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Social Work Activities in Preventing and Intervening Dating Violence Among Students in Hanoi: Current Situation and Impact Factors

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Abstract

Dating violence among university students has become an important social and public health concern in many countries. In Vietnam, empirical research on the role of social work activities in preventing dating violence in university settings remains limited. This study examines the structure of social work activities related to the prevention and intervention of dating violence among university students in Hanoi and explores factors associated with students' evaluations of the effectiveness of these activities. A cross-sectional survey was conducted with university students using a structured Likert-scale questionnaire. Exploratory factor analysis, Cronbach's alpha reliability testing, and multiple linear regression were used to analyze the data. The results identify six groups of social work activities, five of which demonstrate acceptable levels of reliability. Regression results show that professional counseling services, intervention capacity and service coordination, and the institutional social work capacity of universities are positively associated with students' evaluations ($p < 0.05$). The findings suggest that students tend to value practical and professional support services more than general awareness activities. The study highlights the importance of strengthening counseling services, improving service coordination, and enhancing the institutional capacity of social work in universities to support dating violence prevention efforts.

Keywords: *dating violence, social work intervention, university students, prevention programs*

1. Introduction

Dating violence among young people and university students is increasingly recognized as a significant social and public health issue worldwide. It includes physical, psychological, and sexual violence, as well as technology-facilitated controlling behaviors, which often co-occur and negatively affect mental health, personal safety, and social integration (Exner-Cortens et al., 2013; Jewkes et al., 2015; Stonard et al., 2014). University students are particularly vulnerable due to their transitional stage into adulthood and the formation of long-term relationships. Dating violence has been linked to depression, anxiety, reduced academic performance, and increased risk of future victimization, underscoring the importance of prevention and early intervention. Various programs such as prevention education, bystander intervention, counseling, and victim support have shown effectiveness in raising awareness and reducing violent behaviors (Katz & Moore, 2013; Miller et al., 2012), highlighting the role of social work in educational settings.

In Vietnam, research on dating violence among university students remains limited but is gaining attention. Studies indicate its occurrence across institutions, with psychological violence reported at high levels (Vân et al., 2025; United Nations Viet Nam, 2022). Social work plays a key role through counseling, support services, referrals, and prevention activities; however, effectiveness depends on institutional capacity, service accessibility, and professionalism. Despite international evidence, empirical research on the structure and effectiveness of university-based social work activities in Vietnam remains scarce, particularly regarding factors influencing students' evaluations and use of services. Therefore, this study analyzes the structure of social work activities in preventing and addressing dating violence among university students in Hanoi and examines factors influencing students' evaluations, providing empirical evidence for improving student support systems.

Dating Violence among University Students. Dating violence is a significant social and public health issue affecting university students worldwide, including physical, psychological, and sexual violence as well as

controlling behaviors (Exner-Cortens et al., 2013; Leen et al., 2013). These experiences are associated with adverse mental health outcomes such as anxiety, depression, and psychological distress (Exner-Cortens et al., 2013; De La Rue et al., 2017). University students are particularly vulnerable due to developmental transitions and changing relationship dynamics, with prevalence varying across contexts (Jennings et al., 2017; Stonard et al., 2014). In Vietnam, studies indicate increasing recognition of dating violence, with psychological and controlling behaviors reported at relatively high levels (Vân et al., 2025), highlighting the need for effective prevention and support systems.

Prevention Programs for Dating Violence. Prevention programs in educational settings aim to raise awareness, change attitudes, and build healthy relationship skills. Effective programs often combine components such as gender equality education, communication skills, and social norm change (Lee & Wong, 2022; De La Rue et al., 2017). Bystander intervention programs encourage safe intervention and have been shown to improve attitudes and willingness to act (Fenton et al., 2016; Katz & Moore, 2013). Other initiatives focus on communication, conflict resolution, and emotional regulation, with multi-component programs proving effective when contextually adapted (Arrojo et al., 2024). Increasing attention is also given to digital dating violence, including online control and harassment, requiring expanded prevention approaches (Erbiçer et al., 2025).

Social Work Interventions in University Settings. Social work activities play a key role in preventing and responding to dating violence in universities, including counseling, crisis intervention, referrals, and awareness programs (Anh, 2024). Structured models can enhance access and effectiveness through coordination among services and institutional support mechanisms (Nguyen et al., 2025). In Vietnam, although attention to social work in universities has increased (United Nations Viet Nam, 2022), empirical research on its structure and effectiveness remains limited (Nguyen et al., 2025).

Existing studies, largely from Western contexts, focus on specific interventions, while research in developing regions remains limited and often overlooks institutional support systems (Arrojo et al., 2024). In Vietnam, there is still a lack of research on the structure of support activities and students' evaluations of their effectiveness (Anh, 2024; Nguyen et al., 2025).

Based on this gap, the present study analyzes the structure of social work activities in dating violence prevention and intervention and examines factors influencing students' evaluations. Using survey data and statistical analysis, it provides empirical evidence on the role of social work services and clarifies how components such as counseling, intervention activities, social work capacity, and supportive environments shape students' perceptions.

2. Objectives

This study aims to investigate social work activities in preventing and intervening in dating violence among university students in Hanoi and to identify factors influencing the effectiveness of these activities.

Specific objectives include:

- 1) To analyze the structure of social work activities related to preventing and intervening in dating violence among university students.
- 2) To assess students' perceptions and evaluations of various social work activities conducted in universities.
- 3) To examine the influence of institutional and service-related factors on students' perceived effectiveness of social work activities in preventing and intervening in dating violence.
- 4) To provide empirical evidence to improve the effectiveness of interventions and prevention programs in the higher education environment.

3. Materials and Methods

This study employed a cross-sectional mixed-methods design to examine social work activities in preventing and intervening in dating violence among university students in Hanoi. A convenience sample of 1,821 undergraduate students from six universities was recruited. The design integrates quantitative analysis to identify influencing factors and qualitative insights to support interpretation.

The sample included 74.8% female and 25.2% male participants; 42.39% were first-year, 33.99% second-year, 15.35% third-year, 7.61% fourth-year, and 0.66% fifth-year students. Additional variables included ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, residency, and cohabitation status. Quantitative data were collected

using a structured questionnaire based on prior studies, with 763 valid responses included in the analysis. Items were measured on a five-point Likert scale. In-depth interviews with students and stakeholders were also conducted to provide qualitative insights.

The scale assessed social work activities in dating violence prevention and intervention, including counseling and support services, intervention capacity, service coordination, communication activities, access to resources, and a supportive environment. It consisted of 28 items measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

Quantitative data were analyzed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Cronbach's alpha, and multiple linear regression. EFA identified a six-factor structure explaining 62.8% of the total variance, with factor loadings ranging from 0.55 to 0.83 and no substantial cross-loadings. Reliability was high, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.94 to 0.97.

4. Results

This section presents the results of the quantitative data analysis to clarify the characteristics of the research sample and the structure of factors related to social work activities in the prevention and intervention of dating violence in universities in Hanoi. The analysis was conducted through several steps, including descriptive analysis of the sample characteristics, reliability testing of the measurement scales, exploratory factor analysis, and regression analysis to identify factors influencing students' evaluations of these activities.

First, descriptive statistical analysis was used to provide information about the demographic characteristics of the students who participated in the survey. These characteristics included gender, academic year, and other relevant attributes of the participants. Describing the sample characteristics provides contextual information for subsequent analyses and supports the interpretation of the research findings.

Detailed information about the characteristics of the survey sample is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Students' opinions regarding sources of support in situations of dating violence (N=762)

Source of support	n	Percentage %
Family members	204	26.7
Relatives	61	8.0
Friends	407	53.3
Teachers and university staff	24	3.1
Counselors or coaches	56	7.3
Others	11	1.4
Total	763	100.0

Table 1 summarizes the distribution of students' primary sources of support when encountering situations of dating violence. The results indicate that informal support networks play a prominent role in students' help-seeking behavior. Friends are the most frequently reported source of support, accounting for more than half of the responses, followed by family members, who represent approximately one-quarter of the sample. Together, these two groups constitute the vast majority of reported support sources.

Other categories appear far less frequently. Relatives account for a relatively small proportion, while professional or institutional sources such as counselors, coaches, teachers, or university staff are mentioned by only a limited number of students. The "other" category represents a very small share of responses.

Overall, the distribution suggests a pattern in which students primarily rely on close personal relationships when seeking help in situations of dating violence, whereas formal or institutional support channels are used much less frequently.

Table 2 Students' opinions regarding sources of support in situations of dating violence by university (N=762)

University	Who has provided you with the most support?						Total
	Family members	Relatives	Friends	Teachers and university staff	Counselors or coaches	Others	
Hanoi National University of Education	46	19	81	3	18	4	171
Academy of Journalism and Communication	41	25	108	16	8	1	199
Vietnam Youth Academy	82	9	78	4	24	6	203
Hanoi University of Science and Technology	1	0	4	0	0	0	5
National Economics University	14	2	56	1	2	0	75
Hanoi Academy of Theatre and Cinema	20	6	80	0	4	0	110

The variation in students' preferred support sources across the six participating universities is illustrated in Table 2. Although the proportions vary across institutions, a consistent pattern can be observed across the sample: informal support networks play a dominant role in students' help seeking behavior.

Friends remain the most commonly reported source of support in all universities, though the magnitude varies substantially between institutions. The proportion ranges from a comparatively lower level at the Vietnam Youth Academy to a markedly higher level at Hanoi University of Science and Technology. Family members constitute the second most frequently mentioned source overall, with particularly high levels reported among students from the Vietnam Youth Academy.

Other informal sources, such as relatives, appear less prominent and account for only a small share of responses across institutions. In contrast, formal support channels including teachers, university staff, and professional counselors are reported far less frequently. Mentions of teachers or university personnel are observed in only a few universities, while counselors or coaches represent a relatively small proportion in most institutions.

Statistical testing indicated that these variations are not random. The Chi-square test showed a significant association between university affiliation and students' preferred support sources ($\chi^2_{(25)} = 105.99, p < 0.001$). However, the strength of this relationship was relatively modest, as reflected by a Cramér's V coefficient of 0.167.

Overall, while institutional differences are evident, the broader pattern remains consistent across the dataset: students primarily turn to friends and family members when seeking support, whereas formal or institutional sources play a comparatively limited role.

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to examine the underlying structure of social work activities related to the prevention and intervention of dating violence among university students. The analysis included 28 observed variables with a total sample size of $N = 1,821$.

The suitability of the data for factor analysis was assessed using the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. The results showed a KMO value of 0.907, indicating a high level of sampling adequacy. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant ($\chi^2_{(378)} = 15,432.22, p < 0.001$), confirming that the correlation matrix was appropriate for factor analysis.

The factor extraction was performed using Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) with Promax rotation, allowing correlations among factors. The analysis identified six factors with eigenvalues greater than 1, explaining approximately 62.8% of the total variance, which exceeds commonly accepted thresholds in social science research.

All observed variables demonstrated factor loadings of at least 0.55, and no substantial cross-loadings above 0.40 were detected. These results indicate a relatively clear and stable factor structure.

Table 3 KMO and Bartlett's test

Indicator	Value
KMO	0.907
Bartlett's Test (χ^2)	= 15432.22
df	378
Sig.	< 0.001

Table 4 Summary of extracted factors (Pattern Matrix – condensed)

Factor	Conceptual description	Factor loading range
F1	Communication and prevention activities	0.61 – 0.78
F2	Counseling services and professional support	0.58 – 0.81
F3	Intervention and service linkage	0.60 – 0.83
F4	Institutional social work capacity	0.57 – 0.79
F5	Access to formal support resources	0.55 – 0.76
F6	Supportive environment and coordination	0.56 – 0.74

The internal consistency of the extracted factors was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The results indicate that five of the six factors demonstrated acceptable levels of reliability.

However, the factor "Communication and prevention activities" (F1) demonstrated a relatively low reliability coefficient ($\alpha = 0.34$), suggesting poor internal consistency. Therefore, this factor was excluded from subsequent regression analyses and was retained only for descriptive interpretation within the EFA structure.

Table 5 Cronbach's alpha for extracted factors

Factor	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
F1 – Communication & prevention	4	0.34
F2 – Counseling & professional support	6	0.96
F3 – Intervention & service linkage	8	0.96
F4 – Institutional social work capacity	8	0.97
F5 – Access to formal support	6	0.94
F6 – Support environment & coordination	6	0.60

A linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of social work factors on students' evaluations of social work activities related to the prevention and intervention of dating violence. Based on the reliability analysis, five factors (F2 – F6) were retained and included in the regression model.

The results indicate that the regression model was statistically significant ($F = 86, p < 0.001$). The model explains a substantial proportion of the variance, with $R^2 = 0.486$ and adjusted $R^2 = 0.472$, indicating that approximately 47.2% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained by the independent factors. The Durbin-Watson value of 1.9 suggests no serious autocorrelation among the residuals. Multicollinearity diagnostics also showed acceptable values, with variance inflation factor (VIF) values below 2 for all predictors.

Table 6 Regression model summary

Indicator	Value
R^2	0.486
Adjusted R^2	0.472
F	≈ 86
Sig.	< 0.001
Durbin-Watson	≈ 1.9

Table 7 Standardized regression coefficients

Factor	β	Sig.	VIF
F2 – Counseling & professional support	+	< 0.01	< 2
F3 – Intervention & service linkage	+	< 0.01	< 2
F4 – Institutional social work capacity	+	< 0.05	< 2
F5 – Access to formal support	n.s.	> 0.05	< 2
F6 – Support environment & coordination	n.s.	> 0.05	< 2

(n.s.: not statistically significant)

The regression results indicate that three factors counseling and professional support (F2), intervention and service linkage (F3), and institutional social work capacity (F4) have positive and statistically significant associations with students' evaluations of social work activities related to dating violence ($p < 0.05$).

In contrast, the factors of access to formal support resources (F5) and supportive environment and coordination (F6) do not show statistically significant effects within the regression model.

Overall, the findings suggest that students' evaluations of social work activities related to the prevention and intervention of dating violence are associated with multiple dimensions, including professional support services, intervention and referral mechanisms, and institutional social work capacity. Among these dimensions, counseling and professional support (F2), intervention and service linkage (F3), and institutional social work capacity (F4) show significant positive associations with students' evaluations of social work activities.

Conversely, the availability of formal support channels and coordination mechanisms does not necessarily correspond to higher evaluations by students. This finding may indicate that the presence of support services alone does not ensure their effective accessibility or utilization.

The results in Table 8 highlight students' evaluations of support interventions related to dating violence. Overall, the mean scores fall within the upper mid-range of the five-point scale, indicating that these activities are generally perceived as moderately positive. Among the listed activities, opportunities for students to discuss their concerns and identify possible solutions receive the highest evaluations. Several other activities—such as providing information and safety guidance, facilitating discussions on possible responses, and offering follow-up support after intervention also receive relatively high ratings, indicating that students value communication, guidance, and continued support. By contrast, the assessment of students' support needs records the lowest mean score among the listed activities, although the evaluation remains above the midpoint of the scale. The level of variation across responses is moderate, reflecting some differences in students' reported experiences with these services. Taken together, the findings indicate that students tend to rate interactive and supportive elements particularly those involving communication, guidance, and problem-solving more positively within social work responses to dating violence.

Table 8 Support activities for students in situations of dating violence (N = 762; Scale: 1–5)

Support activities	Mean	SD
1. Encouragement to share personal experiences and concerns	3.79	1.087
2. Assessment of students' support needs	3.74	1.059
3. Provision of knowledge about dating violence and skills for conflict resolution, emotional regulation, and coping with violence	3.85	1.040
4. Opportunities to discuss problems and identify possible solutions	3.96	0.964
5. Receiving information and safety guidance	3.88	1.048
6. Emergency assistance (e.g., referral to medical centers, hospitals, psychological stabilization) when necessary	3.83	1.041
7. Discussion of solutions and development of action plans	3.88	1.010
8. Follow-up support after the intervention process	3.88	1.063
9. Referral to relevant support services (e.g., hospitals, psychologists, legal agencies)	3.80	1.061

Table 9 Support activities for students in situations of dating violence by university (N=762, Max=5, Min=1)

Support activities	University	n	Mean	SD
1. Encouragement to share personal experiences and concerns*	HNUE	171	3.86	0.910
	AJC	199	3.93	0.877
	VYA	202	3.88	1.100
	HUST	5	3.60	1.140
	NEU	75	3.55	1.287
	HATC	110	3.41	1.383
2. Assessment of students' support needs*	HNUE	171	3.82	0.857
	AJC	199	3.86	0.891
	VYA	202	3.86	1.095
	HUST	5	3.00	0.707
	NEU	75	3.44	1.177
	HATC	110	3.38	1.341

Table 9 Cont.

Support activities	University	n	Mean	SD
3. Provision of knowledge about dating violence and skills for conflict resolution, emotional regulation, and coping with violence*	HNUE	171	4.01	0.861
	AJC	199	3.99	0.826
	VYA	202	3.93	1.079
	HUST	5	4.20	0.837
	NEU	75	3.60	1.162
	HATC	110	3.37	1.305
4. Opportunities to discuss issues and identify possible solutions	HNUE	171	4.03	0.836
	AJC	199	4.04	0.781
	VYA	202	4.02	1.072
	HUST	5	3.80	0.837
	NEU	75	3.92	1.024
	HATC	110	3.64	1.139
5. Provision of information and safety guidance*	HNUE	171	3.98	0.881
	AJC	199	4.03	0.819
	VYA	202	4.00	1.095
	HUST	5	4.00	0.707
	NEU	75	3.56	1.211
	HATC	110	3.47	1.304
6. Emergency assistance when necessary (e.g., referral to medical centers, hospitals, or psychological stabilization)*	HNUE	171	3.96	0.894
	AJC	199	3.97	0.791
	VYA	202	3.96	1.083
	HUST	5	3.80	1.095
	NEU	75	3.44	1.130
	HATC	110	3.40	1.315
7. Joint discussion of solutions and development of action plans*	HNUE	171	3.99	0.822
	AJC	199	3.99	0.816
	VYA	202	4.01	1.034
	HUST	5	3.80	0.837
	NEU	75	3.64	1.123
	HATC	110	3.40	1.286
8. Follow-up support and continued contact after the intervention process*	HNUE	171	3.99	0.911
	AJC	199	4.10	0.823
	VYA	202	3.99	1.053
	HUST	5	4.20	0.837
	NEU	75	3.60	1.273
	HATC	110	3.31	1.297
9. Referral to relevant support services (e.g., hospitals, psychologists, or legal agencies)*	HNUE	171	3.96	0.825
	AJC	199	3.99	0.816
	VYA	202	3.93	1.083
	HUST	5	4.00	1.000
	NEU	75	3.40	1.197
	HATC	110	3.21	1.348

*, $p < 0.001$

Differences in students' evaluations of nine social work support activities across the six universities are presented in Table 9. Overall, the mean scores fall within the moderate to relatively high range of the five-point scale, suggesting that students generally perceive these activities as being implemented at a satisfactory level.

Several institutions particularly the Academy of Journalism and Communication, Hanoi National University of Education, and the Vietnam Youth Academy show consistently higher evaluations across most activities, indicating relatively stable perceptions of support services among their students. By contrast, students from the National Economics University and the Hanoi Academy of Theatre and Cinema tend to report somewhat lower evaluations, accompanied by greater variability in responses.

The Hanoi University of Science and Technology records several comparatively high mean values; however, these results should be interpreted with caution due to the small number of respondents in this group.

Across institutions, the level of variation in responses remains moderate, suggesting that students within the same university generally share similar perceptions of these support activities. Despite some differences between universities, most evaluations cluster around the upper-middle range of the scale.

A one-way ANOVA further confirms that the differences observed across universities are statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), indicating that institutional context may influence students' evaluations of social work support activities related to dating violence.

Qualitative findings from in-depth interviews also provide additional insight into how students become aware of support services. One student stated: "I learned about support services for students experiencing gender-based violence through several channels. The university introduced them during orientation sessions and through official emails and websites. The student affairs office and academic advisors also mentioned them when discussing students' rights and support systems. In addition, workshops and extracurricular activities on gender equality and the prevention of sexual harassment and gender-based violence helped raise awareness. Information is also shared through student clubs, youth union organizations, and social media, where hotlines, counseling services, and partner organizations are often introduced." – *Third-year student, Vietnam Youth Academy*

Students' evaluations of the nine social work support activities related to dating violence vary slightly across academic years. In general, the mean scores remain within the relatively positive range of the five-point scale, indicating that students across all cohorts generally perceive these support activities positively. A comparison across academic years shows that third-year students provide the most positive evaluations overall, with higher ratings observed for several activities related to communication, problem-solving, and follow-up support. By contrast, fifth-year students report lower mean scores for a number of activities. However, the small sample size of this group means that these results should be interpreted with caution. The variability of responses remains moderate across most items, suggesting that students within each cohort share relatively similar perceptions of the support activities. Differences among the main groups from first- to fourth-year students are generally modest, indicating a largely consistent pattern of evaluations across academic stages. Nevertheless, statistical testing reveals a significant difference across academic years for one specific activity, encouraging students to share their personal experiences (D6.1), as indicated by the one-way ANOVA result ($p < 0.001$). Qualitative data from in-depth interviews also provide additional context for students' experiences with these support activities. One student explained: "Most of the time, I was listened to and given suggestions on how to respond appropriately. I was also guided on how to protect myself, and in more serious situations, I could be referred to external professional agencies. Confidentiality and the respectful attitude of lecturers and staff were very important. During the conversation, students felt that they were listened to and not judged." – *Second-year student, Vietnam Youth Academy*

Table 10 Support activities for students in situations of dating violence by year of study (N=762, Max=5, Min=1)

Support activities	Year of study	n	Mean	SD
1. Encouragement to share personal experiences and concerns*	First year	323	3.84	1.056
	Second year	259	3.69	1.209
	Third year	117	3.97	0.923
	Fourth year	58	3.66	0.828
	Fifth year	5	2.20	1.095
2. Assessment of students' support needs	First year	323	3.81	1.051
	Second year	259	3.63	1.165
	Third year	117	3.85	0.903
	Fourth year	58	3.64	0.831
	Fifth year	5	2.60	0.548
3. Provision of knowledge about dating violence and skills for conflict resolution, emotional regulation, and coping with violence	First year	323	3.86	1.061
	Second year	259	3.75	1.126
	Third year	117	4.15	0.816
	Fourth year	58	3.71	0.817
	Fifth year	5	3.60	0.894

Table 10 Cont.

Support activities	Year of study	n	Mean	SD
4. Opportunities to discuss issues and identify possible solutions	First year	323	4.00	1.026
	Second year	259	3.92	0.989
	Third year	117	4.11	0.796
	Fourth year	58	3.69	0.754
	Fifth year	5	3.60	0.548
5. Provision of information and safety guidance	First year	323	3.90	1.054
	Second year	259	3.78	1.160
	Third year	117	4.07	0.838
	Fourth year	58	3.83	0.819
	Fifth year	5	4.00	1.000
6. Emergency assistance when necessary (e.g., referral to medical centers, hospitals, or psychological stabilization)	First year	323	3.88	1.057
	Second year	259	3.72	1.141
	Third year	117	3.97	0.856
	Fourth year	58	3.76	0.779
	Fifth year	5	3.60	0.894
7. Joint discussion of solutions and development of action plans	First year	323	3.95	1.008
	Second year	259	3.75	1.102
	Third year	117	4.04	0.824
	Fourth year	58	3.81	0.826
	Fifth year	5	2.80	0.837
8. Follow-up support and continued contact after the intervention process	First year	323	3.96	1.052
	Second year	259	3.72	1.198
	Third year	117	4.08	0.832
	Fourth year	58	3.86	0.805
	Fifth year	5	3.20	0.447
9. Referral to relevant support services (e.g., hospitals, psychologists, or legal agencies)	First year	323	3.84	1.069
	Second year	259	3.65	1.189
	Third year	117	4.01	0.804
	Fourth year	58	3.78	0.796
	Fifth year	5	4.00	0.707

*, $p < 0.001$

Table 11 Correlation analysis between support activities and university (N=762)

Support activities	Pearson Correlation	p-value
1. Encouragement to share personal experiences and concerns*	Pearson Correlation	-0.154
	Sig. (2-tailed)	< 0.001
2. Assessment of students' support needs	Pearson Correlation	-0.162
	Sig. (2-tailed)	< 0.001
3. Provision of knowledge about dating violence and skills for conflict resolution, emotional regulation, and coping with violence	Pearson Correlation	-0.207
	Sig. (2-tailed)	< 0.001
4. Opportunities to discuss issues and identify possible solutions	Pearson Correlation	-0.123
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001
5. Provision of information and safety guidance	Pearson Correlation	-0.181
	Sig. (2-tailed)	< 0.001
6. Emergency assistance when necessary (e.g., referral to medical centers, hospitals, or psychological stabilization)	Pearson Correlation	-0.205
	Sig. (2-tailed)	< 0.001
7. Joint discussion of solutions and development of action plans	Pearson Correlation	-0.197
	Sig. (2-tailed)	< 0.001
8. Follow-up support and continued contact after the intervention process	Pearson Correlation	-0.228
	Sig. (2-tailed)	< 0.001
9. Referral to relevant support services (e.g., hospitals, psychologists, or legal agencies)	Pearson Correlation	-0.255
	Sig. (2-tailed)	< 0.001

The correlation analysis shown in Table 11 explores the relationship between university affiliation and students' evaluations of the nine social work support activities (D6.1–D6.9). Based on 762 valid observations, the results reveal negative and statistically significant correlations across all activities ($p < .01$).

Although significant, the strength of these relationships remains relatively modest. The coefficients fall within the range typically interpreted as small effect sizes, indicating that differences between universities are associated with only limited variation in students' evaluations of these support activities.

Among the activities, referral to professional support services (D6.9) demonstrates the strongest association with university affiliation, suggesting that institutional context may be more relevant for services involving formal referral mechanisms. By contrast, activities related to discussing problems and identifying solutions (D6.4) show the weakest relationship with the university variable.

Overall, the findings suggest that while students' evaluations of social work support activities differ across universities, the magnitude of these differences remains relatively small. Institutional affiliation therefore appears to influence students' perceptions to some extent, but it does not appear to be a dominant factor shaping their evaluations of support activities.

The findings indicate varying degrees of student awareness of institutional support mechanisms for dating violence prevention and response. The results, based on descriptive statistics, show different levels of recognition across the various types of support activities.

Among the listed services, psychological counseling centers or social work offices are the most widely recognized, with nearly two-thirds of students reporting awareness of this form of support. This finding suggests a relatively high level of visibility of formal counseling and social work services within the university environment. A moderate level of recognition is observed for online fanpages or support groups that provide information and counseling on dating violence. These platforms appear to play an emerging role in information dissemination and outreach, although their reach among students remains moderate. In contrast, mechanisms intended for reporting incidents such as dedicated mailboxes or contact addresses are recognized by less than half of the respondents. Student clubs focusing on prevention and response to student-related issues receive the lowest level of recognition overall, suggesting that student-led initiatives in this area may have relatively limited visibility. Overall, the findings indicate that while institutional counseling services are relatively well known among students, other forms of support particularly reporting channels and peer-based initiatives appear to be less visible within the university support system.

Table 12 Students' opinions on university support activities (N = 1821)

University support activities	%	SD
1. Reporting mailbox or contact address for students experiencing dating violence	41.7	0.493
2. Psychological counseling center / social work office	64.2	0.480
3. Fanpage or online support group providing counseling and assistance for students regarding dating violence	49.5	0.500
4. Student clubs for prevention and response to student issues, including dating violence	30.2	0.459

Table 13 Students' opinions on the extent to which universities organize activities for the prevention and response to dating violence (N = 1821, Min = 1, Max = 5)

Activities	Mean	SD
1. The Youth Union, Student Association, and Student Affairs Office organize talks or seminars on student relationships and dating violence	2.41	1.229
2. The Youth Union, Student Association, and Student Affairs Office display posters, banners, leaflets, booklets, or handbooks on preventing student-related issues, including dating violence	2.65	1.140
3. The Youth Union or Student Association at the university/faculty organizes contests or theatrical activities to raise awareness about the prevention and response to dating violence	2.70	1.152
4. The Youth Union or Student Association posts articles, infographics, posters, or other materials on their official fanpages related to dating violence among students	2.75	1.161
5. The Youth Union, Student Association, and Student Affairs Office organize seminars or discussions on life skills and coping skills related to student issues, including dating violence	2.75	1.146
6. The psychological counseling center, social work office, or university health center organizes awareness-raising sessions for students about dating violence	2.78	1.159

The results reported in Table 13 summarize students' evaluations of how frequently universities organize activities for the prevention and response to dating violence. The six indicators represent common forms of educational and communication initiatives in university settings, including thematic talks, online communication channels, visual campaigns, and counseling-related activities. Overall, the mean scores remain below the midpoint of the five-point scale, suggesting that students perceive these activities as occurring only occasionally rather than regularly. This pattern indicates that although universities have begun to address dating violence prevention, the overall intensity and reach of these initiatives remain relatively limited. Among the listed activities, awareness-raising sessions organized by psychological counseling centers, social work offices, or university health units receive the most favorable evaluations. This suggests a visible role of professional support services in providing information and psychological assistance to students. Workshops, discussion sessions, or skills-based training programs organized by these units may offer more direct forms of engagement for students. Nevertheless, the relatively moderate mean score suggests that such activities may not be implemented frequently or may reach only a limited proportion of students. At the same time, the variability in responses indicates that students' experiences with dating violence prevention activities are not uniform. Perceptions of these initiatives may vary depending on institutional context, academic environment, or students' exposure to university support services. This variability may indicate that the organization of prevention activities differs across the institutions included in the study.

Table 14 Analysis of students' opinions on the extent to which universities organize activities for the prevention and response to dating violence by university (N=1821, Min=1, Max=5)

The extent to which universities organize activities	University	n	Mean	SD
1. The Youth Union, Student Association, and Student Affairs Office organize talks or seminars on student relationships and dating violence*	HNUE	639	2.77	1.092
	AJC	484	2.68	1.238
	VYA	301	2.65	1.178
	HUST	19	2.26	1.147
	NEU	198	1.35	0.745
	HATC	180	1.21	0.685
2. The Youth Union, Student Association, and Student Affairs Office display posters, banners, leaflets, booklets, or handbooks on preventing student-related issues, including dating violence*	HNUE	639	2.84	1.084
	AJC	484	2.62	1.221
	VYA	301	2.68	1.196
	HUST	19	2.37	0.895
	NEU	198	2.34	1.013
	HATC	180	2.41	1.045
3. The Youth Union or Student Association at the university/faculty organizes contests or theatrical activities to raise awareness about the prevention and response to dating violence*	HNUE	639	2.88	1.087
	AJC	484	2.63	1.240
	VYA	301	2.70	1.177
	HUST	19	2.26	1.046
	NEU	198	2.46	1.102
	HATC	180	2.56	1.063
4. The Youth Union or Student Association posts articles, infographics, posters, or other materials on their official fanpages related to dating violence among students*	HNUE	639	2.90	1.081
	AJC	484	2.74	1.245
	VYA	301	2.72	1.181
	HUST	19	2.11	0.937
	NEU	198	2.59	1.144
	HATC	180	2.56	1.144
5. The Youth Union, Student Association, and Student Affairs Office organize seminars or discussions on life skills and coping skills related to student issues, including dating violence*	HNUE	639	2.93	1.074
	AJC	484	2.69	1.222
	VYA	301	2.73	1.173
	HUST	19	2.21	1.084
	NEU	198	2.52	1.098
	HATC	180	2.60	1.107
6. The psychological counseling center, social work office, or university health center organizes awareness-raising sessions for students about dating violence*	HNUE	639	2.96	1.076
	AJC	484	2.66	1.265
	VYA	301	2.73	1.204
	HUST	19	2.58	1.121
	NEU	198	2.60	1.103
	HATC	180	2.75	1.062

*: $p < 0.001$

Differences across universities in students' evaluations of dating violence prevention activities are summarized in Table 14. Six types of activities (E2.1–E2.6) were assessed using a five-point Likert scale, reflecting students' perceptions of how frequently these programs were implemented within their institutions. The results reveal noticeable variation among the participating universities. Mean scores range from approximately 1.21 to 2.96, suggesting that the level of activity implementation differs considerably across institutions. Hanoi National University of Education reports the highest evaluations across most indicators, whereas the National Economics University and the Hanoi Academy of Theatre and Cinema tend to show lower mean scores. A general pattern also emerges in relation to institutional orientation. Universities with stronger educational or youth-focused missions, such as Hanoi National University of Education and the Vietnam Youth Academy, tend to report relatively higher evaluations of prevention activities. In contrast, institutions with primary technical or economic training orientations show comparatively lower scores. Statistical testing further confirms these differences. The one-way ANOVA results indicate significant variation among universities in students' evaluations of most prevention and response activities related to dating violence ($p < 0.001$). Overall, the findings indicate that institutional context may be associated with differences in the visibility and frequency of dating violence prevention initiatives within universities.

Table 15 Analysis of students' opinions on the extent to which universities organize activities for the prevention and response to dating violence by year of study (N=1821, Min=1, Max=5)

The extent to which universities organize activities	Year of study	n	Mean	SD
1. The Youth Union, Student Association, and Student Affairs Office organize talks or seminars on student relationships and dating violence*	First year	797	2.51	1.178
	Second year	597	2.23	1.345
	Third year	271	2.50	1.125
	Fourth year	145	2.43	1.111
	Fifth year	8	2.38	1.302
	Other	3	2.67	1.528
2. The Youth Union, Student Association, and Student Affairs Office display posters, banners, leaflets, booklets, or handbooks on preventing student-related issues, including dating violence	First year	797	2.70	1.136
	Second year	597	2.71	1.167
	Third year	271	2.51	1.085
	Fourth year	145	2.48	1.131
	Fifth year	8	2.75	1.035
	Other	3	2.00	1.000
3. The Youth Union or Student Association at the university/faculty organizes contests or theatrical activities to raise awareness about the prevention and response to dating violence	First year	797	2.74	1.139
	Second year	597	2.79	1.170
	Third year	271	2.51	1.108
	Fourth year	145	2.52	1.185
	Fifth year	8	2.75	1.035
	Other	3	2.67	1.528
4. The Youth Union or Student Association posts articles, infographics, posters, or other materials on their official fanpages related to dating violence among students	First year	797	2.78	1.139
	Second year	597	2.79	1.198
	Third year	271	2.64	1.136
	Fourth year	145	2.60	1.175
	Fifth year	8	2.63	1.061
	Other	3	2.33	1.155
5. The Youth Union, Student Association, and Student Affairs Office organize seminars or discussions on life skills and coping skills related to student issues, including dating violence	First year	797	2.77	1.141
	Second year	597	2.83	1.166
	Third year	271	2.60	1.104
	Fourth year	145	2.63	1.154
	Fifth year	8	2.63	1.061
	Other	3	2.33	1.155
6. The psychological counseling center, social work office, or university health center organizes awareness-raising sessions for students about dating violence*	First year	797	2.80	1.147
	Second year	597	2.90	1.151
	Third year	271	2.60	1.150
	Fourth year	145	2.51	1.220
	Fifth year	8	2.75	1.035
	Other	3	2.33	1.155

*, $p < 0.001$

Variations in students' evaluations of dating violence prevention activities across academic years are summarized in Table 15. The six activity groups (E2.1–E2.6) were examined for students from the first- to fifth-year using a five-point Likert scale.

Overall, the mean scores across cohorts range from 2.23 to 2.90. Although the differences between academic years are relatively small, all values remain below the midpoint of the scale, indicating that students generally perceive these activities as being implemented only occasionally rather than regularly. This pattern suggests that exposure to dating violence prevention initiatives is relatively similar across academic cohorts, while the overall level of activity implementation remains relatively limited.

The variability in responses is moderate, with standard deviation values slightly above 1.0 for most items. This indicates that students within the same academic year report somewhat different levels of experience with these activities, possibly reflecting variations across programs or institutional units.

The one-way ANOVA results indicate statistically significant differences among academic years for several activities ($p < 0.001$), particularly those related to educational talks organized by student organizations (E2.1) and awareness-raising sessions provided by counseling or social work units (E2.6). In general, first- and second-year students tend to report slightly higher evaluations, whereas the scores decrease somewhat among students in later academic years.

Overall, the findings indicate that dating violence prevention initiatives are present across academic cohorts but are not implemented at a consistently high level.

Table 16 Correlation analysis of students' opinions on the extent to which universities organize activities for the prevention and response to dating violence by university and year of study (N=1821)

The extent to which universities organize activities		University	Year of study
1. The Youth Union, Student Association, and Student Affairs Office organize talks or seminars on student relationships and dating violence	Pearson Correlation	-0.441	-0.021
	Sig. (2-tailed)	< 0.001	0.365
2. The Youth Union, Student Association, and Student Affairs Office display posters, banners, leaflets, booklets, or handbooks on preventing student-related issues, including dating violence	Pearson Correlation	-0.138	-0.064
	Sig. (2-tailed)	< 0.001	0.007
3. The Youth Union or Student Association at the university/faculty organizes contests or theatrical activities to raise awareness about the prevention and response to dating violence	Pearson Correlation	-0.109	-0.066
	Sig. (2-tailed)	< 0.001	0.005
4. The Youth Union or Student Association posts articles, infographics, posters, or other materials on their official fanpages related to dating violence among students	Pearson Correlation	-0.102	-0.052
	Sig. (2-tailed)	< 0.001	0.026
5. The Youth Union, Student Association, and Student Affairs Office organize seminars or discussions on life skills and coping skills related to student issues, including dating violence	Pearson Correlation	-0.111	-0.048
	Sig. (2-tailed)	< 0.001	0.041
6. The psychological counseling center, social work office, or university health center organizes awareness-raising sessions for students about dating violence	Pearson Correlation	-0.074	-0.071
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002	0.003

The relationships between institutional affiliation, year of study, and students' evaluations of dating violence prevention activities are examined through Pearson correlation analysis, as presented in Table 16. Six activity groups (E2.1–E2.6) were included to assess how these contextual factors relate to the perceived level of program implementation.

Overall, the results indicate negative correlations between both independent variables and students' evaluations of the activities. This pattern suggests that differences across universities and progression through academic years are associated with slightly lower evaluations of the implementation of dating violence prevention initiatives.

Institutional affiliation shows a stronger association with the evaluated activities. The correlations between the university variable and the six activities are all statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), with the strongest relationship observed for E2.1, which refers to talks or educational sessions on student relationships and dating violence.

In contrast, the correlations between year of study and the six activities are considerably weaker. Although several coefficients reach statistical significance, their magnitude remains small, indicating that academic seniority is only weakly associated with students' evaluations of prevention activities.

Taken together, the results indicate that institutional differences are more strongly associated with students' evaluations of dating violence prevention activities than students' years of study.

5. Discussion

This study surveyed students' perceptions of social work activities in preventing and intervening in dating violence among university students in Hanoi. The results showed that most students recognized the importance of preventative activities such as media campaigns, counseling services, and educational programs on healthy relationships. These findings suggest that awareness-raising activities at universities can help improve students' understanding of dating violence and available support options. These findings can be interpreted through an ecological perspective on violence prevention, which suggests that dating violence is influenced by interactions among individual, interpersonal, institutional, and broader social factors. Within this framework, universities represent an important institutional setting where social work activities can strengthen awareness, facilitate access to support services, and promote protective social environments. The present findings support the view that institutional support mechanisms, particularly counseling services and referral systems, are important components of a comprehensive response to dating violence among university students.

The findings also indicate that students tend to rely more on informal support sources, such as friends and family members, than on professional counseling services at universities. This pattern is consistent with previous studies showing that young people often prefer to seek help from people they trust before contacting formal support services (Exner-Cortens et al., 2013; De La Rue et al., 2017; Divin et al., 2018; Bundock et al., 2020). While informal support networks may provide emotional comfort and immediate assistance, reliance on these sources may also present limitations. Friends and family members may lack professional knowledge about dating violence, risk assessment, or available intervention services. As a result, students who rely exclusively on informal support may not receive adequate protection or appropriate referrals. This finding suggests that universities should not only expand support services but also increase students' awareness of how and when professional assistance should be accessed. Reasons may include limited awareness of available services, privacy concerns, or the perception that dating violence is a personal issue. These patterns may also reflect broader sociocultural influences within the Vietnamese context. Traditional expectations regarding family harmony, personal reputation, and gender roles may discourage some students from discussing relationship problems publicly or seeking formal support. Concerns about stigma, embarrassment, or negative social judgment may further reduce students' willingness to disclose experiences of dating violence. Consequently, prevention and intervention programs should be designed in ways that are culturally sensitive and responsive to the social norms shaping students' help-seeking behaviors.

Another finding of this study is that educational and prevention activities organized by universities were generally positively evaluated by students. Activities such as workshops, media campaigns, and class discussions may help students better recognize unhealthy behaviors in relationships and increase awareness of available support resources. Similar conclusions have been reported in previous studies, highlighting the importance of prevention programs in shaping knowledge and attitudes toward dating violence (Arrojo et al., 2024). These findings are also consistent with international research suggesting that university-based dating violence prevention programs are most effective when they combine awareness-raising activities, skills development, professional support services, and institutional commitment (Miller et al., 2012; Lee & Wong, 2022; Wong et al., 2023; An et al., 2024; Kuskoff & Parsell, 2024). This broader perspective suggests that awareness campaigns alone may not be sufficient to address dating violence effectively. Instead, prevention efforts should be integrated with accessible counseling services, referral mechanisms, and supportive institutional policies. Such a comprehensive approach may enhance students' awareness of dating violence, improve access to support resources, and strengthen the university's overall response capacity. Therefore, strengthening these activities may contribute to more positive student perceptions of university support efforts and may enhance students' readiness to seek help when needed. Differences in educational institutions were more strongly associated with students' evaluations of dating violence prevention activities than years of study.

The results also suggest that peer support can play a crucial role in prevention and intervention efforts. Students often feel more comfortable sharing their experiences with peers who have similar circumstances. For this reason, peer-based initiatives such as student clubs, peer counseling, or support groups may encourage students to seek help when they experience or witness dating violence.

The findings of this study have several implications for developing social work activities aimed at preventing and responding to dating violence in the university environment. Professional counseling and support services are a crucial component of the student support system; improving access to psychological counseling, social counseling, and personalized support can help students seek assistance when experiencing violence. Furthermore, emphasis should be placed on intervention activities and service linkage mechanisms, including equipping students with skills to recognize signs of violence, seek help, and connect with support resources inside and outside the university. Simultaneously, strengthening social work capacity in higher education institutions is necessary through the development of expert teams, training in prevention and intervention, and the establishment of clear support procedures.

Based on the findings, several practical recommendations can be proposed for universities. First, universities should establish or strengthen dedicated counseling and social work units staffed by trained professionals who are capable of addressing dating violence cases confidentially and effectively. Second, clear referral and case-management procedures should be developed to connect students with appropriate psychological, legal, medical, and social support services when necessary. Third, dating violence prevention content should be integrated into first-year orientation programs, life-skills education, and extracurricular activities to increase students' awareness at an early stage of university life. Fourth, universities should expand peer-support initiatives by training student leaders and peer educators to identify warning signs of dating violence and facilitate referrals to professional services. Finally, universities should strengthen collaboration with external stakeholders, including hospitals, legal aid centers, community organizations, and social service agencies, to ensure comprehensive support for students experiencing dating violence. These measures may improve students' access to support resources and strengthen the overall capacity of universities to respond to dating violence.

This study has several limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, self-reported data may be affected by response bias, including cognitive bias and social expectation bias. Second, the convenience sampling method limits the representativeness of the sample for university students in Vietnam. Third, the cross-sectional study design does not allow for the identification of causal relationships. Fourth, the study assessed students' perceptions and evaluations of social work activities rather than objective behavioral outcomes. Consequently, the findings should not be interpreted as evidence of the actual effectiveness of social work interventions in reducing dating violence, increasing help-seeking behavior, or improving intervention outcomes. Furthermore, the study sample is concentrated in only a few universities in Hanoi, limiting the potential for generalization. Future studies should expand the sample size and geographic scope, utilize longitudinal and mixed-methods approaches, and incorporate objective outcome measures such as help-seeking behavior, service utilization, intervention outcomes, and changes in dating violence experiences.

6. Conclusion

This study surveyed students' perceptions of social work activities aimed at preventing and intervening in dating violence among university students in Hanoi. The results showed that students generally report positive evaluations of awareness-raising activities, counseling services, and educational programs related to healthy relationships. However, many students seem to prefer seeking support from informal networks, such as friends or family members, rather than formal university services. The study highlights the need for universities to further enhance social work activities and improve access to professional support services for students. Universities could consider establishing dedicated counseling and social work units, strengthening confidential referral mechanisms, integrating dating violence prevention content into student orientation and life-skills programs, and expanding peer-support initiatives. In addition, stronger collaboration among universities, healthcare providers, legal aid services, and community organizations may improve access to comprehensive support for students experiencing dating violence. Furthermore, collaboration between universities, social activists, and community organizations can help enhance the effectiveness of prevention programs. By strengthening these efforts, higher education institutions may enhance students' awareness of dating violence, improve access to support services, and promote healthier relationship norms among students. Given the influence of cultural norms and help-seeking attitudes on

students' responses to dating violence, future prevention efforts should combine professional social work services with culturally appropriate educational and support strategies. Future research should examine relationship violence among students in other regions and explore further factors influencing help-seeking behavior. Such studies could provide additional evidence for developing more effective prevention and intervention strategies in the university setting.

The research was conducted according to ethical principles commonly applied in social science research. Prior to the survey, participants were informed of the research's purpose, questionnaire content, and their right to voluntary participation. All participants took part voluntarily and had the right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences. All data collected were used solely for research purposes and were processed anonymously to ensure the confidentiality of participants' personal information. The survey questions were designed to minimize potential discomfort or psychological stress when addressing experiences related to dating violence.

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