize evidence on the effectiveness of college dating violence prevention policies.

### ***1. Prevention and intervention strategies***

Strategies addressing sexual and dating violence on university campuses typically fall into two categories: (1) general awareness/education and (2) bystander education.

#### *General education/awareness programs:*

These programs aim to increase knowledge and change attitudes by educating students about the various forms of violence, strategies for building healthy relationships, and countering harmful gender role stereotypes (DeGue et al., 2014). They often utilize small group discussions, classroom seminars, or large group presentations, incorporating interactive activities such as role plays and interactive videos. These sessions may be conducted as single or multiple sessions and are usually facilitated by trained program staff or student volunteers (Amar et al., 2015; Fenton & Mott, 2018).

#### *Bystander education programs:*

These programs encourage students to intervene when they witness signs of sexual or dating violence. They train participants to recognize warning signs and provide safe, appropriate ways to intervene. Bystander programs have been shown to improve bystander skills and attitudes towards intervening in potential violence situations (Katz & Moore, 2013; Kettrey & Marx, 2019, 2020).

Both approaches typically involve some form of interactive engagement, though the extent varies. Large lecture-format programs tend to be more didactic with less interaction, whereas smaller group sessions encourage more participant engagement (Borsky et al., 2018; Reid et al., 2013). Additionally, some programs are delivered entirely online or through a combination of online and offline methods.

### ***2. Effectiveness of prevention policies***

Comprehensive evaluations of dating violence prevention policies reveal that dating violence involves distinct behaviors and experiences compared to other forms of sexual violence. Thus, there is a critical need for research focusing specifically on dating violence prevention. Evidence suggests that prevention policies are effective in improving knowledge, attitudes towards dating and sexual violence, and bystander intervention skills. However, more activities are required to change actual bystander behaviors (Katz & Moore, 2013).

### ***3. Context in Vietnam***

In Vietnam, policies to prevent school violence exist primarily for primary to high school levels but not for universities. The Ministry of Education and Training's 2018 Work Program and Decision No. 5886/QD-BGDDT, issued on December 28, 2017, emphasize the prevention of school violence within preschool, general education, and continuing education contexts for the 2017-2021 period. These policies direct educational departments to survey, assess, and develop plans to prevent school violence, ensuring students' privacy rights. However, there are no specific policies targeting the prevention or intervention of dating violence among university students.

#### *Suggested activities and policies to prevent dating violence in Vietnam*

Research conducted by To Thu Ha and colleagues reveals strong support among students for training programs on safety in romantic relationships, with 90% of respondents considering it necessary, 6% agreeing, and only 4% deeming it unnecessary. Students expressed enthusiasm for participating in

these programs and a willingness to share knowledge about safe relationship practices (To Thu Ha et al., 2020).

Hoang Thi Bich Hong's research proposes several measures to guide students toward healthy relationship values. These measures include:

- Equipping students with basic knowledge about love: Students should be taught to understand the nature of love, how to nurture it, and its significant role in life.
- Orienting students to a proper value system: This involves guiding students towards appreciating long-term values over immediate gratification and avoiding materialistic and indulgent lifestyles.
- Educating students on the consequences of misconceptions about love: Students need to understand that incorrect or one-sided views on love can lead to negative consequences and personal regret.
- Raising awareness of personal responsibilities: Students should be made aware of their responsibilities towards themselves, their families, and society, encouraging them to strive in their studies and personal development (Hoang Thi Bich Hong, 2013).

#### *School-Based interventions*

School-based interventions can promote respectful relationships among adolescents through activities such as counseling, discussions, and sharing sessions aimed at fostering equality and changing attitudes related to dating. Universities have a responsibility to ensure the safety of female students and help them lead lives free from violence (WHO, 2019).

#### *Proposed solutions for enhancing female students' safety:*

- Curriculum Integration: Incorporate content on preventing sexual harassment into both curricular and extracurricular activities, utilizing union, association, and club activities. Schools should employ specialized staff skilled in supporting students facing violence (Le Thi Lam, 2019).
- Improving social services: Enhance the quality and diversity of social services for victims of sexual harassment, offering continuous and comprehensive support systems that include psychological counseling, legal assistance, health services, livelihood support, and communication services.
- Training support networks: Develop a network of experts and staff with specialized skills to support victims of sexual harassment.

#### *Broader measures*

To further support women and prevent future violence, it is crucial to build vocational, financial, and life skills for women, addressing systemic barriers to social, political, and economic integration such as unequal inheritance systems and property ownership rights. Establishing strong social networks and internal resources for women is also essential. Ensuring the provision of essential services, including law enforcement, legal assistance, health care, and social services, is necessary to meet the needs of women experiencing violence. These services should include care and support for victims, measures to prevent the recurrence of violence, psychological support, and initiatives to reduce substance abuse and improve mental health.

Creating safe environments in schools, workplaces, and public spaces where women and girls are free from fear, harassment, and other forms of violence is a fundamental goal (WHO, 2019).

In summary, while significant progress has been made in addressing sexual violence on university campuses, the prevention of dating violence remains under-researched and under-implemented. Effective prevention policies need to incorporate evidence-based techniques to change behavior and create a safer campus environment for all students.

## Discussion

The phenomenon of dating violence (DV) among university students is an intricate and multifaceted issue that demands thorough exploration and intervention. This discussion aims to contextualize the findings presented in the literature review, elucidate the implications for policy and practice, and suggest directions for future research.

### ***Prevalence and contextual factors***

The prevalence rates of DV among university students highlight a significant public health concern. The studies reviewed indicate that DV affects a substantial proportion of the student population across various cultural contexts. In the United States, figures range from 20% to over 60%, depending on the type of violence and the specific population studied. In Vietnam, the prevalence is similarly alarming, with studies indicating that up to 64% of young women have experienced some form of DV.

Several contextual factors contribute to these high prevalence rates. The university environment, characterized by newfound independence, exploration of intimate relationships, and often increased substance use, creates a setting where DV can thrive. The high rates of DV among LGBTQ+ students and those uncertain of their gender identity underscore the additional vulnerabilities faced by these groups, often due to societal stigma and lack of support systems.

### ***Risk factors and consequences***

The risk factors for DV among university students are multifactorial, involving individual, familial, and societal elements. Substance use, particularly alcohol and drugs, emerges as a significant risk factor, exacerbating the likelihood of both perpetration and victimization. Gender norms and traditional masculine ideologies further perpetuate DV, as evidenced by the higher victimization rates among female students and higher perpetration rates among males.

Family history of violence also plays a crucial role, suggesting that early exposure to violence normalizes aggressive behaviors in intimate relationships. Peer and social influences, including participation in campus social activities and fraternity or sorority life, can increase exposure to high-risk situations, thereby elevating the likelihood of DV.

The consequences of DV are profound and far-reaching, affecting victims' physical, psychological, and academic well-being. The physical injuries and chronic health issues reported are just the tip of the iceberg, with many victims suffering from long-term psychological impacts such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The academic implications, including decreased performance and increased dropout rates, further highlight the pervasive impact of DV on students' lives.

### ***Implications for policy and practice***

The findings underscore the urgent need for comprehensive policies and intervention programs to address DV among university students. Prevention programs should be multifaceted, targeting the individual, relational, and community levels. Educational campaigns that challenge traditional gender norms and promote healthy relationship behaviors are essential. Additionally, universities should implement robust support systems for DV victims, including counseling services, legal assistance, and safe housing options.

Policy interventions should also focus on creating a supportive environment for LGBTQ+ students, who are disproportionately affected by DV. This includes anti-discrimination policies, inclusive campus resources, and training for staff and students on LGBTQ+ issues.

### ***Directions for future research***

While the existing research provides valuable insights, there are several areas that warrant further investigation. Longitudinal studies are needed to understand the long-term impacts of DV on university students and the effectiveness of various intervention strategies. Additionally, research should explore the specific experiences and needs of LGBTQ+ students and other marginalized groups, ensuring that interventions are inclusive and equitable.

In Vietnam, where research on DV is still emerging, there is a need for more comprehensive studies that explore the cultural nuances of DV and the effectiveness of locally adapted prevention and intervention programs. Comparative studies between different cultural contexts can also provide deeper insights into the universal and context-specific factors contributing to DV.

## **Recommendations for dating violence policy's prevention in Vietnamese universities**

Based on the comprehensive literature review on dating violence (DV) among university students, the following recommendations are proposed to address and mitigate the prevalence and impact of DV in university institutions in Vietnam:

### *1. Implement comprehensive prevention programs*

Universities should develop and implement comprehensive prevention programs that target the root causes of DV. These programs should include:

- Educational workshops and campaigns: Increase awareness about DV, its signs, and consequences. Workshops should promote healthy relationships, challenge traditional gender norms, and encourage respectful behavior.
- Bystander intervention training: Equip students with the skills to recognize and safely intervene in potential DV situations.
- Substance abuse education: Highlight the link between substance use and DV, and provide resources for substance abuse prevention and treatment.

### *2. Enhance support services for victims*

To effectively support DV victims, universities should implement the following:

- Counseling and mental health services: Provide accessible, confidential counseling services for DV victims. Train counselors to handle DV cases with sensitivity and expertise.

- Legal assistance: Offer legal support to help victims understand their rights and navigate the legal system.

- Safe Housing Options: Connect and establish safe housing for students who need to escape abusive relationships.

### 3. Develop and enforce strong policies

Universities should establish clear policies regarding DV, including:

- Zero tolerance Policies: Implement strict policies against DV, with clear consequences for perpetrators.

- Reporting mechanisms: Create anonymous and easy-to-access reporting systems for DV incidents. Ensure that students feel safe and supported when reporting.

- Inclusive Policies for LGBTQ+ Students: Develop policies that specifically address the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ students. Provide training for staff and students on LGBTQ+ issues and ensure that campus resources are inclusive.

### 4. Promote a supportive campus environment

A supportive campus environment is crucial for preventing DV and supporting victims. Universities should:

- Peer support programs: Establish peer support groups where students can share their experiences and offer mutual support.

- Faculty and staff training: Regularly train faculty and staff to recognize DV signs and respond appropriately. Encourage them to create a supportive atmosphere in their interactions with students.

- Community partnerships: Collaborate with local organizations that specialize in DV to provide additional resources and support for students.

### 5. Conduct ongoing research and evaluation

To continuously improve DV prevention and intervention efforts, universities should utilize:

- Longitudinal studies: Conduct longitudinal research to track the long-term effects of DV on students and the effectiveness of intervention programs.

- Program evaluation: Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of DV prevention and support programs. Use feedback from students and staff to make data-driven improvements.

- Inclusive research: Ensure that research includes diverse student populations, particularly focusing on the experiences of marginalized groups such as LGBTQ+ students.

### 6. Cultural sensitivity and adaptation

Particularly in countries like Vietnam, where DV research is emerging, it is essential to:

- Adapt programs to local contexts: Develop prevention and intervention programs that are culturally sensitive and relevant to the local context.

- Engage local communities: Work with local communities to understand cultural attitudes towards DV and to develop community-supported initiatives.

## Conclusion

Dating violence among university students is a critical issue with significant implications for public health, safety, and academic success. The high prevalence rates and severe consequences underscore the need for targeted interventions and supportive policies. By addressing the multifaceted risk factors and promoting a culture of respect and support, universities can play a pivotal role in mitigating the impact of DV and fostering a safer, more inclusive environment for all students.

Although limited, research in Vietnam indicates high prevalence rates, necessitating comprehensive studies and effective prevention policies. Future research should continue to build on the existing knowledge, ensuring that interventions are evidence-based and culturally sensitive, ultimately contributing to the well-being and success of university students worldwide.

Addressing dating violence among university students requires a multifaceted and culturally sensitive approach. By implementing comprehensive prevention programs, enhancing support services, developing strong policies, promoting a supportive campus environment, conducting ongoing research, and adapting to local cultural contexts, universities can significantly reduce the prevalence and impact of DV. These recommendations aim to foster safer, more inclusive university environments where all students can thrive free from the threat of violence.

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