

Anomie and psychological violence as predictors of perpetrated physical violence in close relationships by female adults^{1*}

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to examine the predictive power of the anomie and dimensions of psychological violence in predicting perpetrated physical violence by female adults. The sample was convenient and consisted of 341 female adults, aged 18 to 65 years ($M = 25.04$, $SD = 8.97$). Anomie was assessed by the scores on the Perception of Anomie Scale. Violent behavior was assessed by The Violent Behavior Questionnaire among adults (VBQ; dimensions: mocking and making rough jokes, machinations and plotting and insulting and threatening (psychological violence), light hitting, poking, pushing and beating with or without objects (physical violence)). Two hierarchical regression analyses were conducted. In the first model age was included, in the second anomie and in the third dimensions of psychological violence. The results suggest a significant model for light hitting, teasing, pushing away ($R^2 = .37$, $F_{(5,335)} = 39.93$, $p < .001$) with anomie ($\beta = .12$, $p = .006$), mocking and making rough jokes ($\beta = .29$, $p < .001$) and insulting and threatening ($\beta = .33$, $p < .001$) being the significant predictors. The results also suggest a significant model for beating with or without objects ($R^2 = .23$, $F_{(5,335)} = 20.19$, $p < .001$) with age ($\beta = .15$, $p = .004$), anomie ($\beta = .10$, $p = .044$), machinations and plotting ($\beta = .15$, $p = .012$) and insulting and threatening ($\beta = .29$, $p < .001$) being the significant predictors. The results indicate the connection of different forms of violent behavior. In addition, they show the importance of the wider social context in predicting violent behavior e.g., the personal experience of alienation from society in which the individual lives.

Keywords: anomie, psychological violence, physical violence, close relationships, female

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Violence as a social phenomenon can be understood in different ways. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2002) defines this phenomenon as the intentional use of physical force and power by threat or action against oneself, against another person, or against a group of people or an entire community, which could result or results in injury, death, psychological consequences, lack of development or deprivation. The prevalent understanding is that men are more likely to be perpetrators of violence than women. Consequently, a significant amount of research has been conducted to examine the characteristics and relationships of various variables with male-perpetrated violence. Some reasons for the insufficient investigation into men as victims (and their characteristics) of violence include the existence of a “gender paradigm” that implies gender asymmetry, as well as the societal cultural belief that men are capable of defending themselves, and that violence committed by women against men is rare (Carney et al., 2007). However, there is research that confirms that women can be perpetrators of violence against men (Straus, 2015). Therefore, the aim of this research is to investigate violence committed by women in close relationships.

Physical and psychological violence

Violence can be manifested in different contexts and interpersonal relationships; it can have different forms of manifestation and different consequences. As the most common forms of violence in interpersonal relationships we can consider physical and psychological violence.

Physical violence is realized by the use of physical force or against another person in order to inflict or attempt to inflict physical injuries (Krstinić & Vasiljković, 2019). This type of violence refers to numerous behaviors that can cause pain or some kind of injury (physical injury or mental pain) (Lukić & Jovanović, 2003). Some of the manifestations of physical violence are: scratching, slapping, pushing, hitting or holding someone against a wall, biting, choking, inflicting burns, throwing objects at a partner/partner, pulling hair, beating someone, assaulting, locking the victim in a room or throwing the victim out of the house and forcing the victim to leave the house (Janković, 2023). Signs of physical violence in most cases are visible and manifest as injuries on the face, legs, arms, chest, stomach, in the form of hematomas, cuts, scratches, burns, bone fractures and strangulation marks on the neck (Vilić Konstantinović, 2013). Also, in most cases, psychological violence is not recognized until there is an escalation in behavior and severe visible consequences (Seleš, 2020).

In a study in which respondents were females in treatment for abusive behavior, context and motivation for abusing were examined (Babcock et al., 2003; as cited in

Seleš, 2020). Based on the obtained results, the authors grouped the women into two categories: 1) Partner Only (women use aggressive behavior only toward intimate partners); 2) Generally Violent (women use aggressive behavior in various situations). This grouping is based on the assumption that people who manifest violent behavior in different situations are often violent at home and toward an intimate partner. The most common reason for this behavior is that women believe that violence is an adequate response to conflict resolution. Also, some women can control their violent behavior in front of other people and use it only toward their partner.

It has been shown that domestic violence mostly involves physical abuse (Krstinić & Vasiljković, 2019), which often regularly co-occurs with various forms of psychological abuse with the goal to control the victim and establishing power over the victim (Matijašević-Obradović & Stefanović, 2017). Furthermore, in most cases, where a man is arrested as a perpetrator of violence, the type of violence was physical and when a woman is the perpetrator, the basis for the arrest is psychological violence (Dimitrijević et al., 2016). There is some evidence obtained in studies that support the gender symmetry in perpetration of physical assaults against partners (Desmarais et al., 2012; Winstok, 2012) and some unsupportive evidence (Mamula & Dijanić Plašč, 2014).

Psychological violence can be defined in different ways because of many indicators that can refer to this type of violence. This type of violence can also be found in the literature as emotional, verbal or nonphysical abuse or aggression (Lagdon et al., 2014). Psychological violence refers to some kind of intentional use of power against another person or another group and that can result in harm to personality development (physical, mental, moral, social aspects of development; Di Martino, 2002). This type of violence can include many behaviors such as humiliating, ridiculing, insulting (Rippon, 2000), stalking (Bonomi et al., 2012) and acts such as harassment and threats (Di Martino, 2002). Some other behaviors that can refer to psychological violence are belittling, ignoring, cursing, mocking, complaining, intimidating, controlling (including jealous behavior), isolating, contempt, bullying, blaming and verbal attack (Fernández- González et al., 2012; Ignjatović, 2011; O'Leary & Slep, 2003; Orpinas et al., 2012; as cited in Janković, 2023). Dokkedahl et al. (2019) suggest that acts of psychological violence can be ordered by intensity and because of that, acts can be considered using a continuum that begins with a psychological aggression (for example: yelling and insults) and ends with severe abuse which has coercive characteristics (for example: isolation and threats). Listed acts and behaviors indicate that a person uses them to terrorize, intimidate, control, belittle another person with the goal to limit and destroy his/her self-esteem and well-being (Saltzman et al., 2002; as cited in Lagdon et al., 2014). In one study, women who were battered by their partners reported that their experiences of psychological abuse were more damaging to their well-being than their experiences of physical violence (Follingstad et al. 1990). Furthermore, some evidence suggests that coercive control contributes to the destructive psychological effects of domestic violence (anxiety, depression, posttraumatic stress disorder) more than physical violence does (Stark, 2006). Also, some authors found that

psychologically abusive behaviors often occurred more frequently, even on a daily basis, than physically abusive behaviors and that might permeate part of interactions between a victim and a batterer on a daily basis (Marshall, 1999).

In the context of feminist theory-based research, authors suggest that gender inequity is especially important and because of that inequity, women use intimate partner violence with a goal of self-defense or as a response to their partner's abuse pattern (Dasgupta, 2002; Dobash & Dobash, 2004; Swan & Snow, 2006; Worcester, 2002). Moreover, in the context of family conflict research, there is some evidence that men and women have similar motivations relating to conflict resolution and these are mainly anger and desire to resolve conflicts (Straus, 2005). In some societies, men usually have more physical and social power than women and because of that women are often taught through the process of socialization to accept and assume a passive role and that they cannot be very successful in controlling their partners (Dasgupta, 2002; Worcester, 2002). However, there is some evidence that both men and women use intimate partner violence for coercive control (Hamby, 2009) and that they use control in different ways; precisely, women use control with a goal to gain autonomy and control through coercive tactics within both violent and nonviolent relationships (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000) and men use control to demonstrate authority in relationships (Kernsmith, 2005). Furthermore, among women, in the context of intimate partner violence, their perpetration may co-occur with their victimization and as an explanation authors suggested that is because women may use violence with a goal to protect themselves and their children or in retaliation to being victimized (Chen & White, 2004; Dasgupta, 2002; Hamberger & Guse, 2002; Kimmel, 2002). As a summary, some authors examined women's motivations for aggressive behaviors against their intimate partners and they found that motivations can be organized in two types: 1) defensive/reactive/self-protective motives and 2) active motives/goal oriented (for example: retaliation, attempts to control the partner; Swan & Snow, 2006).

In the context of parent-child violence and aggressive behavior, results obtained in some studies showed that antisocial personality, conflict in the family, negative relations with adults and parental use of psychological aggression toward intimate partners were predictors of self-reported youth aggression (Ferguson et al., 2009). Also, antisocial personality traits and delinquent peers were best predictors of bullying behavior (Ferguson et al., 2009). Moreover, if a person was exposed to violence during childhood that can be linked to involvement in a violent intimate relationship (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2004), dating violence victimization and also future perpetration, but it is also important to mention that not all victims are perpetrators (Gover et al., 2008). Related to previously mentioned empirical findings and theoretical assumptions is the cycle of violence hypothesis that suggests that children who experience abuse are more likely to experience and also perpetrate violence in the future (Heyman & Sleps, 2002; Linder & Collins, 2005). Also, the cycle of violence can be considered in the context of social learning theory (Bandura, 1969) which assumes that a person's behaviors are learned through the observations and because of that if a person was abused during childhood, that person may believe

(as he/she ages) that aggression is a method for dealing with interpersonal conflict (Manchikanti Gómez, 2010). Moreover, there is some evidence that juveniles who abuse their parents may, at some point in time, show an escalation in violent behavior. Precisely, abuse toward parent(s) mostly begins with verbal violence and may progress during time in frequency as well as in intensity and verbal violence may be changed by severe psychological or physical abuse (Eckstein, 2004). It is important to mention an escalation hypothesis that suggests that relations between a parent and a child are dynamic interactions which tend to conflict and the intensification process may increase to the point that even parricide may be the culminating action (Walsh & Krienert, 2009). In the context of child use of violence toward their parents, obtained results in some studies suggest that males are more likely to use physical abuse, while females are more likely to use psychological abuse (Evans & Warren-Sohlberg, 1988; Nock & Kazdin, 2002).

Many studies were conducted with a goal to examine sex differences in violence victimization and perpetration and obtained results were not consistent. Some of the studies showed that females are more likely to perpetrate psychological than physical violence against males (Straus et al., 1996). Other studies suggested that women are almost always violent if they are abused by their male partners (Abel, 2001; Hamberger & Guse, 2002) or that women are at least as likely as men to use violence in their relationships (Archer, 2000; Chase et al., 2003) and that there is gender symmetry among couples (Archer, 2000; Fiebert & Gonzalez, 1997). Similar results showed that, when respondents were students, men and women commit similar rates of physical aggression (Cercone et al., 2005). Archer (2000) in a meta-analysis obtained results that indicate that when men's and women's use of intimate partner violence were compared, women were more likely to have ever used physical intimate partner violence and that using violence occurred more frequently. It is also important to mention that some authors suggest that violence that men use is much greater than women's in the context of all areas outside the home (Worcester, 2002). That result is consistent with another result which suggests that girls usually show more violent behavior within home than outside home and that boys are more likely to show violent behavior toward strangers (Cairns et al., 1988).

Two types of violence, psychological and physical, are often considered together and based on research and theoretical evidence it can be said that these two types of violence are distinct and also related (Greenfield & Marks, 2010). Because of that, there were suggestions on how psychological and physical violence can be differentiated: 1) whether or not the act of violence is physical or psychological/nonphysical; 2) whether or not the consequences of the act are physical or psychological /nonphysical (McGee & Wolfe, 1991). Moreover, although it has been shown that psychological and physical abuse can be intertwined, some authors suggested that their dynamics and patterns are not completely identical (Jacobson et al., 1996; O'Leary, 1999).

Therefore, psychological abuse is generally understudied compared to physical abuse. Most studies have been conducted in the context of intimate partner violence. Some studies that examined relations between psychological and physical violence showed that

people who experience psychological violence are more likely to be victims of physical violence (Lanza et al., 2006). There is some evidence that physical and psychological abuse often co-occur, precisely, abuse patterns tend to co-occur and it showed that victimization in one domain is associated with an increased likelihood of victimization in other areas (Claussen & Crittenden, 1991). Also, obtained results in some other studies suggested that two different types of abuse, psychological and physical, were highly correlated (Baldry, 2003) and that frequency of verbal disagreements and high levels of interpersonal conflict are strongly associated with physical violence (Hoffman et al., 1994; Jewkes et al., 2002). Furthermore, some authors found that psychological type of violence can precede or follow or co-occur with physical type of violence (Lukić & Jovanović, 2003; Nedimović & Biro, 2011; Stets, 1991). It showed that most women who experience physical violence by their intimate partner also report that they experience psychological violence (Dutton & Painter, 1993). Similar results showed that jealous and possessive male partners who commit verbal violence against their female partners and deny them access to their family, friends or family income tend to commit physical violence as well (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000; as cited in Kaukien, 2004). Nonphysical, psychological violence can be conceptualized as a predictor of physical violence and that result is consistent with some other results obtained in previous studies (Dutton et al., 1996; Harned, 2002; Macmillan & Gartner, 1999; Murphy & O'Leary, 1989). Furthermore, there is some evidence that stalking, as an indicator of psychological violence, can be a risk factor for some escalated forms of physical violence, even femicide (McFarlane et al., 2002). As already mentioned, there are numerous manifestations of psychological violence, but authors identified humiliation/degradation and controlling/dominance as behaviors that are especially harmful for victim's health (both mental and physical) and that these behaviors are strongly associated with physical violence (Bell et al., 2008; Bennett et al., 2000; Follingstad et al., 1990; Katz & Arias, 1999; Kelly, 2004). In summary, it can be said that psychological violence represents a risk factor for physical aggression (O'Leary, 1999) and precisely, a risk factor for both minor and severe physical injuries (Thompson et al., 2001).

Anomie

Durkheim (1984; as cited in Radetić Lovrić, 2011) is the author of the anomie and he suggested an explanation of collective consciousness which is much stronger than individual consciousness and its sums and which is considered important for understanding the concept of anomie in the explanation of socio-pathological behaviors. Collective consciousness enables the realization of social goals and establishes the socially acceptable behavior of an individual through the process of socializing and through the system of values in society, norms, collective ideas, opinions that exist in the social system and which are woven into customs, morality, law, religion (Radetić-Lovrić, 2011). As society and life circumstances change so does the collective consciousness. In cases where the collective consciousness is not able to continue to follow rapid social changes, that may lead to the fact that society has no control over the individual.

Furthermore, at some point, society finally loses prior regulatory function and social rules and norms about human behavior that is socially acceptable are modified. After all those changes, there is a lawlessness state in society that Durkheim calls anomie (Radetić-Lovrić, 2011). Anomie may manifest at both individual (as lack of exteriority and constraint) and social (as aggregation of the lack of exteriority and constraint) levels (Sârbu et al., 2022). An alienated person (from society or/and him/herself) may feel numerous unpleasant feelings such as: feeling different from everyone else, feeling distanced from work, family, and friends, feeling separate from everyone else, feeling that the world is empty or meaningless, feeling unsafe when interacting with others, having difficulty approaching and speaking with others, especially with parents, feeling hopeless and low self-esteem (Barclay & Moncivaiz, 2018; as cited in Sârbu et al., 2022). However, it should be noted that only certain individuals find a way out of anomic social situations in the world of social pathology. Such life circumstances can be unfavorable for the development of an individual and can lead to the creation of dissatisfaction in a person, which manifests itself through various psychological phenomena (alienation, loneliness, helplessness), and can even lead to some types of social pathology (the world of crime, using drugs and other socio-pathological phenomena). Therefore, anomie may generate certain social-psychological phenomena that are more directly related to social-pathological phenomena and that anomie in itself is not sufficient to cause social-pathological phenomena (Radetić-Lovrić, 2011).

One of the understandings of anomie is to conceptualize this phenomenon as a component of social alienation. Social alienation actually represents the state in which the person can be and whose characteristic is that the person may dissociate both from society and from himself, which can lead to the development of a psychological disorder (Erdner et al., 2005). A social system that is in a state of anomie may cause people to interpret the situation in which they find themselves in such a way that they are unable to have control over such a situation. Consequently, the state of anomie is conceptually close to the concept of an external locus of control, because people interpret the situation they are in as one that is beyond control and it is unlikely that they can change anything about their lives and about what happens to them (Rotter, 1966). A group of authors (Mihailović et al., 2004) examined the consequences of anomic social conditions in Serbia and they obtained results that present life in Serbia is determined and subordinated to the past and that can be discouraging for young people and their aspirations and desires with a future ahead of them.

Regarding the measurement of the possible effects that social anomie has on the manifestation of behavior that can be characterized as breaking the rules, Durkheim and Merton were pioneers in the research of these effects (Durkheim, 1951; Merton, 1968; as cited in Konty, 2005). The results of their studies indicated that the manifestation of deviant behavior is frequent in a state of social anomie, because such a state in which people live is extremely tense and difficult. Consequently, violent behavior then actually appears as some type of social-psychological mechanism that a person uses in order to cope with such conditions, to adapt to such conditions and that person usually does because of feelings of helplessness.

It has been shown that poverty, unexpected and rapid changes in social and economic status, as well as the experience of a high degree of instability and the difficulty of making decisions due to new life circumstances, may cause a person to experience a high level of stress, to the destabilization and disorganization of family relationships and to the appearance of violent behavior in the family (Nikolić-Ristanović, 2008; as cited in Opsenica Kostić et al., 2016). Some authors suggest that shame may be the key emotion of anomie for the person because it can arouse other emotions (for example: intense anger, sadness, feel of rejection...) and that may further lead to the possibility of violent behavior toward others and also against the self (Lansky, 1987; Scheff, 1997; as cited in TenHouten, 2016). There is some evidence that rapid changes in society tends to result in an increment of suicides, crime, and deviant behavior (Bjarnason et al., 2005; Thorlindsson & Bernburg, 2004), conflict and other forms of violence (Karimi & Jafari-Koshki, 2020). Also, in a study which examines the postwar former Yugoslavia context (Spini et al., 2019), authors obtained results that when local communities have been exposed to violence (generalized across different ethno-national groups), local communities powerfully criticize abuse of the human rights and results suggested that the relationship between generalized victimization and the abuse of human rights violations is mediated by a collective sense of anomie.

In the context of intimate partner violence, the majority of research has been focused on the women as victims of violence (and their mental health) and men as perpetrators of violence. There are limited number of studies that study women as perpetrators of violence and use of violence behaviors in other close relationships (not only in relationships with partners) (Bernardi & Steyn, 2019; Carney et al., 2007; Chen & White, 2004; Machado et al., 2020; Mackay et al., 2018; Venäläinen, 2017; Walker et al., 2020). Accordingly, the aim of this study was to examine the predictive power of the anomie and different dimensions of psychological violence in predicting physical violence in close relationships perpetrated by female adults.

Method

Sample and procedure

The sample was convenient and consisted of 341 female adults. The mean age of the respondents was 25.03 ($SD = 8.97$). Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 65 years.

Table 1
Sample structure by socio-demographic variables

Education	%	Relationship status	%	Satisfaction with material condition (income)	%
Finished secondary education	69.5%	Not in a relationship	40.5%	Very dissatisfied	4.1%

Finished higher school	1.5 %	Living in a cohabitation with their partner	12 %	Moderately dissatisfied	15.8 %
Bachelor's degree	18.8%	Married	8.8%	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	29.6%
Master's degree	10.3%	Divorced	1.8%	Moderately satisfied	36.4%
		Widows	0.9%	Very satisfied	14.1%
		In a relationship but not living with a partner	36.1%		

Respondents were recruited in part online and they filled out an online questionnaire ($n = 151$) (which was shared through social media and personal contacts), and the other part of the respondents participated using the paper and pencil method ($n = 202$). Research was conducted in the period from December 2022 to June 2023. The respondents who filled out the paper questionnaire were recruited at the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš, Serbia. Researchers asked students to fill a questionnaire after their exam was finished or before their lecture began. Participation in the research was completely anonymous and voluntary, and respondents received all necessary information for participating in the research. Within the battery of instruments, there was a one-item marker for checking the attention of the respondents (for checking the validity of the answers). Based on the answer to this item, 12 respondents were removed. The research was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš (number 12-2022).

Data analysis

Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS 20 and JASP 0.16.0.0 (JASP Team, 2022). Descriptive statistics for investigated variables were given in terms of means, standard deviations, range and skewness and kurtosis. The reliability of the scales was assessed using Cronbach's α and McDonald's omega coefficient. In order to determine the relationship between anomie, dimensions of psychological and physical violence, Pearson's correlation coefficients between the variables were calculated. Moreover, predictive power of age, anomie and dimensions of psychological violence in predicting dimensions of physical violence was assessed through hierarchical linear regression.

Instruments

Questionnaire of Violent Behavior among adults (VBQ; Kodžopeljić et al., 2014). The questionnaire is intended to self-assess the frequency of committing violent behavior by a person in the present or in the past toward different groups

of people (parents, siblings (or other household members), partner (husband/wife or boyfriend/girlfriend), friends/acquaintances/colleagues from work, and unknown persons). Respondents had the task of reading all the statements and choosing a number on a five-point Likert scale (the following meanings were added to the extreme values: 1 – *Never*; 5 – *Several times a week*) which is the most appropriate.

The original version of the questionnaire consists of 25 items, but for the purposes of this research, a version of 20 items was used. Precisely, items related to committing violent acts against unknown persons were omitted, and the reason for such a decision is reflected in the fact that this research examined committing violent acts in close relationships.

The items in the questionnaire are conceptualized in such a way that they measure five different forms of manifestation of violent behavior, which are ordered by the intensity of the violence: mocking and making rough jokes, machinations and plotting, insulting and threatening, light hitting, poking, pushing, beating with or without objects. These forms of violence can be further grouped into two superordinate categories: 1. Psychological/Emotional violence (indicators/dimensions: mocking and making rough jokes (direct verbal violence), machinations and plotting (indirect verbal violence) and insulting and threatening (direct verbal violence)); 2. Physical violence (indicators/dimensions: light hitting, poking, pushing, beating with or without objects). The scale showed mostly satisfying internal consistency reliability based on the present sample: mocking and making rough jokes ($\alpha = .784$; $\omega = .786$); machinations and plotting ($\alpha = .750$; $\omega = .753$); insulting and threatening ($\alpha = .653$; $\omega = .659$); light hitting, poking, pushing ($\alpha = .570$; $\omega = .587$); beating with or without objects ($\alpha = .434$; $\omega = .399$).

Perception of anomie scale (original instrument: McClosky & Shaar, 1965; translation and adaptation: Radetić-Lovrić, 2011). The scale is intended to measure a person's subjective experience that there are no more existing and accepted norms in society, which leads to a feeling of confusion regarding the norms that are now valid in society. Respondents had the task of evaluating their degree of agreement with given statements related to the world and society in which they live on a five-point Likert scale (the following meanings were added to the extreme values: 1 - *I do not agree at all*; 5 - *I completely agree*). The scale is unidimensional and consists of 9 items (example of an item: "Today the world is uncertain and anything can happen"). The scale shows satisfying internal consistency reliability based on the present sample ($\alpha = .833$; $\omega = .834$).

Results

Some basic descriptive statistics indicators are summarized and shown for all variables that were used in this research. Table 2 shows the descriptive indicators (range, means, standard deviations and measures the deviation of empirical distributions from normal) of the variables used in the research.

Table 2*Descriptive indicators*

Variable	Min	Max	M	SD	Sk	Ku
Anomie	1.00	5.00	3.54	.78	-.31	-.18
Mocking and making rough jokes	1.00	5.00	1.90	.82	1.22	1.33
Machinations and plotting	1.00	3.75	1.24	.45	2.45	6.63
Insulting and threatening	1.00	4.25	1.45	.55	1.62	3.22
Light hitting, poking, pushing	1.00	3.75	1.45	.51	1.560	2.60
Beating with or without objects	1.00	2.25	1.04	.15	4.29	20.84

Furthermore, Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated with the aim of examining the relationship between measures obtained on different dimensions of committing violent behavior and anomie (Table 3).

Table 3*Pearson correlations between the dimensions of violent behavior and social anomie*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Anomie	1	.03	.11	.08	.16**	.18**
2 Mocking and making rough jokes		1	.47**	.51**	.51**	.26**
3 Machinations and plotting			1	.53**	.40**	.34**
4 Insulting and threatening				1	.53**	.42**
5 Light hitting, poking, pushing					1	.45**
6 Beating with or without objects						1

Note: **p<.01, treba staviti razmak pre i posle znaka manje, p <.01

The obtained results indicate that the measures obtained on anomie are positively correlated with the dimensions of physical violence (light hitting, poking, pushing and beating with or without objects) of low intensity, while the measures obtained on anomie are not significantly correlated with the dimensions of psychological violence (mocking and making rough jokes, machinations and plotting and insulting and threatening) (Table 3). As regards for the correlation between the measures obtained on different dimensions of violent behavior, the obtained results indicate that these measures are significantly positively correlated and that the intensity of the correlations ranges from low to moderate. Based on the intensity of all shown correlations, it can be said that there is no high correlation between the measures obtained on the assumed predictor variables, that is, there is no multicollinearity, which is one of the conditions for conducting regression analysis.

Two hierarchical regression analyses were conducted. Before considering the obtained results of the hierarchical regression analysis, the VIF and Tolerance values were considered with the aim of checking whether these values indicate the existence of multicollinearity between the predictor variables. Based on the values of these parameters, it can be said that there is no multicollinearity (VIF < 10; Tolerance > .10; Senaviratna & Cooray, 2019).

Bearing in mind that there is an asymmetry regarding respondents' age, reflecting the young age structure, with the goal of statistical control of the variable age, this variable was included in the first step of the hierarchical regression analysis. First, the criterion variable was a perpetrated lower level of physical violence, light hitting, poking, pushing, and the predictor variables were anomie and the dimension of psychological violence (mocking and making rough jokes, machinations and plotting and insulting and threatening; Table 4).

Table 4

Results of the hierarchical linear regression: age, anomie and dimensions of the psychological violence as predictors of dimension light hitting, poking, pushing

Predictors	Model Summary	β	p	Tolerance	VIF
1 Age	$R = .06, R^2 = .00,$ Adjusted $R^2 = .00, F(1, 339) = 1.25, p = .264$	-.06	.264	1.00	1.00
2 Age Anomie	$R = .19, R^2 = .03,$ Adjusted $R^2 = .03, F(2, 338) = 6.12,$ $p = .002, \Delta R^2 = .03, \Delta F(1, 338) = 10.96, p = .001$	-.10 .18	.060 .001	.94 .94	1.06 1.06
Age					
Anomie		-.04	.357	.89	1.12
Mocking and making rough jokes	$R = .61, R^2 = .37,$ Adjusted $R^2 = .36, F(5, 335) = 39.93, p = .000,$ $\Delta R^2 = .34, \Delta F(3, 335) = 60.31, p = .000$	.12 .29	.006 .000	.93 .64	1.07 1.55
Machinations and plotting		.07	.158	.66	1.51
Insulting and threatening		.33	.000	.62	1.61

The obtained results of the hierarchical regression analysis indicate that the first model, in which age was included, is not statistically significant; precisely, age is not a significant predictor in predicting light hitting, poking, pushing (Table 4). In the second step, anomie was included in the model as a potential predictor variable, and it was shown that the model conceptualized in this way is statistically significant as a whole. The obtained results indicate that the contribution of anomie in predicting the commission of light hitting, poking, pushing is significant with anomie as a significant predictor. In the third step, the dimensions of psychological violence were added and it was shown that the model is statistically significant as a whole. The obtained results indicate that the contribution of dimensions of psychological violence in predicting the commission of light hitting, poking, pushing is significant. Significant predictors within this model are anomie, mocking and making rough jokes and insulting and threatening. All significant predictors are positive predictors of light hitting, poking, pushing.

Results of hierarchical regression analysis with perpetrated severe form of physical violence (beating with or without objects) as a criterion, and anomie and the dimension of psychological violence (mocking and making rough jokes, machinations and plotting and insulting and threatening) as predictors were presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Results of the hierarchical linear regression: age, anomie and dimensions of the psychological violence as predictors of dimension Beating with or without objects

Predictors	Model Summary	β	p	Tolerance	VIF
1 Age	$R = .16, R^2 = .03,$ Adjusted $R^2 = .02, F(1, 339) = 9.29, p = .002$	.16	.002	1.00	1.00
2 Age	$R = .22, R^2 = .05,$ Adjusted $R^2 = .04, F(2, 338) = 8.31, p = .000,$	.13	.019	.94	1.06
Anomie	$\Delta R^2 = .02, \Delta F(1, 338) = 7.16, p = .008$	.15	.008	.94	1.06
3 Age		.15	.004	.89	1.12
Anomie		.10	.044	.93	1.07
Mocking and making rough jokes	$R = .48, R^2 = .23,$ Adjusted $R^2 = .22, F(5, 335) = 20.19, p = .000,$	.06	.280	.64	1.55
Machinations and plotting	$\Delta R^2 = .18, \Delta F(3, 335) = 26.84, p = .000$	.15	.012	.66	1.51
Insulting and threatening		.29	.000	.62	1.61

The obtained results of the hierarchical regression analysis indicate that the first model, in which age was included, is statistically significant; precisely, age is a significant predictor in predicting beating with or without objects (Table 5). In the second step, anomie was included in the model as a potential predictor variable, and it was shown that the model conceptualized in this way is statistically significant as a whole. Anomie is a significant positive predictor in predicting a committing beating with or without objects and age remains a significant positive predictor. In the third step, the dimensions of psychological violence were added and it was shown that the model conceptualized in this way is statistically significant as a whole. The obtained results indicate that the contribution of dimensions of psychological violence in predicting the commission of beating with or without objects, is significant. Significant predictors within this model are age, anomie, machinations and plotting and insulting and threatening. All significant predictors are positive predictors of beating with or without objects.

Discussion

The main goal of this research was to examine the predictive power of anomie and different dimensions of psychological violence in predicting physical violence perpetrated in close relationships by female adults. Although the relationship between psychological and physical violence was proved by numerous studies (Baldry, 2003; Bell et al., 2008; Bennett et al., 2000; Dutton et al., 1996; Follingstad et al. 1990; Harned, 2002; Kelly, 2004; Lanza et al., 2006; McFarlane et al., 2002; Macmillan & Gartner, 1999; Murphy & O'Leary, 1989; Nedimović & Biro, 2011), there are almost no studies focused on female perpetrators. However, by reviewing the literature, it was noticed that there is a limited number of studies that have examined the relationship between anomie and the perpetration of physical and psychological violence, either by male or female perpetrators.

First of all, because it was established that there is an asymmetry of respondents' age, reflecting the young age structure, age was included in the hierarchical regression analysis. Based on the obtained results it can be said that age is a significant predictor only of severe forms of perpetrated physical violence - beating with or without objects. Such a result indicates that the frequency of occurrence of perpetrated physical violence increases with age. Furthermore, the result of this study refers to the predicted probability of intimate partner violence perpetration which was higher for female youth beginning at age 17 and continuing to 28 years (oldest observed age in this study; Johnson et al., 2015). A larger number of studies have been conducted that have considered the relationship between experiencing violence in a partner relationship (not perpetration) and the age of adolescents and it has been confirmed that the likelihood of experiencing violence in a partner relationship increases with a higher number of their years (Malik et al., 1997; Spriggs et al., 2009; Vives-Cases et al., 2021; as cited in Janković, 2023). Bearing in mind that there is an asymmetry of respondents' age, reflecting the young age structure, it can be said that our results are consistent with the results of the previously mentioned study. In a prospective longitudinal study that explores adolescent and young adult development, obtained results indicated that age had no significant effect on intimate partner violence (experienced and perpetrated) among both women and men (Chen & White, 2004). This result is somewhat in line with the obtained results within the current study, considering that age is not a predictor of light hitting, poking, pushing, but it is of beating with or without objects. Conversely, there are also results from studies conducted in previous research that are not in agreement with the findings obtained within the current study. In some previously conducted studies, it has been shown that age was negatively correlated with the physical violence variables among adults (both women and men and both experienced and perpetrated violence), indicating that younger respondents tended to report more physical violence than older respondents (Kwong et al., 2003). Age was also negatively correlated with physical violence among women who have experienced physical violence in a partner relationship by a man (Abramsky et al., 2011; Mezey et al., 2002).

The hypothesis was that anomie will be a significant predictor of physical violence in close relationships among female adults. Precisely, it was assumed that anomie will be a significant predictor of dimensions of committed physical violence (light hitting, poking, pushing and beating with or without objects). Based on the obtained results it can be said that this hypothesis is confirmed because anomie is a significant positive predictor of both dimensions of committed physical violence: light hitting, poking, pushing and beating with or without objects. As an explanation for the result obtained in this study, it can be said that if the life circumstances of a person and the society in which person lives are such that they can lead to the feelings of insecurity about the present and the future, as well as dissatisfaction, this can further lead to reacting with the use of violent behavior (Radetić-Lovrić, 2011). Therefore, as a response to the subjective experience of powerlessness, dissatisfaction and insecurity, which is associated with the climate within a society characterized by extreme tension, which is difficult and in which rapid changes take place, violent behavior is manifested, which is in accordance with some results obtained in previous studies (Durkheim, 1951; Merton, 1968; as cited in Konty, 2005; Nikolić-Ristanović, 2008; as cited in Opsenica Kostić et al., 2016; Karimi & Jafari-Koshki, 2020). In the context of this study, it is shown that people who have a subjective feeling of alienation from the world, insecurity about what to do and how to behave, inability to keep up with changes within the society in which a person lives, are more prone to commit both lower and severe forms of physical violence. Therefore, a woman can, in her close relationships, manifest hitting, poking, pushing or beating with or without objects with the goal of somehow facing the situation that she is in and thus adapting to the conditions in which she is. Bearing in mind the mentioned fact that there are limited number of studies that have examined the relationship between anomie and the perpetration of both physical and psychological violence, the importance and significance of this work can be reflected in the fact that this study gains insight into the relationship between these constructs and that obtained results indicate that by anomie we can predict committed physical violence among females.

It was further assumed that committed psychological violence will be a significant predictor of committed physical violence in close relationships among adult females. Precisely, it was assumed that dimensions of committed psychological violence (mocking and making rough jokes, machinations and plotting and insulting and threatening) will be significant predictors of dimensions of committed physical violence (light hitting, poking, pushing and beating with or without objects). These assumptions are partially confirmed. Specifically, mocking and making rough jokes and insulting and threatening are significant predictors, but machinations and plotting are not significant predictors of light hitting, poking and pushing. Therefore, use of direct verbal violence can predict lower levels of physical violence committed by female adults. Furthermore, machinations and plotting and insulting and threatening are significant predictors, but mocking and making rough jokes is not a significant predictor of beating with or without objects. Accordingly, psychological violence is a significant predictor of physical violence in close relationships which is consistent

with some results from some previous studies (Dutton et al., 1996; Harned, 2002; Macmillan & Gartner, 1999; Murphy & O'Leary, 1989) and with results that suggested that psychological types of violence can precede or follow or co-occur with physical types of violence (Lukić & Jovanović, 2003; Nedimović & Biro, 2011; Stets, 1991). Furthermore, the obtained results suggest that psychological and physical violence were related which is consistent with some results obtained in some other studies (Greenfield & Marks, 2010), but we obtained results that suggest that these two types are low correlated which is not consistent with some obtained results that suggested that these two types of violence were highly correlated (Baldry, 2003; Hoffman et al. 1994; Jewkes et al., 2002). Some authors suggested that verbal abuse has a reactive characteristic (Kodžopeljić et al., 2014). Bearing this in mind as well as results from some studies about intimate partner violence, women use violence with a goal of self-defense or as a response to their partner's abuse pattern (Dasgupta, 2002; Dobash & Dobash, 2004; Swan & Snow, 2006; Worcester, 2002), to protect themselves and their children or in retaliation to being victimized (Chen & White, 2004; Dasgupta, 2002; Hamberger & Guse, 2002; Kimmel, 2002). Also, as an explanation for the obtained results in this study, it can be said that usually, people who use these forms of direct verbal violence tend to use hostile polemical behavior in which the interlocutor is often insulted, they have poor impulse control (Kodžopeljić et al., 2014) and this may escalate to the use of physical violence. It can be concluded that the results of this research show that psychological violence can be a risk factor for physical aggression, both for minor and serious physical injuries (O'Leary, 1999; Thompson et al., 2001).

Regarding the practical implications of the research findings, based on the obtained results, it is possible to develop and implement interventions/treatments that would take into account the fact that women can also be perpetrators of violence in close relationships. Furthermore, the obtained results can be useful for raising awareness in the media and society in general, considering that it has been shown that women also use both physical and psychological violence in their close relationships, alongside men who are more commonly associated with perpetrating violence. Some authors have suggested that studying violence in intimate relationships can lead to a richer understanding of how violence is perceived, and this knowledge can be translated into media literacy training to attempt to change assumptions that enable and sustain a culture and society where violence is widespread (Duran et al., 2008; as cited in Scarduzio, 2017). In addition, the results of this study provide insight into the variables related to the perpetration of physical violence and their dynamics, and can potentially be useful to psychotherapists and counselors in working with persons who are victims of violence in close relationships. Also, it is important to take measures to reduce anomie in a given society, given that the results show that anomie is a significant predictor of physical violence. This would mean that prevention programs and campaigns should be designed with the aim of strengthening solidarity, empathy and closeness between people.

There are a few limitations of this study. It is possible that some respondents gave socially desirable answers and therefore there is a limited range and low variability of

measures. Furthermore, reliability analysis showed unsatisfying internal consistency for some of the dimensions within the questionnaire that measures violent behavior (Insulting and threatening; Light hitting, poking, pushing; Beating with or without objects) so the obtained results should be considered and interpreted with a dose of caution. Therefore, there is a need for additional verification of the obtained results by future researchers. Also, the recommendation to future researchers is that it would be useful to consider the obtained results in the context of sex differences because the current sample did not allow us to do so. Furthermore, it would be useful for future researchers to examine and include in the predictor model some variables, such as whether the woman has experienced violence in close relationships (both with a partner and with parents, friends, colleagues). Variables that operationalize mental health (for example, anxiety, depression, stress, somatic symptoms) would also be beneficial to incorporate into the predictor model. Additionally, including variables related to personal characteristics that could be associated with the perpetration of violence (for example, self-esteem, neuroticism, impulsivity, empathy) would be valuable. Furthermore, it would be useful to obtain data related to the reasons for committing violence, whether they consume alcohol and/or any type of drug.

Conclusion

We can conclude that the obtained results within this study indicate that it is possible to predict the occurrence of physical violence in close relationships by women based on psychological violence and anomie. The results show that the subjective experience of powerlessness, dissatisfaction and insecurity, which is associated with the climate within a society, can be important in predicting physical violence in close relationships. The relationships between psychological and physical violence obtained within the framework of this study are similar to those obtained in some previous studies (when examining either male or female perpetrators of violence in close relationships) (e.g., Baldry, 2003; Jewkes et al., 2002; Lanza et al., 2006; Lukić & Jovanović, 2003; Nedimović & Biro, 2011). Additionally, within this study, it has been shown that based on the dimensions of committed psychological violence, it is possible to predict the occurrence of physical violence carried out by women, which is consistent with findings from previous studies that mainly explored predictive patterns within samples of male perpetrators of violence (e.g., Dutton et al., 1996; Harned, 2002; Macmillan & Gartner, 1999; Murphy & O'Leary, 1989; McFarlane et al., 2002). Thus, we can conclude that when considering the possibility of predicting committed physical violence based on committed psychological violence, whether by men or women, the results are consistent, indicating the potential to predict physical violence based on psychological violence.

As already mentioned in the introduction of the paper, there are different study results indicating that women commit physical violence more frequently (Archer, 2000), that women were similar to men in terms of their use of severe violence, inflicting severe injuries on their partners (Busch & Rosenberg, 2004), that

the rate of committed physical violence in intimate relationships is similar among both men and women (Carney et al., 2007; Desmarais et al., 2012), and that, in a broader context, perpetrating physical violence in intimate relationships represents a serious social issue (Desmarais et al., 2012). Furthermore, some authors have discovered that the female perpetrators of domestic violence share many of the same demographic characteristics as the men in terms of childhood experiences, exposure to interparental conflict, mental health history (Henning et al., 2003), experiences of complex trauma (Flemke et al., 2014) and that they have similar motives and psycho-social characteristics such as prior aggression, substance use and personality disturbance (Carney et al., 2007). Therefore, in order to better understand the dynamics of violence in close relationships, as well as differences in the perpetration of violence between men and women, it is important to consider a number of different predictors. Only some of them were considered in this research.

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Anomija i počinjeno psihičko nasilje kao prediktori počinjenog fizičkog nasilja u bliskim vezama od strane odraslih žena

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Apstrakt

Opšti cilj istraživanja bio je ispitati da li se činjenje fizičkog nasilja u bliskim vezama od strane žena može ispitati na osnovu anomije i počinjenog psihičkog nasilja. Uzorak je činilo 341 osoba ženskog pola, starosti od 18 do 65 godina ($M = 25.04$; $SD = 8.97$). Anomija je bila operacionalizovana preko skora na Skali za ispitivanje anomije. Počinjeno psihičko i fizičko nasilje je operacionalizovano preko skorova na Uпитniku nasilnog ponašanja (UNP; dimenzije: ismevanje i pravljenje grubih šala, spletkarenje ili kovanje zavere i vređanje i pretnje (psihičko nasilje); lakše udaranje, ćuškanje, odgurivanje i teža tuča sa ili bez upotrebe oružja (fizičko nasilje)). Sprovedene su dve hijerarhijske regresione analize. Prvi model se sastojao od varijable starost, u drugom koraku je uključena anomija, a u trećem dimenzije psihološkog nasilja. Rezultati ukazuju da je model značajan u predikciji lakšeg udaranja, ćuškanja, odgurivanja ($R^2 = .37$, $F_{(5,335)} = 39.93$, $p < .001$), a kao značajni prediktori izdvajaju se anomija ($\beta = .12$, $p = .006$), ismevanje i pravljenje grubih šala ($\beta = .29$, $p < .001$) i vređanje i pretnje ($\beta = .33$, $p < .001$). Takođe, model je značajan u predikciji teže tuče sa ili bez upotrebe oružja ($R^2 = .23$, $F_{(5,335)} = 20.19$, $p < .001$), a kao značajni prediktori izdvajaju starost ($\beta = .15$, $p = .004$), anomija ($\beta = .10$, $p = .044$), spletkarenje ili kovanje zavere ($\beta = .15$, $p = .012$) i vređanje i pretnje ($\beta = .29$, $p < .001$). Dobijeni rezultati ukazuju na međusobnu povezanost različitih oblika nasilnog ponašanja. Pored toga, oni ukazuju i na važnost razumevanja šireg društvenog konteksta u predviđanju nasilnog ponašanja, s obzirom na to da je lični doživljaj otuđenosti od društva povezan sa društvenim kontekstom i uslovima u kojima pojedinac živi.

Ključne reči: anomija, psihičko nasilje, fizičko nasilje, bliske veze, žene

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