The Roles of Men in the Dating Violence Phenomenon

Vivin Septiani Jatmiko1*, Diyah Ayu Amalia Avina2
1,2Universitas Brawijaya
*Email korespondensi: d_avina@ub.ac.id

Abstract: This research focuses on the roles of men discussed in the subject research papers on dating violence. Dating violence is one of the phenomena that has been drawing attention to various researchers since 1990s due to the high percentage of dating violence cases in various countries and the negative effects it has caused to the involved parties. The selected research articles were analysed using systematic literature review (SLR) by using PRISMA Diagram. According to the analysis, a discourse may have implications in forming power, which, in turn, may lead to blinding knowledge. This research finds that the dominant discourse exists in most of the selected research papers, where men being positioned as offenders in dating violence incidents. The emergence of the dominant discourse is attributed by the presence of controls on the institutions (publishers). The influence of controls can be seen in the positioning of men portrayed as masculine, dominant, and rough by the majority of the journal editorial boards and authors; such a framing may form the dominant course in that particular type of research. Furthermore, the massive usage of quantitative research in the dating violence topic is seen as further forming a single fact. In essence, the dominant course results in the silent majority, a condition where male victims are reluctant to seek help from police authority or their social community on their violence cases.

Key words: Dating Violence; Gender Construction; Men;

INTRODUCTION

Men’s violence and gender construction have reciprocal relationship and kinship; violent actions committed by men directly or indirectly are the direct effects of masculinity hegemony. Barker (2004) argued that masculinity hegemonic forces men to solve their problems independently. Pressures and expectations of being a ‘man’ in a society induce men to commit violent actions as forms of self-healing and defence (Real, 1998).

To add more, masculinity hegemony also has externalities on men victims. Hoyle and Young argued that male victims of raping continue to be marginalised in the 21st century (in Javaid, 2014). One reflection of the marginalized male victims is their reluctance to report to police authority of violences they have experienced (Cook-Daniels, 2009). He further argued that the fear of being disbelieved, shame, refusal to be witness in the trial, and the fear of being considered as a gay are some of the reasons why male victims tend to be silent or not. As a form of power, hegemony has been heavily influenced by any form of communication, from interpersonal, family, to media communication messages (Ibrahim, 2005).

To be exact, Masculinity hegemony formed in every aspect of social life in many society in the world. Boys treated and formed to be independent, strong, introduced to outdoor activities, and become a “Man” since their early age (Barker, 2004). Media also consistently describe male as the dominant, have to control themselves as well as other people, and aggressive (Media Smarts, n.d.). And one of the powerful media is science. Ahl (2004) held that science is a social construction operating through persuasion and argumentation. Science is constructed by various forms of scholarly communication avenues; one of them is through scientific research papers (Sawant, 2012). In fact, that particular social construction precipitates innocent knowledge; and scholarly journals are a form of knowledge-generating texts.
Meanwhile, Scholarly journals play a critical role among scholars. A research paper explained that approximately 99.5% researchers in the UK believe that scientific journal articles function as the main sources of information (Research Information Network, 2006). Scholarly journal articles are also used by many organisations in the world to gauge the significance of the climate of an issue that, in turn, will be used as reference to formulate actions or policies to deal with the issue. One such example is the report produced by the World Health Organization on violence against women in 2013. This shows how important scholarly journals play roles in creating how society thinks about certain issues, including masculinity. One of the reasons people believe in scholarly journals is because of its peer-review systems to determine its validity, originality, and significance of a journal draft (Elsevier, 2016), even though Young (2009) argued that reviewers have a high tendency to have prejudice to the draft journals that argue their perspectives and theories. Also Huff (in Ahl, 2004) give suggestions to go to famous journals or articles as references, go to topics that are interesting and have a broader audience as some ways to write article journals. These reasons which make scholarly journals are socially constructed and not innocent, but give significance impacts to the public.

Academic journal articles discuss a number of issues and topics including issues about violence, gender, and masculinity. Lewis and Fremouw (2001) explained that issues related to violence are frequently quoted by researchers and practitioners. Violence can take in any form, type, or context; one of them is dating violence. They also explain that studies about violence mostly focused on domestic violence and violence on children and not much talking about dating violence.

The dating violence phenomenon has been drawing the attention of researchers since the 1980s, earmarked by the growing research on aggression and violence in dating (Jackson, 1999). Sabina, Cuevas, and Cotignola-Pickens (2016) discussed that a great deal of researchers agree that violence needs public attention due to the significantly high occurrence rate of dating violence in various countries and the externalities it has caused.

In relation to the scholarly journal articles that had been done on dating violence, there are mixed results with regard to the roles of men and women. On the one hand, a number of research found that men are portrayed as playing a masculine role articles (Jackson, 1999; Makepeace, 1988; Machado, Cariade, & Martins, in Pradubmook-Sherer&Sherer, 2011; Langhinrichsen-Rohling & Niedig, in Pradubmook-Sherer & Sherer, 2011; Funk, et al., in Pradubmook-Sherer & Sherer, 2011). On the other hand, other research findings showed that men are no longer framed as monopolising the masculinity role (Follette, 1992,in Lewis & Fremouw, 2001; O’Keefe, et al., 1986, in Lewis & Fremouw, 2001; Riggs, et al.,1990, in Lewis & Fremouw, 2001; Sabina, Cuevas, & Cotignola-Pickens, 2016; Arias, et al.,1987, in Lewis & Fremouw, 2001; Clark, et al.,1994, in Lewis & Fremouw, 2001; Foshee, 1996, in Lewis & Fremouw, 2001; Lane & Gwartney-Gibbs, 1985, in Lewis & Fremouw, 2001; Magdol, et al., 1997, in Lewis & Fremouw, 2001; Marshall & Rose, 1987, in Lewis & Fremouw, 2001; Chan, et al., 2008).

Therefore, this research employs discourse analysis on scholarly articles on dating violence to better understand how the existing scholarly journals discussed dating violence in gender and masculinity perspective. Foucault (1972) defined power not as a form of ‘ownership’ by an individual, rather it is practiced in a particular scope with various interrelated positions in strategic manners (in Graham, 2005). He further posited that that knowledge is one of the means to construct and form power. Foucault’s discourse analysis is chosen on the basis of the argument founded by Foucault stating that a discourse has a connection with power as it can form blindly justified knowledge considered as a truth (in Ahl, 2003).
This research aims to disclose the power practices that spread their power manifestations through knowledge and science. The criteria of samples are based on research by Lewis and Fremouw (2001) in their literature review about dating violence that suggest on future research which separate and distinguish the gender and roles as victims and perpetrators. The purpose of this research is giving insights on social constructions over men’s role in the phenomena are of importance, especially either to organisations and practitioners handling the case as reference for setting the appropriate policy and solutions towards involved men in dating violence. The limitation of this research is only examines research articles that are men-focused research articles in the dating violence phenomenon.

RESEARCH METHODS

Foucault explained that the processing of discourse is always controlled, selected, organised, and distributed using specific procedures (Ahl, 2004). He further held that this processing is intervened by internal parties, namely authors; objects, methodologies, research types, claimed reasoned propositions, rules of regulation, and definitions on the employed techniques and tools (Ahl, 2004);

In this research, there are 31 academic papers that are chosen in this research. This paper adopts or uses the systematic literature review (SLR) guidance by using the PRISMA diagram (Mother, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman, & The PRISMA Group, 2009), for collecting data. The flows of PRISMA diagrams consist of 4 key elements which are identification, screening, deeper screening to find the eligibility, and the final data included in studies

Identification. At first, ScienceDirect, ProQuest Central, and PubMed are chosen to search and collect the samples of research texts. Those databases chosen to find the samples because they are known as the major, big, and best databases are used by major university such as Harvard University, University of Michigan Library, University of Wisconsin-Madison, etc. Finding the samples had been done in May until June 2020. Those samples that included in this research are research texts that were published from 1980 until early 2020 which are based on research from Jason (1999) explaining that research about dating violence start growing on those period. Advance search are used on the databases while finding the samples in order to find the research texts more detail and specific. The main keywords that had been used in this research are “Dating Violence” and “Male”. While the alternative keywords are “Men” and “Courtship Violence”. All the keywords are combined to draw all the relatable research texts.

There were 299 studies found in Science Direct, 428 studies found in Pubmed. While initially 606 studies were found in ProQuest Central, but only 536 showed up after the ‘Scholarly Journals’ category clicked. There are a total 1,263 studies found in the first identification process. After the first step, the screening, deeper screening to find the eligibility, and the final data included in studies were done to exclude the unrelatable studies and find the final samples. Chart 1 snapshots the data collection and selection process flowchart as well as the exclusion criteria.
The selected research articles are analysed using the micro analysis on parts of the article, encompassing introduction, hypothesis, sample or informants used, and finding parts of the research. Further, this research analyses the elements of the reviewed research articles, inter alia research focus; topic discussed in the research; reasons of choosing the topic, as well as how men are positioned and what roles they play in the said research papers; the crafted hypothesis(s) of the research; places of the research, sample selections or informants based on race, age, and education; and, the findings and conclusion of the research papers. This research also reviews the authors of the research articles, academic journal articles publishing the studies, and publishers of the papers to see the internal regulations related to the writing policy and publishing practices.

Based on Foucault’s explanations on discourse, this research also attempts to interprets those explanations and to understand the following elements:

1. Internal parties and internal rules, namely the authors, the boards of editors of the reviewed journal articles, and the publishers of the articles;

2. The demographic characteristics of the research papers, comprising the research type, focus of the research, the publication date of the research, and sample(s) used in the research;

**Chart 1. The Flowchart of the Selection Process of the Research Data**

Source: Data were compiled and tabulated by the author, 2020
3. The tone (writing style) and meaning (epistemologically) of the research texts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Findings of the research

Scholarly journals, as has been said in the introduction of this paper, are socially constructed that created discourse on certain issues. Therefore, we need to look at how articles produced and who produce the articles (Ahl, 2004) as a part of disclose the discourse. The first part of the research is about the internal parties and internal rules of the articles that has been released. Authors that wrote about men in dating violence mostly are from USA which are 63 authors, 10 authors are from Canada, and 2 authors are from Spain.

These journals are published on 18 different places and published by different publishers as well. There are two journals, *Family Relations* and *Sociological Inquiry* that published by Wiley-Blackwell. There also SAGE Publications that published journals such as *Journal Interpersonal Violence* (JIV), *Violence against Women* (VW), and *American Journal of Men’s Health* (AJMH); Libra Publishers that published *Adolescent; American Public Health Association* (APHA) that published *American Journal of Public Health* (AJPH); and Springer Verlag/ Springer Publishing that published *Violence and Victims*. Those 5 publishers are based on USA. While there are 3 other publishers that are come from outside USA, such as Springer Science+Business Media based on Germany that published *Cognitive Therapy and Research* (TSR), *Journal of Urban Health* (JUH), and *Journal Youth and Adolescence* (JYH); Elsevier based on Netherlands that published *Journal Adolescent Health* (JAH), *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* (AJPM), *Journal of Contextual Behavioral Science* (JCBS), and *Addictive Behaviors* (AB); and Taylor&Francis based on UK that published *AIDS Care* and *Journal of Human Behavior*. Both of the publishers that based on USA or outside USA are dominated by researchers from USA as the editors.

The second part of research focused on the demographic characteristics of the research papers, comprising the research type, focus of the research, the publication date of the research, and sample(s) used in the research. This part of research to understand better about what kind of research had been done, where the research takes place, who are the samples, and when the research happened. There are 28 quantitative research or research that has positivistic paradigm, 2 qualitative research papers, and 1 literature review paper that were analysed in this study. The US dominated the research in this area (28 research papers), 2 research activities in Canada, and 1 in Spain. Thirteen research journals chose university students as samples; 6 research activities chose high school students as samples; and 12 research projects selected male samples from other educational backgrounds (high school students, secondary school or compulsory students, or ordinary teenagers). Based on the sampling used, 8 research activities only took male samples that have heterosexual orientation, 2 others chose male samples being partially heterosexual, and the other 21 research projects did not disclose the sexual orientation of their respective samples.

The third part of the research is about the tone (writing style) and meaning (epistemologically) of the research texts. There are three categories on the writing style and focused of research texts that talks on men in dating violence, which are men as perpetrator, men as victims and, men as both.

**The first category**

Men are positionned as offenders in the research papers. This men’s role is the main topic or focus of the research in a great deal of the reviewed research papers (26 papers). Table 4 contains the list of research texts that focused on men as perpetrators.
There are a number of writing styles used to stress men in this particular role. The most precise writing style is to portray men as offenders and women as victims without considering possibilities of other roles that were experienced or done by men and women. Another writing style used to place or imply men as ‘the real’ offenders is by explaining that female offenders are considered less dangerous compared with male offenders or explanations on violence crimes are for defence purposes when committed by women. Barnes, Greenwood, and Sommer (1991), for example, quoted the articles of O’leary et al. and Flynn as favourable justification for female offenders.

“In this study the focus is on the male perpetrators of courtship violence. Although recent research has shown that female violence against men is also quite common (O’Leary et al., 1989), this violence is often in response to male violence and is generally less dangerous (Flynn, 1990)” (h. 37).

In addition, the common tone used by researchers to justify their argument that men are the perpetrators of courtship violence is by accentuating the overwhelming examples or severity women experiencing dating violence have undergone. The tone, hence, implies that men are the sole guilty party in any dating violence occurrence.

However, there are a number of research papers discussing that men do not commit the violence; instead, the violence is attributed to the victims per se or women perpetrators. The finding implies that violence is not the nature of men as not all men are violent. Unfortunately, in a string of other papers, the previous assumption is deemed weak as the authors of the papers did not substantiate in details why men should not be considered as guilty; hence, the argument is only considered as a comparison or flimsy rather than as a grounded justification.

The second factor is the research focus or the positioning of men as the perpetrators. This relates to the social factors and negative effects of the masculinity hegemony or public expectations affecting men to commit such violence. Research papers taking into account the masculinity hegemony factor in them are considered relatively neutral or even fair as they do not generalise that the offenders of dating violence are men; even, some of the papers admit that either women or men do not commit such violence.

The tone used in those papers is by underlining the significant number of female victims, the negative effect the female victims had received, or by directly discussing factors triggering to violences done by men as justifications for the research projects about perpetrators or violences committed by men. Examples of research papers applying such the tone are research papers written by Carr and Van Deusen (2002); Diaz-Aguado and Martinez (2015); Forbes, et al. (2006); Lundeberg, et al. (2004); McCauley, et al. (2013); Miller, et al. (2012); Miller, et al. (2013); Reidy, et al. (2011); Reidy, et al. (2015); and Shorey, et al. (2015).

The second category

Men are considered as victims (Table 5). The research was done in 1998 by Catherine J. Simonellidan Kathleen M. Ingram (1998), and Ryan C. Shorey, JeniimarieFebres, Hope Brasfield, dan Gregory L. Stuart (2012). There are 4 types of papers discussing men as victims. There is similarity in tone when several authors position men as the victims in dating violence. Firstly, they tend to explain that the male victims suffer or experience the same negative effect of dating violence as what the female party do. Secondly, the researchers stress that men experience more violences in several forms compared with their women counterpart. Thirdly, they describe how low is research or attention given towards male victims in dating violence. In addition to that, another tone employed by researchers who view men as victims is by stirring the attention and care of public towards the male victims. Some of them
further argue that the research articles they wrote positioning men as victims should not be seen as discounting or overlooking the male offenders.

The third category

Two roles performed by men in dating violence, as offenders and victims. The research in this category are one research text that was done in 2014 by Desiree Stepteau-Watson, titled “Dating Violence, Young African Amerian Males, and Risk and Protective Factors: A Review of the Literature”. This research explains factors affecting males in perpetrating dating violence, namely family and community, gender construction, violence surrounding their neighbourhood, and their involvements in gangs. However, this research does not discuss male victims specifically, nor does it position men as ‘the real’ offenders, nor generalise men as the only possible perpetrators. Instead, it highlights the existence of male groups who do not carry out such violence and the existence of female offenders.

The Discussion of the research

It can be seen in the previous section that the authors of the discussed research papers incorporated of the dominant discourse into their research papers specifically focusing on men as offenders in dating violence. This research has found that the dominant discourse being prevalent in most of the reviewed research papers, with 26 research papers describing men as the violence offenders, while there are only 4 papers positioning men as victims. In addition, 1 research article discussing two roles of men in dating violence does not describe in detail or in specific about male victims.

The dominant discourse is not only formed by the massive offences done by men, but also supported by the weak justifications in their research. They had a tendency to stress the high rate of violence against women (Reed, et al., 2011; Reidy, et al., 2015; and Shorey, et al., 2015) or the severity of the negative effects the female victims have experienced from dating violence (Reed, et al., 2014; Raj, et al., 2007; Riggs & Caulfield, 1997; and Miller, et al., 2013). That justification seems to eliminate any possibility of women as offenders or men as victim in dating violence. On the other hand, research papers explaining the existence of female offenders discussed that female perpetrators are considered to be less frequent, less dangerous, and less scary, compared with their male counterpart (Barnes, Greenwood, & Sommer, 1991; Shorey, et al., 2014; Carr & VanDeusen, 2002; Eckhardt & Jamison, 2002; Eckhardt, Jamison, & Watts, 2002; Reyes & Foshee, 2013; and Simons, Burt, & Simons, 2008). Some others positioned men as offenders without grounded arguments (DeKeseredy, 1990; Harper, Cercone, & Arias, 2005; Lavoie, et al., 2002; and Shorey, Stuart, McNully, & Moore, 2014). Similar justifications or reasons can also be seen in some research papers acknowledging the factor of masculinity in men’s role in the phenomenon.

Swales explained that the international scientific article authors employ similar rhetoric steps in order to attract their readers’ attention and deliver their messages (in Ahl, 2004). Justifications on the importance of conducting research on the behaviour of men can frequently be seen in the introduction part of research papers. A number of researchers (for example, Constantcontent, n.d.; Hoogenboom & Manske, 2012; Kallestinova, 2011; The University of Melbourne, 2012; UNE, n.d.) held that the introductory part of a research text is an important, vital part, and of a high essence. It is because that it functions as a hook for public or readers, whether to continue or stop reading the text (Constantcontent, n.d.; Kallestinova, 2011); as the first impression (The University of Melbourne, 2012); and to attract the readers’ attention (UNE, n.d.). Therefore, this part is claimed by Hoogenboom and Manske (2012) as a difficult section to prepare and write. Writers must be able to convince their readers that the research they have conducted is worth reading (Hoogenboom & Manske, 2012).
The subject research papers in this research are no difference, in terms of the writing concept of research paper as discussed in the previous paragraphs. Justifications used by the authors, as discussed above, are a rhetoric approach to explain the significance of their research and to attain public attention. To some degree, those papers have been successful in justifying the importance of conducting research on men as offenders; however, on the other end, their research justifications may be seen as promoting taken-for-granted assumptions, namely men as the only possible perpetrators or men as ‘the real’ offenders, which may potentially form a stereotype within public that men are the only responsible characters in dating violence. Those justifications may also conceal or overlook contrast arguments.

The leading example in this context are the amount and negative effects experienced by male victims. Cook-Daniels (2009) argued that such practices (justifications) as ‘blinding biases’, conditions where practitioners focus more on female victims by excluding male victim counterpart. Meanwhile, Pannucci and Wilkins (2010) considered that such justifications as a bias, which has a tendency to lead to prejudice in a statement. They explained that a bias could occur in any phase of research, from planning, data collection, analysis, to publication processes of research.

An important factor in spreading the dominance discourse about men as the dominant offenders is the dominance of the US in journal and research publications. Foucault asserted that the production process of a discourse is always controlled, selected, organised, and distributed using specific procedures (Ahl, 2004). In research paper publication, those control process, selection, and production rules are under the sphere of publishers and the board of editors in each publisher. Before being published to public, a research article will undergo several selection processes sanctioned by publishers. Those steps are the common processes undertaken by any publisher to ensure that articles published be of quality, credible, valid, and free from plagiarism. However, on the other side of a coin, those processes may lead to bias and conflict of interest. Young (2009) explained that conflict of interest is present when personal interests are in conflict with professional obligations. Conflict of interest is an issue for publishers, journal article boards of editors, manuscript reviewers, and authors that may emerge in any single aspect of the production process of a journal article (Young, 2009).

There is ongoing similar pattern in the side of authors of the journal articles regarding men in dating violence. The authors of the research papers in this research data, who had published more than one research paper, had a tendency to select similar research topics. Christopher Eckhardt and T. Rene Jamison published an article titled “Articulated Thoughts of Male Dating Violence Perpetrators during Anger Arousal” in June, 2002, and published another article titled “Anger Experience and Expression among Male Dating Violence Perpetrators during Anger Arousal” in October, in the same year. On a later year, Christopher Eckhardt published a research paper titled “Cognitive and Aggressive Reactions of Male Dating Violence Perpetrators to Anger Arousal” in 2015. Those 3 research articles have a similar topic, which is the relationship between anger and violent behaviour of men.

Moreover, Donna E. Howard and Min Qi Wang published research articles on the relationship between psycho-social factor and men reporting their dating violence experiences in 2003 - 2008. Elizabeth Miller, Daniel J. Tancredi, Heather L. McCauley, Michele R. Decker, Maria Catrina D. Virata, Heather A. Anderson, and Jay G. Silverman published research papers on prevention programs to dating violence, that is “Coaching boys into men” in 2012 and 2013. Those research tone, tend to neutral but still justified male as offender.

The explanation for this pattern is related to controls done by the authors. Those controls also include the production process of the research paper in phases 1 and 2, namely manuscript preparation by authors and submission of the manuscripts to the board of editors of a journal. Foucault explained
that authors control their writing pieces. Decisions on what to write or not, even the framework of thinking of a manuscript are under the realm of the authors (Foucault, 1972). Controls undertaken by the authors are an effort to increase the chance of their papers being chosen and published by publishers.

In the institutional level, members of the editorial boards in most journal articles in which issues on men in dating violence phenomenon are discussed are mostly US-based researchers or scientists. Not only this pattern of dominance can be seen in US-based publishers, but also it can be seen in non-US-based publishers.

Holdings position within an editorial board is such an honour for an author and it also means that that researcher is within the inner circle when reviewing a scientific journal and has privilege to set standards for the journal articles (Ahl, 2004). In other words, the lack of editorial board members from Asia, Africa countries, or even from non-UK countries in Europe may give US-based researchers powerful authority to unilaterally set and control standards as well as internal rules of those journal articles to follow their American ‘value’.

The hegemony of the US-based authors in the editorial board positions in various scientific journals indirectly explain the homogeneity of the authors and research locations of the research papers reviewed in this research. This is attributed by the domination of the US-based authors as editorial board members, which in turn, could have control and authority to select who can talk or who cannot. Foucault (in Ahl, 2004) explains that an authority to select who can talk is a form of power to control a discourse.

Moreover, Ahl (2004) discussed that not only becomes language a barrier for non-English speaking researchers or authors, but also the American Way or the American writing guideline(s) does constrain the said authors to publish their writing pieces in their desired journal articles. In addition to the homogenous editorial board members, conflict of interest and bias may also occur in the peer-review processes, which is the third phase in the publication process of a scientific paper. A number of critics have been proposed with respect to the peer-review process in the academic world. Reviewers and editors assigned to review manuscripts have a high degree of bias towards the manuscripts reporting results that are in contrast with their perspectives (Ware, 2008; Young, 2009). This argument is in accordance with the view of Foucault (1972) asserting that when an originating foundation of a discourse has been established, the following statements or findings must be ‘adjusted’ to conform to that founding statement. Here, any ‘obeying’ statement will be included; while any contrast view on the matter will be ‘removed’ (Eriyanto, 2011, p. 74).

Richard Smith, the ex-chief editorial BMJ, expressed his critics over the peer-review process; he considers it to be expensive, unfair towards unconventional research findings, and fails to detect any mistake or error contained in a particular research paper (in Ahmed & Gasparyan, 2013). Bornmann and Mungra (2011) even argued that recommendations from reviewers are frequently subjective and unfavourable towards non-native English authors. This information is another challenge for other authors coming from non-English speaking countries to publish their scientific papers.

The vested interests of publishers cannot also be overlooked. In the institutional level, the single-minded editorial board of a journal article is not the sole problem in the selection process and distribution of scientific articles; there are also economic interests from publishing firms. Cost or financial rational in the production process of research papers are important factors leading to conflict of interests within the publishing companies, either for-profit publishers or not-for-profit publishers (Young, 2009).

The power to select and underpin certain discourses so as to make the discourses dominant creates the dominant discourse (Eriyanto, 2011). In accordance with the context of this study, it can be
interpreted that the perceived knowledge on men’s role in dating violence corresponds to how the US perceives that role. Mike Barry posited that it has been long held in the US that men do not have any choice, except to become masculine (in Chalabi, 2016). Being a tough and strong man is such an important value for Americans and is related to the myth of image that must be embraced unswervingly by Americans (Garland, 2012).

Western culture is a culture that has striven over the past 50 years to develop laws and institutions intended towards the gender equality between men and women, in terms of marriage, divorce, and sexual intercourse (Fletcher, Simpson, Campbell, & Overall, 2013). However, they also indicated that violences committed by men against women in relation to sexual intercourse are still ongoing problems in this culture.

The patriarchal culture relates to the perception of men towards women, including their romantic partners. Bartholomew and Allison (2006) explained that men internalising patriarchal norms into their life tend to believe that they have rights to dominate and control women, leading to violence against women. There are several cases occurring caused by such a perception, that is “If I can’t have her no one will”, justifying men to finally stalk and even killing their ex-lovers in several extreme incidents (Fletcher, Simpson, Campbell, & Overall, 2013). The said perception can be interpreted in two ways, as a form of over attachment towards their ex romantic partners and/or as a perspective of men’s power over women.

It is argued that the reason why the subject authors had decided to choose topics related to men-perpetrated violence was directly or indirectly influenced by how the US perceives men and the romantic life in the US as discussed above. This influence was dominant to them since those authors might be exposed to or could have lived in a social environment embracing masculinity credo or ideology, which may have heavily influenced and constructed knowledge they possess. Wilson and Brekke discussed that, in the real life, humans are not cognizant that knowledge they possess is a form of constructions (in Young, 2009).

In this study context, the discourse concerning male victims is indeed written by the US-based authors. Research regarding male victims is also conducted in the US; however, the lack of research positioning and considering men’s role as victims (4 studies) causes this discourse is not dominant, leading to the unpopularity of the perception or knowledge of such a role.

Indeed, the discourse on men as offenders emerges as the dominant discourse corresponds to the American perspective; however, it does not mean that there is no balancing discourse from within the same country or society, that is the US. Michel Foucault held that there are various contrasting discourses in a society (Eriyanto, 2011). Nonetheless, Foucault argued that a power chooses, supports, and maintains a certain discourse, hence it becomes dominant, while other discourses are put aside or marginalised (Eriyanto, 2011).

Blinding biases and taken-for-granted assumptions present in research articles drive public to merely focus on advocating female victims. This operating condition causes female victims no longer become the silent group in the dating violence phenomenon since they can conveniently request for help. The traditional conditioning of men as the dominant group and the initiating party in dating violence, in fact, bring negative consequences towards the minority group, that is the male victims. When men are constantly framed as the offenders, then public will perceive them, in reality, act as offenders; hence, male victims become ignored. This perception regarded as reality is a stereotype. This perception is normalised widely and resonates the meaning reproduction with regard to masculinity,
hence, forms the stereotype against men. Stereotype frequently presents partial, subjective, and sometimes misleading image (Wolska, 2011).

This stereotype, finally, marginalises male victims. Howard and Wang (2003) expressed their critic against the excessive focus of research on female victims and male perpetrators, causing data on male victims in dating violence is very limited and skewed. Researchers focusing on men as victims also argued that male victims seldom seek for help (Cook-Daniels, 2007; Cornelius, Shorey, & Kunde, in Shorey, Febres, Brasfield, & Stuart, 2012; Simonelli & Ingram, 1998). Not only that, Simonelli & Ingram (1998) suggested that more public attention on the male victims is needed to empower men to report any violence incident they have experienced and ensure that their reports are seriously taken care by police, judges, health practitioners, family, friends, and other related parties.

The stereotype describing men, in general, as a rough, dominant, powerful party has been deeply rooted in society. In fact, for example in the US, the Afro-America group, seniors, gays and lesbians, lower class society, and other several groups could be groups with no access to power (West & Turner, 2008). This example indicates that not all men are within the dominant and powerful group.

CONCLUSION

The main conclusion that can be drawn is that the dominant discourse heavily influences the subject research papers on dating violence positioning men as the offenders. There are several factors attributing to such a condition.

The first factor is the influence of the internal parties and internal rules, in this case parties who process and produce the research articles. The presence of conflict of interest in any phase of the selection process and distribution of the research articles, as well as the dominance of the US-based authors or researchers sitting as the editorial board members could perhaps contribute to the homogeneity of the research texts focusing on men as offenders in dating violence. The effect of the US dominance can be seen in the research papers reviewed in this research, which heavily portray men as masculine; these research articles, consequently, position men as dominant, rough, and offenders in any dating violence incident.

The second factor is the overwhelming application of quantitative research in the reviewed research articles discussing men’s role in dating violence. Quantitative research per se for several researchers is considered as extremely masculine. However, apart from that notion, quantitative research has some characteristics; one of them is to generalise the results of the research and test of theory(s). This results in the findings of quantitative research only attempt to answer the hypothesis(s) proposed without fully answering the existence of other possible dynamics as well as the depth of the topic(s) being studied. In this context, quantitative research positioning men as offenders would arrive at a single confirmation, men as perpetrators. In contrast with quantitative research, qualitative research is more powerful in explaining and elaborating problems in a more comprehensive manner and results in non-single reality; hence, even though the focus of the research is about offenders or men’s violence behaviour, the results generated would not instantly conclude that men act as offenders.

The third factor is the presence of blinding biases or bias that usually emerges due to the incorporation of unbalanced justification(s) constructed by authors overlooking any other possible scenarios, facts, or roles into their research; such a justification even exists in research papers focusing on the effects of masculinity on violence perpetrated by men. Finally, blinding biases could lead to taken-for-granted assumptions, such as judging men as the only possible offenders, violence as the nature of men, or men as the ‘real’ offenders since they are considered larger in quantity, more worrying, or more dangerous compared with their female counterpart. The dominant discourse positioning men
as the main offenders could affect on the marginalisation of other attributable parties involved in dating violence; and one of them is the male victim group.

REFERENCES


