

# Perceptions of Violence against Women among College Students in the United States, Japan, India, Vietnam and China

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## Abstract

Violence against women is a global health issue that threatens the health and human rights of women. Intimate partner violence (IPV) and sexual violence are the most common forms of violence against women. While previous studies examined incidence of IPV and other forms of violence against women in the United States (US), little is known about variations in the perceptions of violence against women among college students in other countries. This study explored differences in perceptions of violence against women among college students in the US, Japan, India, Vietnam and China. A total of 1,136 college students from these countries participated in a self-administered survey in 2012-2013. The students' perceptions about the prevalence of domestic violence in their country varied across countries. Furthermore, more than half of the students across the countries perceived alcoholism and drug addiction to be causes of domestic violence against women. It was also found that the levels of knowledge about laws on domestic violence in their country varied among the students. These findings show the importance of understanding country level variations that may affect violence against women. The results of this study provide important insights by documenting cross country variations in students' perceptions about violence against women that can provide helpful inputs in framing country-specific programs and policies to prevent violence against women.

**Keywords:** Violence against women, perceptions, college students, the United States, Japan, India, Vietnam, China

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Violence Against Women

Violence against women is a global health issue that threatens the health and human rights of women (Ellsberg, 2006). Violence against women refers to physical, sexual, or psychological violence perpetrated by an intimate partner, acquaintance, or stranger (World Health Organization, 2013). Violence against women can occur at any locations including home, school, workplace, community, or public places. While violence against women is a global concern, critical data on violence against women is significantly lacking. One of the major reasons for this lack is that the definition of violence against women varies across surveys, cultures, or locations. There are some common universal characteristics of violence against women; these include the under-reporting of cases, pointing the blame at the victim instead of the perpetrator (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). But other characteristics

in terms of prevalence or conviction of belief may vary across countries and cultures.

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is one of the most common forms of violence against women. IPV includes physical, sexual, or psychological harm inflicted by a current or former intimate partner including a spouse or a dating partner (Center for Disease Control, 2013). According to a World Health Organization (WHO) survey of ten countries, the lifetime prevalence of physical intimate partner violence varies from 15 % to 71 % (Garcia-Moreno, Jensen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts, 2006).

Sexual violence is another common form of violence against women. Sexual violence refers to any sexual act without consent, with coercion, or in circumstances when a victim is unable to give consent. It includes - but is not limited to - physical force, psychological intimidation, threats, rape, and attempted rape (WHO, 2002). The percentage of women aged 16 years or older who reported sexual assault in the previous year in 20 countries located in Africa, Latin America, Asia, or Eastern Europe ranged from 0.3 to 8.0 percent (WHO, 2002). However, many women do not report sexual assault (WHO, 2002). As a result, the prevalence of sexual violence is probably under reported.

In this study, we surveyed college students in the United States (US), Japan, India, Vietnam and China. The different backgrounds of the legal systems and cultures may be associated with national differences in perception of violence against women (Frank, Hardinge, & Wosick-Correa, 2009). A global standard of IPV is needed to change the culture of intimate partner violence acceptance, and to increase rejection of intimate partner violence (Pierotti, 2013). Gender and culture shape attitudes toward violence against women (Flood & Pease, 2009). There are different factors, individual level factors, and macro structural factors affecting perceptions or attitudes toward violence against women. These include experiencing or witnessing violence, the age of victims and those who commit the violent act, violence supportive contexts, participation in informal peer groups and networks, pornography and other media, education campaigns, criminal justice policies, and social movements (Flood & Pease, 2009). This study targeted college students because many are in the stage of intellectual and social development and have the potential to change the future culture of violence against women (Fleck-Henderson, 2012).

### *1.2 Prevalence and Incidence of Violence Against Women in the US*

In the US, The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was passed in 1994. This act sought to improve responses at both the community and justice level against domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and even stalking. The lifetime prevalence of intimate partner violence among women is 35.6 % (including rape, physical intimate partner violence, and/or stalking), and 18.3 % for rape (Black et al., 2010).

Female college students are at high risk of being sexually assaulted (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, 2015). Previous studies show that physical assaults occurring in college dating relationships in the US ranged from 18.4 to 48.2 percent prevalence (Straus, 2004). One third of female college students may be victims of sexual assault by their senior year of college (Finley & Corty, 1993). On campus violence against women prevention programs are essential in lowering the number of sexual assaults (Karjane, Fisher, & Cullen, 2005). Sexual violence on college campuses is underreported (Armstrong, Hamilton, & Sweeney, 2006). One of the reasons may be that the majority of perpetrators are acquaintances, making it harder for the women who experience assault to report. Another reason is survivors of sexual assault may be unclear on where to report an assault to campus officials (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, 2015). Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 aims to protect students from sexual violence as well as sexual harassment (Fleck-Henderson, 2012).

### *1.3 Prevalence and Incidence of Violence Against Women in Japan*

In Japan, the Act for the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims was enacted in 2001 (Rice, 2001). The lifetime prevalence of physical/psychological/sexual intimate partner violence based on a national survey was 10.6 % for women (Gender Equality Bureau, Japan Cabinet Office, 2013). The number of intimate partner violence cases that were reported to domestic violence counseling centers increased more than two times from 2002 to 2012. The lifetime prevalence of sexual violence from the same survey, the Gender Equality Bureau, was 4.1 % for women. The notable problem is that 67.9 % of women who experienced sexual assault did not seek any help (Gender Equality Bureau, Japan Cabinet Office, 2013).

There are few studies on college students and gender based violence in Japan. One study of alcohol-related harassment among medical college students found that verbal abuse, physical abuse, or sexual harassment are common and tended to occur at a drinking party organized by a student club (Nagata-Kobayashi et al., 2010). While about half of male and female college students in Japan reported they had experienced harassment from an intimate partner, the majority did not recognize verbal harassment, controlling behaviors, and unprotected sexual intercourse as violence (Ohnishi et al., 2011). Japanese college students tend to accept traditional gender roles (Yamawaki, 2005) and were more likely to minimize, blame and excuse domestic violence compared to American college students (Yamawaki, Ostenson & Brown, 2009).

#### *1.4 Prevalence and incidence of Violence Against Women in India*

In India, more than one third of women experience physical or sexual violence some time in their lifetime (Jain, 2013). The number of reported rape cases was 24, 206 in 2011. Although the number of reported cases is small for the population of 1.2Billion (Government of India Ministry of Home Affairs, 2011), the number increased by 28 % from 2001 to 2011. India has a similar problem to the US and Japan: 85 % of sexual violence victims did not tell anyone (Jain, 2013). Following a well-publicized rape incident in New Delhi in December 2012 where a 23year old female student was gang raped by 6 males and whom later died from her injuries, the Parliament of India passed a new law related to violence against women in March 2013 (Bajaj, 2013). This law makes stalking and sexual harassment a crime. It also makes the death penalty an option for repeat offenders. It is, however, very challenging to enforce laws in India and, unlike in the US and Japan, the new law does not cover rape by a husband (Bajaj, 2013).

Similar to Japan, there are few studies on college students and violence in India. According to a multinational study of 16 countries (Straus, 2004), the rate of physical assault by a dating partner at a university in Pune, India was 41.2 % for female victims. This percentage was the third highest among the 31 universities in the 16 countries in the study. Also, female students in India tend to have a higher level of awareness of violence against women than male students (Agrawal & Banerjee, 2010). Furthermore, college-educated women were more likely to experience intimate partner violence if they were married to a man who did not attend college (Ackerson, Kawachi, Barbeau, & Subramanian, 2008). It is critical for college students in India to understand prevention of violence against women and to lower the number of cases of violence against women.

#### *1.5 Prevalence and Incidence of Violence Against Women in Vietnam*

In Vietnam, the prevalence of physical or sexual intimate partner violence (IPV) was 32.7 % for lifetime experience, and 9.2 % for the past one year according to a study conducted in rural Vietnam (Vung et al., 2008). In Vietnamese communities, respondents to a violence report believe that a man has the right to discipline his wife, can expect sex whenever he wants it, is the ruler of his home, and that wives deserve beatings (Yoshioka et al 2000). In 2007, the Vietnam government passed the Law of Domestic Violence Prevention and Control (Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa, 2010). This not only defined what domestic violence was but also stated the consequences for those found guilty of committing violence. Though this is good in theory, in reality, it is not the most effective. By the time the paperwork goes through, it could be an additional half a year or more that a victim would continue to suffer. It is also not as effective because not many even know about the law, including officials.

#### *1.6 Prevalence and Incidence of Violence Against Women in China*

In China, the lifetime prevalence of IPV was 34 % (Parish et al., 2004). In a study conducted by Hou et al (2003), it was found that women had a higher rate of developing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) if they had suffered from some sort of domestic violence. Domestic violence in this study was characterized by physical, psychological, and /or sexual abuse from a husband, ex-husband, or former or current intimate heterosexual partner. With the consideration of and prevalence of certain factors, males were more likely to be violent, both physically and sexually toward their partners when controlling behavior was associated. Alcohol misuse was also found to be associated to physical violence against their partner (Fulu, 2013).

The prevalence of sexual violence among female college students in Hong Kong was 20 % (Tang, et al., 1995). Nearly 40 % of adolescents in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Taiwan had experienced dating violence (Shen et al., 2012). In a study that looked at prevalence and correlates of physical assault on dating partners, it was found that 46% of Hong Kong participants had reported an incident of physical assault against a dating partner (Chan, et al., 2008). The prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV) in terms of in a lifetime were higher for females found in a study conducted in 2011 in Hong Kong. Being female also increased the risks of IPV by 95% for both within their lifetime and the preceding year (Chan 2011).

#### *1.7 Purpose of This Study*

The purpose of this study was to explore national differences in perception of violence against women among undergraduate students in the US, Japan, India, Vietnam and China. This study is significant because little is known about cross-national differences in perceptions of violence against women among college students. Better understanding of national differences in perception of violence against women is important to develop culturally and country-specific effective violence against women prevention programs.

## **2. Methods**

### *2.1 Data Collection and Study Participants*

The data were collected at four universities in the US, Japan and India in the fall of 2012, and at two universities in Vietnam and China in the spring of 2013: one state university in the US; two national universities in Japan;

one public university in India; one national university in Vietnam, and one public university in China. All universities are located in a mid to large size city. At each university, a consent cover letter and a survey instrument were handed to undergraduate students aged 18 to 30 years attending a social science class. If a student agreed to participate, he or she answered and submitted the survey during class time. The lead Institutional Review Board (IRB) for this study was located at the US University. One university in Japan obtained IRB approval. The other Japanese university, the university in India, the university in Vietnam, and the university in China did not have an IRB. The IRB of the U.S. academic institution has a detailed and strict guideline that requires foreign universities with no IRB to follow to protect human subjects for international research, including for a situation where there is no local IRB. This study followed every step of the guideline and was approved entirely by the U.S. academic institution.

### *2.2 Survey Instrument*

Opinions regarding domestic violence against women were asked using several questions from the Domestic Violence against Women Report (European Commission, 2010). The questions included were: 1) where the participant had heard about domestic violence against women (yes or no for each item, for example, television, friends, family, school); 2) how common domestic violence against women is in their country (4-point Likert scale: 1 = very common, 4 = not at all common or 5 = don't know); 3) how serious each form of domestic violence against women is, for example psychological violence, in their view (4-point Likert scale: 1 = very serious, 4 = not at all serious or 5 = don't know); 4) whether domestic violence against women is acceptable or not (1= acceptable in all circumstance, 2 = acceptable in certain circumstances, 3 = unacceptable but should not always be punishable by law, 4 = unacceptable and should always be punishable by law, 5 = don't know); 5) causes of domestic violence against women, for example alcoholism (yes, no, or don't know); and 6) "whether they were aware of laws related to domestic violence against women, for example the prevention of domestic violence against women (yes, no, or don't know).

We developed demographic questions regarding gender, age, marital status, year in college, and college major. The US participants were also asked their race/ethnicity. We did not ask the participants from the other institutions race/ethnicity because most of the students are Asian at the universities in these countries. The participants were also asked whether they had heard about any organizations or programs on campus or in the community that work to prevent sexual assault (e.g., Have you heard about any organizations or programs on campus that work to prevent sexual assault?), whether they knew someone who had experienced sexual assault, the relationship with the person (if there is any) including friend/ acquaintance at college, friend/ acquaintance outside of college, family, neighbor, and myself, from whom they would seek help if they were a victim of sexual assault (including not seek any help, family, friends, university resources, hospital/ clinic/ other health care facility, police, attorney/ legal expert, and help center for victims of sexual assaults).

### *2.3 Survey Administration*

The survey was administered in English in the US and India. The survey instrument was translated into Japanese for use at the two Japanese Universities, into Vietnamese for use at the university in Vietnam, and into Chinese for use at the university in China. Forward- and back- translations were conducted to ensure accuracy of the translations.

### *2.4 Data analysis*

Data were analyzed using statistical software SPSS (version 19). Descriptive statistics were used to describe the distribution of the demographic characteristics of the participants. Descriptive data were presented as proportions for categorical variables and means with standard deviations (SDs) for continuous variables.

### 3. Results

**Table 1**

<b>Socio demographic variables</b>	Total N=1,136	US N=206	Japan N=215	India N=216	Vietnam N=238	China N=261
Age, mean (SD)**	20.0 (1.8)	20.9 (2.7)	19.5 (1.6)	20.1 (1.2)	19.6 (1.1)	19.9 (1.6)
Female	728 (64.1)	116 (56.3)	113 (52.6)	151 (69.9)	176 (73.9)	172 (65.9)
Year in college						
Freshman (1 <sup>st</sup> year)	465 (40.9)	59 (28.6)	137 (63.7)	1 (0.4)	93 (39.1)	175 (67.0)
Sophomore (2 <sup>nd</sup> year)	297 (26.1)	32 (15.5)	28 (13.0)	90 (41.7)	67 (28.2)	80 (30.7)
Junior (3 <sup>rd</sup> year)	232 (20.4)	47 (22.8)	28 (13.0)	107 (49.5)	45 (18.9)	5 (1.9)
Senior (4 <sup>th</sup> year)	135 (11.9)	68 (33.0)	22 (10.2)	13 (6.0)	32 (13.4)	0 (0)
Major						
Sociology	133 (11.7)	52 (25.2)	30 (14.0)	0 (0)	50 (21.0)	1(0.4)
Psychology	55 (4.8)	28 (13.6)	11 (5.1)	1 (0.4)	14 (5.9)	1 (0.4)
Economics	297(26.1)	7 (3.4)	7 (3.3)	113 (52.3)	26 (10.9)	144 (55.2)
Political Science	144 (10.0)	15 (7.3)	9 (4.2)	90 (41.7)	30 (12.6)	0 (0)
(pre-) Law	87 (7.7)	2 (1.0)	64 (29.8)	2 (0.9)	19 (8.0)	0 (0)
Undecided	73 (6.4)	19 (9.2)	43 (20.0)	7 (3.2)	2 (0.8)	2 (0.8)
Other	317 (27.9)	53 (25.7)	51 (23.7)	3 (1.4)	97 (40.8)	113 (43.3)

Mean (SD) or No. (%)

Table 1 describes the demographic characteristics of participants. The average age of participants was 20 years old (SD=1.8). Approximately 40% of the participants (n=465) were freshman. But this varied across countries. More than 60% of the Chinese participants were freshman, whereas in India and the US, the majority of the participants were juniors and seniors respectfully. The Academic Major of participants also varied across countries. For example, while more than half of the participants in India and China majored in Economics, the percentage of Economic students was low among US, Japanese and Vietnamese students.

**Table 2**

	Total N=637	US N=206	Japan N=215	India N=216	Vietnam N=238	China N=261
<b>Have you heard of domestic violence against women?</b>						
Yes, on television	527 (82.5)	165 (80.1)	202 (94.0)	160 (74.1)	205 (86.1)	254 (97.3)
Yes, in magazines/ newspapers	419 (65.8)	141 (68.4)	133 (61.9)	144 (66.7)	185 (77.3)	180 (69.0)
Yes, on the radio	175 (27.5)	101 (49.0)	22 (10.2)	52 (24.2)	120 (50.4)	72 (27.6)
Yes, in books	277 (43.5)	112 (54.4)	95 (44.2)	70 (32.4)	134 (56.3)	132 (50.6)
Yes, at cinema	301 (47.3)	130 (63.1)	65 (30.2)	106 (49.1)	39 (16.4)	209 (80.1)
Yes, through friends	267 (41.9)	129 (62.6)	49 (22.8)	89 (41.2)	153 (64.3)	111 (42.5)
Yes, through family circle	214 (33.6)	103 (50.0)	29 (13.5)	82 (38.0)	131 (55.0)	118 (45.2)
Yes, at school	253 (39.7)	138 (67.0)	88 (40.9)	27 (12.5)	141 (59.2)	72 (27.6)
Yes, at work place	79 (12.4)	61 (23.5)	6 (2.8)	12 (5.6)	45 (18.9)	15 (5.7)
Yes, on internet	304 (47.7)	137 (66.5)	111 (51.6)	56 (25.9)	139 (58.4)	209 (80.1)
Yes, elsewhere	123 (19.3)	70 (34.0)	18 (8.4)	35 (16.2)	2 (0.8)	43 (16.5)
<b>How common do you think that domestic violence against women is in your country?</b>						
Very common	196	46	12 (5.8)	139	68 (28.6)	14 (5.4)

	Total N=637	US N=206	Japan N=215	India N=216	Vietnam N=238	China N=261
	(30.8)	(22.3)		(64.4)		
Fairly common	268	117	99	52	139	70
	(42.1)	(56.8)	(48.1)	(24.1)	(58.4)	(26.8)
Not very common	116	36	65	15 (6.9)	23 (9.7)	148
	(18.2)	(17.5)	(30.2)			(56.7)
Not at all common	3 (0.5)	0	0	3 (1.4)	0	12 (4.6)
Don't know	45 (7.1)	6 (0.5)	37	2 (0.9)	6 (2.5)	17 (6.5)
			(17.2)			
<b>Psychological violence</b>						
Very serious	392	146	118	128	146	138
	(61.5)	(70.9)	(54.9)	(59.3)	(61.3)	(52.9)
Fairly serious	175	51	79	45	78 (32.8)	78
	(27.5)	(24.8)	(36.7)	(20.8)		(29.9)
Not very serious	36 (5.7)	7 (3.4)	11 (5.1)	18 (8.3)	12 (5.0)	21 (8.0)
Not at all serious	2 (0.3)	0	0	2 (0.9)	1 (0.4)	5 (1.9)
Don't know	8 (1.3)	0	3 (1.4)	5 (2.3)	1 (0.4)	16 (6.1)
<b>Physical violence</b>						
Very serious	508	189	151	168	196	162
	(79.7)		(70.2)	(77.8)	(82.4)	(62.1)
Fairly serious	84	14 (6.8)	50	20 (9.3)	96 (40.3)	74
	(13.2)		(23.3)			(28.4)
Not very serious	17 (2.7)	2 (1.0)	10 (4.7)	5 (2.3)	14 (5.9)	18 (6.9)
Not at all serious	2 (0.3)	0	0	2 (0.9)	1 (0.4)	1 (0.4)
Don't know	5 (0.8)	0	1 (0.5)	4 (1.9)	1 (0.4)	4 (1.5)
<b>Sexual violence</b>						
Very serious	509	194	164	151	130	152
	(79.9)	(94.2)	(76.3)	(69.9)	(54.6)	(58.2)
Fairly serious	81	9 (4.4)	35	47	79 (33.2)	59
	(12.7)		(16.3)	(21.8)		(22.6)
Not very serious	21 (3.3)	2 (1.0)	11 (5.1)	8 (3.7)	18 (7.6)	21 (8.0)
Not at all serious	1 (0.2)	0	0	1 (0.5)	5 (2.1)	6 (2.3)
Don't know	7 (1.1)	0	1 (0.5)	6 (2.8)	5 (2.1)	22 (8.4)
<b>Threats of violence</b>						
Very serious	353	122	135	96	74 (31.1)	119
	(55.4)	(59.2)	(62.8)	(44.4)		(45.6)
Fairly serious	194	68	57	69	116	93
	(30.5)	(33.0)	(26.5)	(31.9)	(48.7)	(35.6)
Not very serious	48 (7.5)	14 (6.8)	14 (6.5)	20 (9.3)	42 (17.6)	30
						(11.5)
Not at all serious	9 (1.4)	1 (0.5)	4 (1.9)	4 (1.9)	3 (1.3)	6 (2.3)
Don't know	10 (1.6)	0	1 (0.5)	9 (4.2)	7 (2.9)	8 (3.1)
<b>Restricted freedom</b>						
Very serious	346	137	111	98	90 (37.9)	152
	(54.3)	(66.5)	(51.6)	(45.4)		(58.2)
Fairly serious	200	57	79	64	97 (40.8)	57
	(31.4)	(27.7)	(36.7)	(29.6)		(21.8)
Not very serious	48 (7.5)	8 (3.9)	15 (7.0)	25	39 (16.4)	25 (9.6)
				(11.6)		
Not at all serious	11 (1.7)	2 (1.0)	2 (1.0)	7 (3.2)	3 (1.3)	12 (4.6)
Don't know	13 (2.0)	1 (0.5)	4 (1.9)	8 (3.7)	7 (2.9)	11 (4.2)
<b>Is domestic violence against women...?</b>						
Acceptable in all circumstances	22 (3.5)	2 (1.0)	5 (2.3)	15 (6.9)	3 (1.3)	3 (1.1)
Acceptable in certain circumstances	15 (2.4)	1 (0.5)	2 (1.0)	12 (5.6)	15 (6.3)	18 (6.9)
Unacceptable but should not always be	108	43	41	24	62 (26.1)	59

	Total N=637	US N=206	Japan N=215	India N=216	Vietnam N=238	China N=261
punished by law	(17.0)	(20.9)	(19.1)	(11.1)		(22.6)
Unacceptable and should always be	474	158	160	156	154	177
punishable by law	(74.4)	(76.7)	(74.4)	(72.2)	(64.7)	(67.8)
Don't know	11 (1.7)	1 (0.5)	6 (2.8)	4 (1.9)	1 (0.4)	4 (1.5)
<b>Is each of the following a cause of domestic violence against women?</b>						
Alcoholism	558 (87.6)	191 (92.7)	170 (79.1)	197 (91.2)	126 (52.9)	228 (87.4)
Drug addiction	540 (84.8)	184 (89.3)	182 (84.7)	174 (80.6)	212 (89.1)	236 (90.4)
Unemployment	388 (60.9)	129 (62.6)	104 (48.4)	155 (71.8)	213 (89.5)	154 (59.0)
Poverty/social exclusion	411 (64.5)	154 (74.8)	124 (57.7)	133 (61.6)	152 (63.9)	163 (62.5)
Media	200 (31.4)	115 (55.8)	40 (18.6)	45 (20.8)	83 (34.9)	38 (14.6)
Religious beliefs	318 (59.9)	125 (60.7)	75 (34.9)	118 (54.6)	152 (63.9)	82 (31.4)
Low level of education	344 (54.0)	115 (55.8)	70 (32.6)	159 (73.6)	166 (69.7)	187 (71.6)
Having oneself been a victim	323 (50.7)	180 (87.4)	71 (33.0)	72 (33.3)	141 (59.2)	86 (33.0)
Unequal gender power	468 (73.5)	149 (72.3)	171 (79.5)	148 (68.5)	77 (32.4)	138 (52.9)
The way women are viewed by men	499 (78.3)	171 (83.0)	163 (75.8)	165 (76.4)	130 (54.6)	181 (69.3)
Provocative behavior of women	209 (32.8)	63 (30.6)	74 (34.4)	72 (33.3)	55 (23.1)	124 (47.5)
Being genetically predisposed to violent behavior	499 (78.3)	171 (83.0)	163 (75.8)	165 (76.4)	48 (20.2)	147 (56.3)
<b>Are there special laws in your country regarding..?</b>						
The prevention of domestic violence against women	392 (61.5)	128 (62.1)	92 (42.8)	172 (79.6)	210 (88.3)	111 (42.5)
Social support for victims	396 (62.2)	161 (78.2)	102 (47.4)	133 (61.6)	129 (54.2)	124 (47.5)
Legal support of victims	382 (60.0)	164 (79.6)	76 (35.3)	142 (65.7)	119 (50.0)	170 (65.1)
Punishment of perpetrators	435 (68.3)	177 (85.9)	144 (53.0)	114 (52.8)	196 (82.4)	174 (66.7)
Rehabilitation of perpetrators	188 (29.5)	82 (39.8)	49 (22.8)	57 (26.4)	158 (66.4)	93 (35.6)

No. (%)

Table 2 presents the results of perceptions of violence against women. The majority of the participants had heard of domestic violence against women through the media, either on the television (82.5%) or through the Internet (47.7%). The perception of how common domestic violence against women in their country varied between the participants. For the US, Japan, and Vietnam, the participants stated domestic violence was fairly common in their country at 56.8%, 48.1%, and 58.4% respectively. India was the only country where the majority of students stated that it was the very common at 64.4%. China was the only country where the majority of students stated domestic violence against women was not very common in their country at 56.7%.

In total, 87.6% percent of students reported that alcoholism is the leading cause of domestic violence with a close second being drug addiction at 84.8%. Nearly 90% of the US participants (87.4%) responded that having been a victim oneself is a major cause of domestic violence against women. This percentage is significantly larger than the other countries. Compared to the other countries, Vietnam had a low percentage of students who reported that unequal gender power was a cause of domestic violence at 32.4%. Vietnam also had a

noticeably low percentage of students (20.2%) who reported that being genetically predisposition to violent behavior was a cause of domestic violence against women in their country. The other percentages from the other countries ranged from 56.3% to a high 83% from the US students.

As for the knowledge about special laws on the prevention of domestic violence against women, India (79.6%) and Vietnam (88.3%) had high percentage of the participants who believed that there was such law in their country. Less than half of the participants in Japan (42.8%) and China (42.5%) perceived that there was such law in their country.

#### 4. Discussion

This project explored national differences in the perceptions of violence against women among college students in the US, Japan, India, Vietnam and China. There are three main findings. First, the perceptions of how common the domestic violence against women is in their country varies across countries. Second, while more than half of the participants in the countries believed that alcoholism and drug addiction were causes of domestic violence against women, there were some variations regarding other causes of domestic violence against women across countries. Third, the levels of the knowledge of special laws on the prevention of domestic violence against women were high among Indian and Vietnamese participants but were low among Japanese and Chinese students.

While India had the highest percentage of participants who believed domestic violence against women was very common in their country, China had the lowest percentage. In India, domestic violence against women is a significant social problem that affects health and well-beings of women (Kamimura, Ganta, Myers, & Thomas, 2014; Kamimura, Ganta, Myers, & Thomas, 2015). It seems that the participants in India were well aware of the issue of domestic violence against women in their country. Since the prevalence of IPV in China is not necessarily low (Parish, Wang, Laumann, Pan, & Lup, 2004; Xu, et al., 2005), the perceptions that IPV was not very common in China does not reflect the actual circumstances. College students in China may need more educational opportunities to learn about IPV.

The results of this study suggesting that the participants thought that alcoholism and drug abuse were causes of IPV were consisted with previous studies that empirically presented the same results (Connelly, Hazen, Baker-Ericzen, Landsverk, & Horwitz, 2013; Evans & Shapiro, 2011; Illangasekare, Burke, Chander, & Gielen, 2013; Klostermann, et al., 2006). As for the results of the US perception that having been a victim oneself is a major cause of domestic violence against women is also consistent with previous studies which indicate the issue of co-occurrence of victimization and perpetration of IPV (Leisring, 2013; Shorey et al., 2010; Straus, 2008). But the majority of IPV research still ignores the possibility of the co-occurrence (Straus, 2008). It is not surprising that the larger number of participants in other countries did not believe that having been a victim oneself is a major cause of domestic violence against women was a cause of IPV. Moreover, Participants from Vietnam did not feel as if having unequal gender power to be a cause of domestic violence against women. This could possibly be due to the cultural roles that play into the lives of Vietnamese. For them, there is a strong push to still adhere to the Confucian roles of family hierarchy (Schuler, et al., 2007).

When looking at the laws to prevent domestic violence against women, the US, Japan, India and Vietnam all have laws, whereas China does not. The results of this study do not portray the actual legal situation. In 1994, the US passed the Violence Against Women Act as a federal law (Busch-Armedariz, 2011). This act not only helped victims both legally and socially through various programs, but also was designed to help prevent future violence. This act not only protects the rights of female victims but male victims of domestic violence as well. Despite this, only 62.1% and high 70% of US college students believe there are programs in place for the prevention of domestic violence and support for victims respectfully. These percentages should be closer to, if not at, 100%. Vietnam also should have higher percentages for in 2007, the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control was passed. This stated that victims had certain rights and compensation. It even went on to state different ways in which information about domestic violence prevention and control be passed onto the public (Trong, 2007). Japan had the one of the lowest percentages of students say there were laws in their country that prevented domestic violence and gave support to victims. This is surprising for in 2001 Japan passed the Law on Prevention of Spousal Violence and Protection of Victims (Rice, 2001). In contrast to Japan's low percentages, a large portion of Indian students, believed there were laws in place regarding the prevention of domestic violence against women. In any case, it is important to increase the knowledge about laws to prevent IPV.

#### 5. Limitations

The participants were drawn using a convenience sample. In addition, the data were collected at one university in the US, India, Vietnam and China and two universities in Japan. Therefore, the participants do not necessarily represent the entire college students in these countries. This study was cross-sectional and descriptive, and was limited to address causal relationships. Despite these limitations, this study provides comparative information on

perception of violence against women in the US, Japan, India, Vietnam and China which is not otherwise available and contributes to providing fundamental knowledge to develop country-specific prevention programs.

## 6. Conclusions and future research

This study described how college students view violence against women in the US, Japan, India, Vietnam and China. It not only showed some similarities, but also presented some great differences among the countries, suggesting that possible underlying socio and cultural factors may have a hand in determining these perceptions. This study also demonstrated the need for future research and potential policies and programs that are necessary to be put in place in order to help with specific countries to obtain education about violence against women. Violence against women is considered a problem worldwide, even in the countries with laws already in place. Based on the results of this study it is recommended the development of effective country-specific programs and policies. For example, college students in China would need programs which promote awareness of IPV while those in Japan may need to attend class on laws related to violence against women. The next steps will be to better understand their culture and social norms that would affect violence against women and develop policies and programs that would be most beneficial for their population. Other studies have also come to this same conclusion (Thongpriwan, 2015). Future research should develop educational programs on IPV and test the effectiveness of the programs.

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