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# The Role of Entitlement, Self-Control, and Risk Behaviors on Dating Violence Perpetration

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## Abstract

Dating violence continues to be pervasive among college students (Stappenbeck & Fromme, 2010). Given the paucity of research investigating the various pathways through which risk factors are linked to dating violence among different college campuses, we use multiple group path analysis to examine the role of child abuse, self-control, entitlement, and risky behaviors on dating violence perpetration among college students from one Southeastern and one Midwestern university. There were 1,482 college students (51% female) enrolled in undergraduate courses at 2 large public universities who completed paper and pencil surveys. Dating violence perpetration was directly associated with gender, child physical abuse, and sexual and drug risk behaviors and indirectly associated with college Greek letter fraternity affiliation, self-control, and entitlement. Moreover, significant differences in the pathways to dating violence were found between the Southeast and Midwest campuses.

**Keywords:** child physical abuse, dating violence, drugs, sexual risk, college students

Dating violence, which includes physical or sexual violence, threats of violence, and psychological aggression, is widespread in dating relationships among unmarried, non-cohabiting college students (Barnett, Miller-Perrin, & Perrin, 2011), and over one-third of

U.S. college students report dating violence (Stappenbeck & Fromme, 2010). A 17-country study of 33 universities revealed that dating violence perpetration ranged from 17% to 45% (Straus, 2004). Dating violence may have long-lasting effects, including poor mental health (DeMaris & Kaukinen, 2005), revictimization (Gómez, 2010), and problematic drug use (Exner-Cortens, Eckenrode, & Rothman, 2013).

Correlates of dating violence include gender (Gover, Kaukinen, & Fox, 2008; Luthra & Gidycz, 2006), child abuse (Foshee, Benefield, Ennett, Bauman, & Suchindran, 2004; Herrenkohl et al., 2004), drug use (McNaughton Reyes, Foshee, Bauer, & Ennett, 2012), and Greek letter fraternity affiliation<sup>1</sup> (Humphrey & Kahn, 2000). Although research has examined multiple risks for dating violence perpetration, there is limited knowledge about the role of entitlement (i.e., unreasonable expectations for receiving advantageous treatment based on a privileged social status alone; Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004) in this process. Moreover, the role of entitlement although correlated with negative behavior (Campbell et al., 2004) has seldom been examined in conjunction with heavy drinking and drug use. Entitlement is important for understanding dating violence given that entitlement has been linked to numerous antisocial personality traits and behaviors characteristic of violent perpetrators (Skeem, Miller, Mulvey, Tiemann, & Monahan, 2005), such as dominance, hostility (Campbell et al., 2004; Raskin & Terry, 1988), resentment, and difficulty forgiving others (Exline, Baumeister, Bushman, Campbell, & Finkel, 2004). In addition, few studies have compared whether risk factors for dating violence perpetration vary by campus location even though higher rates of dating violence have been found in Southern (Straus, 2004) versus Midwestern U.S. states (Marquart, Nannini, Edwards, Stanley, & Wayman, 2007). To address these shortcomings, we use multiple group path analysis to examine the role of child abuse, self-control, entitlement, and risky behaviors on dating violence perpetration among college students from one Southeastern and one Midwestern university in the United States.

### **Risk Factors for Dating Violence**

A history of child abuse is an important risk factor for dating violence (Foshee et al., 2004; Herrenkohl et al., 2004). According to a social learning orientation, it is speculated that children from violent households observe and learn the techniques of aggression and then emulate this behavior in future personal relationships because it may result in rewarding outcomes. Research that has examined the effect of child abuse on dating violence has found both a direct (Slesnick, Erdem, Collins, Patton, & Buettner, 2010) and an indirect link (Brownridge, 2006). In addition, child physical abuse has been found to significantly increase engagement in heavy drinking and unsafe sexual practices (Bensley, Van Eenwyk, & Simmons, 2000).

Growing research has documented the rise of entitled attitudes among college students, related to their beliefs that they are deserving of certain privileges based on their social status and are not required to adhere to standard norms and expectations present in the wider society (Greenberger, Lessard, Chen, & Farruggia, 2008). Studies have identified various correlates of entitled attitudes, including early exposure to family risk factors and deviant behavior. For example, experiencing child abuse and witnessing domestic violence

among college men has been linked to the development of beliefs whereby they feel entitled to abuse their own partners (Silverman & Williamson, 1997). Bearing witness to family violence is also strongly related to aggression and the belief that violence can be justified (Calvete & Orne, 2013), which may be interpreted as a form of entitlement. In addition, a sense of masculine sexual entitlement toward women is tied to more positive endorsement of rape-related beliefs among men (Hill & Fischer, 2001) and risky sexual behaviors, such as unprotected sex (Santana, Raj, Decker, La Marche, & Silverman, 2006). Although the personality trait of general entitlement has been deemed a fruitful area to explore among dating violence perpetrators, little research has examined this relationship (Pomari, Dixon, & Humphreys, 2013).

Numerous studies have examined how early life experiences and impulsive personality traits are related to perpetrating dating violence. Early experiences of child abuse can lead to decreased feelings of self-control related to anger management (Briere & Elliott, 2003). In particular, exhibiting diminished self-control is associated with drug use (Sussman, McCuller, & Dent, 2003) and violent tendencies later in one's life, including dating violence perpetration (Gover, Jennings, Tomsich, Park, & Rennison, 2011). Finally, perpetrating dating violence has been found to be associated with risky sexual behaviors (e.g., inconsistent condom use) among young men (Raj et al., 2006).

### *Gender*

Although much of the partner violence literature has focused on male-perpetrated violence (DeMaris & Kaukinen, 2005; Silverman, Raj, Mucci, & Hathaway, 2001), some studies contend that women inflict violence at similar rates as their male partners (Archer, 2000; Capaldi, Kim, & Shortt, 2007). Although men and women may commit similar amounts of violence, the literature demonstrates that men are more likely to inflict injury (Whitaker, Haileyesus, Swahn, & Saltzman, 2007) but that both male and female victims suffer poor mental and physical health outcomes (Coker et al., 2002). Moreover, male victims are more likely to experience externalizing behaviors (e.g., substance abuse), whereas females exhibit more internalizing behaviors including depression and anxiety (Afifi et al., 2009).

### *Greek Letter Affiliation*

Studies on U.S. college students reveal that 35% are binge drinkers. Moreover, 40% of females and 46% of males report having gotten drunk in the past 30 days (Johnston, O'Malley, Bachman, Schulenberg, & Miech, 2014). Despite these high rates, members of Greek letter fraternity organizations exhibit even higher levels and more frequent consumption of alcohol (Hummer, LaBrie, Lac, Sessoms, & Cail, 2012; McCabe et al., 2005). Reasons for the higher rates of drinking among such organizations may be attributed to group living, peer pressure and group conformity, hazing, and the lack of supervision (Addiction Center, 2015). Fraternity members also experience more negative consequences (e.g., physical fights) while drinking compared to nonmembers (Borsari, Hustad, & Capone, 2009). Overall, binge drinking fraternity members are significantly more likely to engage in other high-risk behaviors, such as driving drunk and having unprotected sex (Ragsdale et al., 2012). Moreover, because some fraternities endorse sexual aggression and violence against women (Humphrey & Kahn, 2000), it is conceivable that Greek letter fraternity members

potentially perpetrate dating violence at a higher rate compared to their non-Greek letter fraternity counterparts. Finally, some research has found higher rates of dating violence in Southern and Southeastern states (Straus, 2004) compared to states in the Midwest (Marquart et al., 2007).

### **Theoretical Frameworks—Potential Modes of Intergenerational Transmission**

Various theoretical perspectives have been used to understand how negative childhood experiences are linked to young adult relationship violence. Social learning theory holds that violence directed at others is learned from one's social environment through the process of observational learning (Bandura, 1977). Children exposed to violence in their family may later imitate the behavior they have observed, especially if they witness its positive outcomes (e.g., compliance). Further, Gelles (1997) argued that children who grow up in violent homes learn the techniques of being violent and the justifications for this behavior. Owens and Straus (1975) also hold that children exposed to interpersonal violence at a young age, either as victims or perpetrators, report greater approval of interpersonal violence as adults. Moreover, early exposure to distinctive types of family violence and abuse are related to the development of unique forms of aggression in later life (Bevan & Higgins, 2002; Straus, Douglas, & Medeiros, 2014).

Similarly, the background situational model of dating violence suggests that those who are more accepting of dating aggression are more likely to engage in dating violence perpetration (McNaughton Reyes, Foshee, Niolon, Reidy, & Hall, 2016; Temple, Shorey, Tortolero, Wolfe, & Stuart, 2013). This level of acceptance is not restricted to exposure to violence within the home but may also be a result of being a victim of interpersonal violence as a child (Owens & Straus, 1975). As such, exposure to familial violence may lead children to view aggression as a normative aspect of relationships and increase their tolerance for it and likelihood of using it to establish compliance (Foshee, Bauman, & Linder, 1999). Previous work supports this notion of intergenerational violence or the creation of expectations or norms related to interpersonal relationships based on experiences in childhood (Straus & Gelles, 1990). Research finds that experiencing child abuse or neglect is associated with perpetration (Widom, Czaja, & Dutton, 2014) within intimate relationships, and this normalization of violence is linked to experiencing violence in future dating relationships (McNaughton Reyes et al., 2016).

In addition, the antisocial orientation perspective (L. G. Simons, Burt, & Simons, 2008; R. L. Simons, Lin, & Gordon, 1998) suggests that children exposed to poor parenting, such as physical abuse, are at greater risk for dating violence through delinquent behavior and substance use. Therefore, a general pattern of antisocial behavior is passed from parents to their children, and because the children's antisocial tendencies persist throughout the lifespan, this affects the probability that they will engage in dating violence. Others have also found support for this model in that maltreated children are likely to demonstrate antisocial behavior and violence as adults (Park, Smith, & Ireland, 2012). Based on an antisocial orientation perspective, it is important to consider not only drug and sexual risk behaviors when examining the association between child abuse and dating violence perpetration (L. G. Simons et al., 2008) but also general entitlement and self-control.

### ***Aims and Hypotheses***

We use multiple group path analysis to examine the role of child abuse, self-control, entitlement, and risky behaviors on dating violence perpetration among college students from one Southeastern and one Midwestern university in the United States. First, we hypothesized that experiencing more child physical abuse, being Greek letter fraternity or sorority affiliated, having lower self-control, higher entitlement, and greater sexual, drinking, and drug risk behaviors would all be positively associated with perpetrating dating violence. Second, we hypothesized that having lower self-control and higher entitlement would be positively associated with sexual, drinking, and drug risk behaviors. Third, we expected that having lower self-control and higher entitlement would mediate the relationship between child physical abuse and dating violence perpetration. Fourth, we hypothesized that greater sexual, drinking, and drug risk behaviors would mediate the relationship between lower self-control and entitlement and dating violence perpetration. Fifth, because our Southeast campus had higher mean scores on all of the risk behaviors, we hypothesized that the pathways leading to dating violence would be significantly stronger for these college students compared to those at the Midwest campus. The models control for respondents' gender.

### **Method**

#### ***Study Site and Participants***

Data were gathered in the 2013–2014 academic year at two large public universities in the United States, one in the Midwest and one in the Southeast. Both universities are public land-grant institutions with undergraduate enrollment ranging from 20,000 to 25,000 students. Racial composition at both locations was approximately 80% White. The combined sample consisted of 1,482 undergraduate college students, including 778 (52.5%) from the Southeast and 704 (47.5%) from the Midwest. The sample was split between males (48.8%) and females (51.2%). Most respondents were White (80%), followed by Black or African American (7.3%), Hispanic or Latino (3.6%), Asian (6.6%), and 2.4% identified their race as "other." Over one third (37.5%) of participants were members of a Greek letter fraternity or sorority.

#### ***Procedure***

Undergraduate students enrolled in social science courses completed a paper and pencil survey of attitudes and experiences about dating, sexuality, and substance use. Every student was eligible to participate. Students were informed that their participation was voluntary and their responses were anonymous. They had the option of filling out the survey for course credit. If they did not wish to complete the survey, they were given another option. Students were told that if they chose not to fill out the survey or do the alternative extra credit assignment, it would not affect their course grade. Approximately 98% of all students in attendance across both institutions completed the survey, whereas the remaining students opted for the alternative assignment. The institutional review board at both institutions approved this study for their respective location.

## Measures

### Dependent Variable

*Dating violence perpetration* (adapted from Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996) included five items from the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2), which asked respondents, "During the past 12 months, how many times have you done each of the following to a current or former partner," such as threw something that could hurt and kicked your partner (0 = *never* to 4 = *more than 10 times*). The alpha reliability was .65 and all items loaded on a single factor. Because of skewness, this variable was dichotomized (0 = *never*; 1 = *at least once*).

### Independent Variables

*Child physical abuse* included four items adapted from the Parent-Child Conflict Tactics Scale (PC-CTS; Straus, Hamby, Finkelhor, Moore, & Runyan, 1998). Respondents were asked for example whether a parent or caregiver had ever shoved or grabbed them in anger (0 = *never* to 4 = *frequently or always*). Items were summed and then the variable was logged (because of skewness), whereby a higher score indicates more abuse ( $\alpha = .82$ ).

*Self-control* included six items adapted from the Brief Sensation Seeking Scale (Hoyle, Stephenson, Palmgreen, Lorch, & Donohew, 2002) such as "It is hard for me to resist acting on feelings" and "I like to stop and think things over before I do them" (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*). Certain items were reverse coded and a mean scale was created where a higher score indicates lower self-control ( $\alpha = .52$ ).

*Entitlement* included six items adapted from the Psychological Entitlement Scale (Campbell et al., 2004) such as "I honestly feel I'm just more deserving than others" (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*). Items loaded on one factor. A mean scale was created where a higher score indicates higher entitlement ( $\alpha = .73$ ).

*Sexual risk behavior* included three items, which asked (a) how old they were the first time they had sexual intercourse (1 = *less than 14 years old* to 5 = *never experienced sexual intercourse*), (b) the number of people they have had sexual intercourse with (vaginal or anal penetration; 1 = *none* to 5 = *10 or more*), and (c) how often they use condoms during sexual intercourse (1 = *always* to 3 = *never*; 4 = *never had sexual intercourse*). Item 1 was recoded such that a higher score indicated earlier sexual initiation. In addition, those respondents who reported never having sex for Item 3 were coded as "1." The three items were standardized and then a mean scale was created where a higher score indicates riskier sexual behavior ( $\alpha = .71$ ).

*Drug risk behavior* included two items, which asked respondents how often they smoked marijuana and how often they used prescription drugs (e.g., Adderall) that were not prescribed for them or used them in a way other than how the doctor prescribed their use (0 = *never* to 4 = *more than 10 times*). A mean scale was created where a higher score indicates more frequent drug risk behavior. The correlation between the two items was .65.

*Drinking behavior* included two items (adapted from Testa, Livingston, & Leonard, 2003), which asked respondents, "During the past 12 months, how many times have you gotten drunk on alcohol and how many times have you consumed five or more (if you're a man)/four or more (if you're a woman) drinks in a single sitting" (0 = *never* to 5 = *five or*

more days per week). The two items were averaged (Testa et al., 2003), where a higher score indicates more frequent heavy drinking. The correlation between the two items was .87.

Greek letter affiliation was coded 0 = nonmember and 1 = member of a Greek letter fraternity or sorority. Gender was coded as 0 = male and 1 = female.

**Statistical Analyses**

Comparisons between the two institutions were done using *t* tests and chi-square tests. Next, a fully recursive multiple group path model was estimated using the maximum likelihood estimator in Mplus Version 7.4 (Muthen & Muthen, 1998–2012) to simultaneously compare pathways between the two institutions. Standardized beta coefficients (~) are reported in all figures. Thirty-four cases (2.3%) were dropped because of missing data on the predictors. Thus, the sample size for our final analyses included 1,448 cases.

**Results**

Table 1 reports *t* test comparisons between campuses. Results revealed that the mean for physical abuse, sexual risk behavior, drug risk behavior, and drinking behavior was significantly higher among students at the Southeast campus than the Midwest campus. Chi-square test results in Table 2 revealed that there were significantly more females at the Midwest campus (55.50%) than the Southeast campus (44.50%), but more Greek letter affiliated students at the Southeast location (67.15%) than the Midwest location (32.85%).

**Table 1.** Mean Comparison between Campuses

Correlate	<i>M</i>		<i>t test</i>
	Southeast	Midwest	<i>t</i>
Physical abuse	0.39	0.33	3.60**
Entitlement	2.31	2.30	0.42
Self-control	2.82	2.84	-0.39
Sexual risk behavior	0.08	-0.08	3.80**
Drug risk behavior	2.01	1.78	3.47**
Drinking behavior	1.43	1.06	7.01**

\**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01.

**Table 2.** Frequencies and Group Comparison for Dichotomous Variables by Campus Location

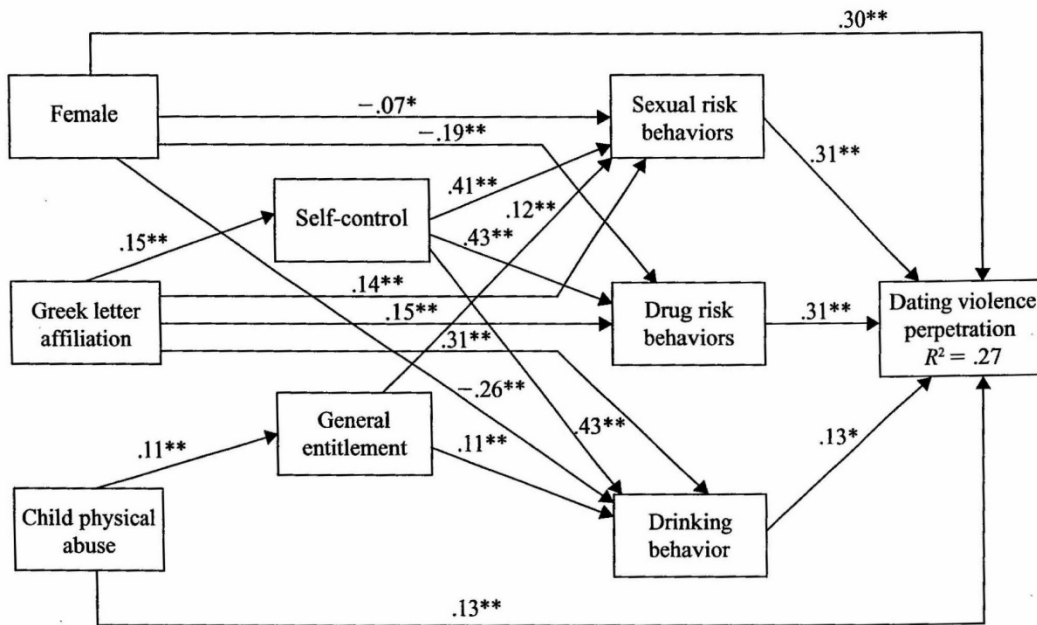
	N/Total	Total	Southeast		Midwest		$\chi^2$
		%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	
Female	755/1475	51.19	336	44.50	419	55.50	39.41**
Greek letter affiliation	551/1470	37.48	370	67.15	181	32.85	76.38**
Dating violence perpetration	589/1482	39.74	323	54.84	266	45.16	2.15

\**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01.



**Direct Effects**

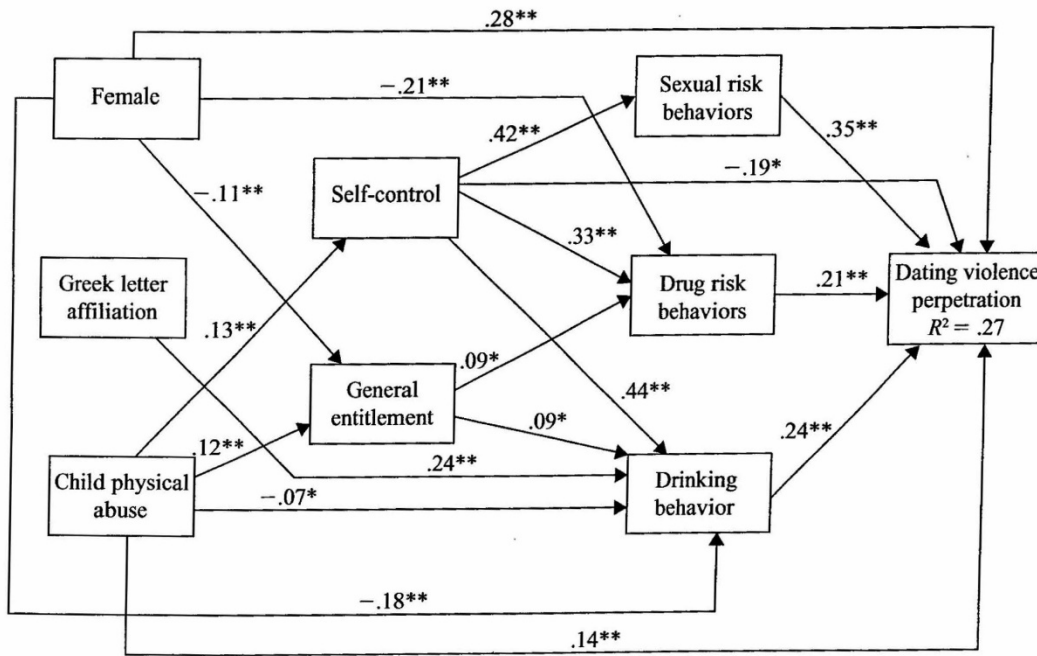
Results for the path analysis for the Southeast campus (only significant paths given) shown in Figure 1 revealed that being a Greek letter affiliate was positively associated with lower self-control ( $\beta = .15$ ). Thus, Greek letter members are more likely to have lower self-control compared to non-Greek letter members. Also, those who experienced more physical abuse had higher entitlement ( $\beta = .11$ ). Higher sexual risk behavior was linked to being male ( $\beta = -.07$ ), having lower self-control ( $\beta = .41$ ), being a Greek letter affiliate ( $\beta = .14$ ), and having more entitlement ( $\beta = .12$ ). Engaging in more frequent drug use was positively associated with being male ( $\beta = -.19$ ), lower self-control ( $\beta = .43$ ), and being a Greek letter fraternity or sorority member ( $\beta = .15$ ). Participating in more risky drinking was linked to being male ( $\beta = -.26$ ), a Greek letter member ( $\beta = .31$ ), having lower self-control ( $\beta = .43$ ), and higher entitlement ( $\beta = .11$ ). Finally, students who reported perpetrating dating violence were significantly more likely to be female ( $\beta = .30$ ); to have experienced more physical abuse ( $\beta = .13$ ); and to have higher participation in sexual ( $\beta = .31$ ), drug ( $\beta = .31$ ), and drinking risk behaviors ( $\beta = .13$ ). The full model explained 27% of the variance in dating violence perpetration among college students at the Southeast campus.



**Figure 1.** Correlates of dating violence perpetration for Southeast campus (only significant paths shown).  $*p < .05$ .  $^{**}p < .01$ .

Results for the Midwest campus shown in Figure 2 revealed that students who experienced more physical abuse had lower self-control ( $\beta = .13$ ) and higher entitlement ( $\beta = .12$ ), whereas females had lower entitlement ( $\beta = -.11$ ) than males. Sexual risk behavior was positively associated with lower self-control ( $\beta = .42$ ), whereas engaging in more drug risk

behaviors was linked to being male ( $\beta = -.21$ ), having lower self-control ( $\beta = .33$ ), and higher entitlement ( $\beta = .09$ ). Students with more risky drinking behavior had lower self-control ( $\beta = .44$ ), higher entitlement ( $\beta = .09$ ), were Greek letter affiliated ( $\beta = .24$ ) and male ( $\beta = -.18$ ) but were less likely to have experienced physical abuse ( $\beta = -.07$ ). Finally, sexual ( $\beta = .35$ ), drug ( $\beta = .21$ ), and drinking risk behaviors ( $\beta = .24$ ) were all positively associated with perpetrating dating violence as was being female ( $\beta = .28$ ) and experiencing more physical abuse ( $\beta = .14$ ). Those with higher self-control were more likely to perpetrate dating violence ( $\beta = -.19$ ) compared to their counterparts. The full model explained 27% of the variance in dating violence perpetration among college students at the Midwest campus.



**Figure 2.** Correlates of dating violence perpetration for Midwest campus (only significant paths shown).  $*p < .05$ .  $**p < .01$ .

**Comparisons of Direct Paths**

A comparison of all direct path coefficients revealed four significant differences between campuses at the  $p < .05$  level: (a) The effect of gender on entitlement was significantly different at the Southeast campus (positive; i.e., females had greater entitlement;  $\beta = .05$ ) compared to the Midwest campus (negative; i.e., males had greater entitlement;  $\beta = -.22$ ), (b) there was a significant positive relationship between Greek letter affiliate and sexual risk behaviors at the Southeast campus ( $\beta = .27$ ) but no significant relationship for students at the Midwest campus ( $\beta = .00$ ), (c) the positive relationship between Greek letter affiliate and drug risk behavior was significant at the Southeast campus ( $\beta = .30$ ) but not at the Midwest campus ( $\beta = .04$ ), and (d) lower self-control was a significantly stronger correlate

of drug risk behavior for the Southeast campus ( $\beta = .43$ ) compared to the Midwest campus ( $\beta = .33$ ).

### *Indirect Effects*

The full indirect effect results for the Southeast campus (top half of Table 3) revealed that four variables including gender, Greek letter affiliate, self-control, and entitlement had a significant indirect effect on dating violence perpetration through numerous variables. Specifically, males who engaged in more drug risk behavior were more likely to perpetrate dating violence. Greek letter fraternity or sorority affiliates engaged in more sexual and drug risk behaviors, which were linked to dating violence perpetration. Students with lower self-control had higher rates of drug and sexual risk behavior, which led to dating violence. Finally, those with higher entitlement engaged in more sexual risk behavior, which was linked to dating violence perpetration for those at the Southeast campus.

**Table 3.** Full Model Results for Dating Violence Perpetration

Variables	Direct Effect Estimate	SE	Indirect Effect Estimate	SE	Total Effect Estimate	SE
<i>Southeast Campus</i>						
Female	.30**	0.05	-.12**	0.03	.18**	0.04
Greek letter affiliation	-.04	0.05	.19**	0.03	.12*	0.05
Physical abuse	.13**	0.05	.03	0.02	.17**	0.05
Self-control	-.12	0.09	.32**	0.06	.20**	0.05
Entitlement	.06	0.05	.07**	0.02	.12*	0.05
Mediating construct						
Sexual risk behavior	.31**	0.05	—	—	—	—
Drug risk behavior	.31**	0.06	—	—	—	—
Drinking behavior	.13*	0.06	—	—	—	—
<i>Midwest Campus</i>						
Female	.28**	0.05	-.10**	0.03	.18**	0.05
Greek letter affiliation	-.09	0.05	.06*	0.03	-.02	0.05
Physical abuse	.14**	0.05	.02	0.02	.16**	0.05
Self-control	-.19*	0.09	.32**	0.06	.14*	0.05
Entitlement	.09	0.05	.06*	0.03	.15**	0.05
Mediating construct						
Sexual risk behavior	.35**	0.05	—	—	—	—
Drug risk behavior	.21**	0.05	—	—	—	—
Drinking behavior	.24**	0.06	—	—	—	—

Note. Standardized coefficients shown. SE= standard error.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

Results for the Midwest campus (bottom half of Table 3) revealed that four variables including gender, Greek letter affiliate, self-control, and entitlement had a significant indirect effect on dating violence perpetration. Specifically, males with more drinking and drug risk behaviors perpetrated dating violence. Greek letter fraternity or sorority affiliates have higher rates of heavy drinking, which led to dating violence perpetration. Students with lower self-control engaged in more sexual, drug, and drinking risk behavior, which were linked to perpetrating dating violence. Finally, those with higher entitlement engaged in more drug and drinking risk behaviors, which led to perpetrating dating violence among students at the Midwest campus. All indirect path coefficients were statistically similar, indicating that none of the *indirect* paths leading to dating violence perpetration significantly differed for the two campuses (results not shown).

## Discussion

This article examined the role of child abuse, self-control, entitlement, and risky behaviors on dating violence perpetration among college students from one Southeastern and one Midwestern university in the United States. Although many of the direct pathways to dating violence were similar for both campuses (e.g., child abuse, gender, sexual, and drug risk behaviors), other direct pathways were significantly different. These findings underscore the need to examine regional variations in college student dating violence across different university campuses.

General entitlement and self-control had varying effects on dating violence perpetration across the two campuses. An inflated sense of entitlement was indirectly linked to dating violence at both schools. Research demonstrates a positive link between narcissism and physical aggression (Reidy, Zeichner, Foster, & Martinez, 2008), and entitled mentalities are becoming more common among college students (Greenberger et al., 2008). As such, it is possible that college campuses may see increases in the prevalence of dating violence in the near future if this trend continues. Moreover, research finds that general entitlement is linked to numerous antisocial personality traits and behaviors (Campbell et al., 2004; Raskin & Terry, 1988), and sexually entitled beliefs among young men are tied to higher rates of unprotected sex (Santana et al., 2006). Previous research along with this study suggests that campuses may also see patterns of increasing high-risk behaviors among college students. For example, our findings show that higher entitlement is linked to sexual risk-taking behaviors and more problematic drinking among students at the Southeast campus. Meanwhile, Midwest students with higher entitlement have riskier substance-using behaviors, which is associated with dating violence.

These findings point to the need for future research to examine the multidimensional nature of entitlement among college students beyond academic attitudes (Lippmann, Bulanda, & Wagenaar, 2009), such as self-entitled beliefs surrounding sexual risk behaviors, substance use, and violence. It is possible that entitled attitudes extend beyond academic achievement and have a significant impact on risk-taking behaviors, which would have significant implications for campus-based interventions. For example, alcohol-based interventions on college campuses may be most effective when they take into consideration the unique characteristics and needs of student populations in identifying risk factors (Larimer

& Cronce, 2002), such as overall levels of entitlement and geographic location. Furthermore, findings from this study can inform multilevel approaches to college alcohol interventions, which have proven successful (Prochaska et al., 2004), by concurrently emphasizing more individual risk factors (i.e., entitlement), interpersonal experiences (i.e., dating violence), and institutional characteristics (i.e., geographic region). Finally, campus interventions addressing dating violence among college students can be effective in modifying stereotypical, harmful gender beliefs through skills training and raising awareness (Schwartz, Griffin, Russell, & Frontaura-Duck, 2006), which could also be applied toward entitled mindsets.

Students with lower self-control were more likely to engage in sexual, drug, and drinking risk behaviors across both campuses, and these deviant behaviors are associated with perpetrating dating violence. The effect of lower self-control on deviant behavior and violence is consistent with prior research (Gover et al., 2011; Sussman et al., 2003). Past research has identified the ability to self-regulate as a strong predictor of whether or not one will engage in partner violence (Finkel, DeWall, Slotter, Oaten, & Foshee, 2009). Contrary to expectations, however, students with higher self-control are more likely to perpetrate dating violence at the Midwest campus. It is possible that some college students exert self-control in making conscious, well-thought-out decisions to perpetrate partner violence, especially if they believe that violence is normative and expected in the context of relationships and they feel entitled to abuse their partners (Silverman & Williamson, 1997). For students at both campuses, experiencing more physical abuse is a risk factor for dating violence, which is consistent with prior research (Foshee et al., 2004; Herrenkohl et al., 2004). Although students at the Southeast school reported significantly more physical abuse, child abuse continues to be an important contributor of dating violence as its effect is direct and significant, even when considering several additional risk behaviors regardless of campus location.

Our findings are generally supportive of the background situational model of dating violence, which holds that those who experience family violence may view aggression as an acceptable part of relationships and use it to establish compliance in future dating because they view this behavior as normative (Foshee et al., 1999; McNaughton Reyes et al., 2016). In addition, our findings also support the antisocial orientation perspective, as those who are exposed to poor parenting (i.e., physical abuse) are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior, which leads to dating violence perpetration (L. G. Simons et al., 2008). Specifically, experiencing more child abuse is linked to lower self-control (Midwest sample only), and general entitlement and self-control are associated with drinking, drug use, and/or sexual risk behavior, all three of which are tied to dating violence perpetration (R. L. Simons et al., 1998).

Although campus culture in general contributes to widespread drinking (LaBrie, Grant, & Hummer, 2011), drug use (Johnston et al., 2014), and risky sexual behavior (Mair, Ponicki, & Gruenewald, 2016), the social context of being a member of a Greek letter affiliation adds additional risk. Although Greek letter affiliation did not have a direct effect on dating violence, it has a significant indirect effect through sexual and drug risk behaviors for the Southeast campus. Moreover, there were significant differences in the two direct pathways linking Greek letter affiliation to sexual and drug risk behaviors for the Southeast sample

compared to the Midwest. Thus, differences exist in risk factors for dating violence between these two campuses. Although the Southeast campus had higher rates of dating violence compared to the Midwest campus, this difference was not statistically significant, despite some literature showing higher rates in the Southern and Southeastern states compared to the Midwest (Marquart et al., 2007; Straus, 2004). It is possible that Greek letter fraternity or sorority life is more culturally prominent at the Southeast institution, as their membership is more than double compared to the Midwest institution. The added element of widespread Greek letter fraternity or sorority culture, with its emphasis on heavy drinking (Hummer et al., 2012) and drug use (McCabe et al., 2005), may exacerbate actual substance use among students at the Southeast campus compared to those at the Midwest location. In fact, our findings show that the Southeast campus has significantly higher rates of sexual, drug, and drinking risk behaviors as well as higher Greek letter fraternity and sorority membership compared to the Midwest campus.

Because Greek letter affiliated members tend to engage in more drinking and high-risk behaviors (Borsari et al., 2009; Hummer et al., 2012) and certain fraternities endorse violence against women (Humphrey & Kahn, 2000), it is plausible that this combination increases the risk of dating violence. Studies consistently find that Greek letter fraternity members have higher rates of drinking and drug use (McCabe et al., 2005; Sidani, Shensa, & Primack, 2013) compared to non-Greek letter fraternity affiliated students. Furthermore, Greek letter fraternity members often report suffering more negative outcomes related to substance use (Franklin, 2010; Larimer et al., 2000) compared to nonmembers. As such, the unique experiences of fraternity and sorority members warrant further attention in understanding the role between Greek letter affiliation context and dating violence.

In terms of limitations, all data are self-reported, and because of the sensitive nature of some questions, some students may have succumbed to the social desirability bias and reported, for example, lower rates of dating violence perpetration than their actual behavior. Despite this, participants answered anonymously so it is less likely that they would be motivated to bias their responses. Second, the retrospective nature of some of the measures may have resulted in some over- or underreporting. Third, the cross-sectional data precludes inferences about causality. For example, although drug risk behavior was modeled as an independent variable leading to dating violence, the reverse relationship is plausible. Fourth, because students were not randomly selected, we cannot generalize our findings to all undergraduate students enrolled in social science courses at the Midwest and Southeast campuses. Finally, the self-control scale we used had a low alpha reliability. Despite this, the scale still did quite well in terms of explaining sexual and drug risk behaviors.

These findings contribute to the literature in two ways. First, little research has examined the role of general entitlement and dating violence, but our results show that entitlement had significant indirect effects on dating violence for students at both campuses. Given the rise in entitled attitudes among college students (Greenberger et al., 2008), further research in this area is warranted. Second, we compared two large public universities and found certain risk factors (e.g., gender, Greek letter affiliation, and self-control) operated differently in explaining dating violence for students at the two campuses, suggesting that although dating violence is prevalent, the risk factors vary by campus location and student body characteristics. As such, the location of public universities should be taken

into consideration for campus-based interventions that highlight the unique dating violence risks that different campuses may face.

## Note

1. Greek letter affiliation refers to group membership in a fraternity or sorority, which are social organizations at colleges and universities that engage in philanthropic activities, often host parties and other events, have a shared ideology, and create networking and career opportunities for their members.

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