

**Power relations in dating relationships:
A phenomenological study of violence in university students in Samarinda City**

***Relasi kuasa dalam hubungan pacaran:
Studi fenomenologi kekerasan pada mahasiswa di Kota Samarinda***

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Abstract

In 2022, cases of violence against women and children in East Kalimantan Province increased by 315 cases in just four months. Samarinda City is in first place for cases of violence against women and children in East Kalimantan Province, with 18 victims being students. This study focuses on the experiences and impacts of violence experienced by female students in Samarinda City as victims of violence in dating relationships. This type of research is qualitative research with a phenomenological approach. This study employed Michel Foucault's power relations theory. Data acquisition was carried out through in-depth interviews. The data was then processed using the Creswell method. This study found that patriarchal culture is still extremely strong, making the perpetrators believe that as men, they must be brave and dominant in a dating relationship to be able to maintain power and control over their partners. Victims of dating violence are willing to do whatever their partner requests in the hope that it will make their partner happier and love them more. This study concludes that the impact of violence on victims can take the form of verbal violence, physical violence, or psychological disturbances, requiring victims to seek medical assistance from a psychiatrist to help deal with mental disorders and trauma.

Keywords: dating violence; gender equality; hegemonic masculinity; power relations

Abstrak

Pada tahun 2022, kasus kekerasan terhadap perempuan dan anak di Provinsi Kalimantan Timur mengalami peningkatan sebesar 315 kasus hanya dalam kurun waktu empat bulan. Kota Samarinda menduduki peringkat pertama temuan kasus kekerasan terhadap perempuan dan anak di Provinsi Kalimantan Timur termasuk sebanyak 18 korban berstatus sebagai mahasiswa. Penelitian ini berfokus pada pengalaman serta dampak dari kekerasan yang dialami oleh mahasiswi di Kota Samarinda sebagai korban kekerasan dalam relasi pacaran. Jenis penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori power relations Michel Foucault. Perolehan data dilakukan dengan wawancara mendalam (in-depth interview). Data diolah menggunakan metode Creswell. Studi ini menemukan bahwa budaya patriarki masih begitu kuat sehingga para pelaku merasa bahwa sebagai laki-laki harus gagah berani dan dominan dalam suatu hubungan pacaran untuk dapat mempertahankan kekuasaan dan kendali atas pasangannya. Korban kekerasan dalam pacaran bersedia melakukan apapun yang diminta oleh pasangannya dengan harapan agar pasangannya merasa lebih bahagia dan lebih menyayangnya. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa dampak kekerasan yang dialami oleh korban dapat berupa kekerasan verbal, kekerasan fisik, maupun gangguan psikis, yang mengharuskan korban mendapatkan pertolongan medis dari psikiater untuk membantu menangani gangguan mental serta trauma yang diderita.

Kata kunci: kekerasan dalam pacaran; kesetaraan gender; maskulinitas hegemonik; relasi kuasa

Introduction

Cases of violence in Indonesia are increasing every year, with victims including not only adults but also teenagers, children, and even toddlers (Wishesa & Suprapti 2014). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), one in every three women worldwide faces violence. As many as 37% of women

in the Asia-Africa region experience violence, which is the highest among other countries (Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak Republik Indonesia 2018). Cortens et al. (2021) stated that more than one in three Canadian youth who have dated have experienced dating violence in the previous 12 months, specifically, 11.8% for physical violence, 27.8% for psychological violence, and 17.5% for cyber aggression, with socially marginalized adolescents experiencing the most violence in dating.

Cases of violence against women have decreased since 2016, but the number remains alarming. One in every four women aged 15 to 64 has experienced physical or sexual violence from a partner during their lifetime. Women living in urban areas (27.8%) are more likely to be victims of physical or sexual violence than women in rural areas (23.9%) (Dinas Kependudukan, Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak 2022). Dating violence refers to physical, sexual, and psychological violence against unmarried partners (Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak Republik Indonesia 2018). This type of violence frequently follows domestic violence, but it receives less attention than domestic violence, so it is sometimes overlooked by both victims and perpetrators.

Cases of dating violence are ranked third after cases of domestic violence and sexual violence (Hickman et al. 2004, CNN Indonesia 2021, Dihni 2022). From January until October 2021, the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan RI) received a total of 4,500 reports, 1,200 of which were cases of dating violence. Many women are unaware that they are trapped in forms of violence such as verbal, physical, or sexual violence, and psychological violence because it is considered normal and a form of concern and love for their partners (Hlavka 2014).

According to the Online Information System for Women and Child Protection as of July 1, 2022, there were 443 cases of violence against women and children in East Kalimantan Province. In 2022, there is a tendency for an increasing trend because based on data as of March 1, 2022, there were 128 cases. Meanwhile, as of July 1, 2022, it increased to 443 cases or an additional 315 cases. Samarinda City ranks first in cases of violence against women and children in East Kalimantan Province. There are three cities with the highest rankings of violence cases in East Kalimantan, including Samarinda with 293 cases, followed by Bontang with 70 cases, and Balikpapan with 51 cases (Dinas Kependudukan, Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak 2022).

In Samarinda, the education level of violence victims includes 92 high school victims, or 41.63%, 36 junior high school victims, 39 elementary school victims, 18 college victims, and 11 non-education victims (Dinas Komunikasi dan Informatika Provinsi Kaltim 2022). In cases of dating violence, women who are victims are typically weak, lack confidence, and love their partners very much (Anantri 2015, Haes 2017, Alverina 2021, Manoppo 2021). Some research literature shows that dating is not about love and affection, but rather about the desire to dominate. Some people regard dating as a form of ownership, rather than simply a process of getting to know each other before moving on to a more serious process, such as marriage (Rohmah & Legowo 2014, Jailani 2022). The existence of this perception causes a person to commit violence to defend what he has (Khair & Suriadi 2022).

Lestari et al. (2022) found that the violence experienced by victims includes verbal, physical, and sexual violence. The psychological impact of verbal and physical violence on victims is feeling traumatized and stressed with their partner's demands due to fear of being abused, whereas the impact of sexual violence on victims is self-blame, low self-esteem, feeling worthless, relying on their partner, and frequently hurting themselves.

In relationships, women believe that their boyfriends will change, that they can minimize the impact of violence, and that their boyfriend is violent because they are the cause of the violence (Astutik & Syafiq 2019). Many women choose to maintain violent dating relationships because, in dating, the emphasis on gender is increasing (Wishesha & Suprapti 2014, Sari 2018). Men are expected to be leaders in a relationship so that they have more power to control the relationship, and women can only respond and participate in relationship plans determined by men (Santrock 2013).

Many perpetrators immediately apologize after committing violence by expressing regret, promising not to do it again, and being romantic towards their partner (Widiyanti 2020, Sulistianto 2021). This is why women continue to forgive and understand their partner's behavior and resume their previous dating relationship. Even people who are naturally rough with their partners tend to repeat the same behavior because it is a personality and attitude in dealing with a conflict or problem (Astutik & Syafiq 2019).

Several studies on dating violence indicate that there are several factors underlying the violence experienced by female victims in order to maintain the relationship they are in, such as jealousy, infidelity, and not following their partner's desires (Jailani 2020, Khair & Suriadi 2022). Sholikhah & Masykur (2020) found that the reason victims stay in unfavorable situations is because of the comfort provided by their partners. The partner is seen as a fulfillment of needs, and some of the victims have lost their virginity. In some cases, violence occurs when the victim is unable to satisfy their partner's desires and violates their partner's rules.

The issue of dating violence is still poorly understood by the general public, particularly among those with low levels of education, difficulty controlling their emotions, low economic well-being, and toxic friendships (Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak Republik Indonesia 2018). The term "Acceptance of Dating Violence" refers to the common phenomenon of dating violence. Acceptance of Dating Violence is the victim's attitude and behavior of acceptance toward their partner's aggressive behavior in the dating relationship (Guerra et al. 2003, Schnurr et al. 2010). Such attitudes and behaviors develop when the victim believes that their partner's violence is reasonable, even believing that they deserve to be treated in this manner as proof of their partner's love for them (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention 2023).

Foucault has a different definition of "power" compared to Max Weber, which is the ability of an individual to influence the behavior of others according to their desires. However, for Foucault, the element of power is sufficient for the existence of a relationship between one person and another. Foucault stated that knowledge is the source of power. Power, according to Foucault, exists because of knowledge; whoever possesses the knowledge, possesses power (Ritzer & Goodman 2010:78-79). The theory proposed by Michel Foucault views power as something that everyone possesses. One person has power over others. Power, he believes, is fluid and present everywhere, including in dating relationships. This study attempts to examine how power relations play out in dating relationships among college students in Samarinda City.

Dating violence has been studied for a long time, but this phenomenon has received little attention from the local community. Until now, the government has only focused on cases of domestic violence, despite the fact that dating violence has a significant impact on young people's future as the nation's successors. According to the data collected, Samarinda has the highest number of violent cases, indicating that more people believe that violence is normal. Dating violence is not a new research topic. However, given the prevalence of violence, this phenomenon needs further investigation. Many authors use middle and high school students as research subjects for dating violence because they are still in the puppy love stage and are vulnerable to toxic relationships and have the possibility of dating violence. This study is expected to provide a new perspective for women, particularly female students, to anticipate themselves earlier in order to avoid easily falling into unhealthy relationships, as well as an effort to free women from the shackles of violence in order to achieve gender equality.

Research Method

This was a qualitative study that took a phenomenological approach. This study described the experiences of students who have experienced violence in dating relationships, as well as the impact on victims of violence in Samarinda City. This study included eight participants. They were divided into three groups, including three female victims of dating violence as main informants, two male perpetrators of violence, and three female victims' friends as supporting informants.

Data collection was done through face-to-face and telephone in-depth interviews using interview guidelines. Data analysis was conducted using the Creswell method. The data obtained from data collection was processed, summarized, classified into smaller units, and patterns were sought that were similar, resulting in findings or conclusions. The data processing stage began with recording the transcribed interview results, taking notes and observations, and classifying, or sorting other data based on the source of information and the need to answer the problem formulation. Then, all data was read using a general understanding of the information obtained, then reflected on its overall meaning, and finally categorized and summarized overlapping and unused information. Then, data coding aimed to make data classification easier before interpreting it. To find the meaning contained in the data, a dialogue was conducted based on knowledge and experience. Furthermore, data was chosen and linked based on context, informant perspective, process, activity, and social structure.

Furthermore, coding was used to describe the settings, people, categories, and themes that were studied. Codes were organized in such a way that they form patterns and themes. All of the data were described and analyzed. Furthermore, coding was used to describe the settings, people, categories, and themes that were studied. Codes were organized in such a way that they form patterns and themes, describe all of the data, and then analyze it. The data description included an explanation of the event chronology and the interrelationships between the contexts discussed. Finally, there was data interpretation. The essence of what the data produced was then constructed at this stage. In broader and deeper forms, research findings were compared with information derived from other theories and literature. It is possible to obtain new and important ideas relevant to the research context. The authors provided truthful and accurate information, descriptions, and data from processed data.

Results and Discussion

University student experience as victims of dating violence

Dating violence experienced by female university students as participants in this study included emotional, physical, and financial violence and activity restrictions. Every female student who was a victim of violence did not only experience one form of violence but can be more than two forms of violence in her relationship. The violence experienced by ANA is described as follows:

“At the beginning of dating, I was excited because I could date someone I liked. But after some time, I felt the conflict approaching. I tended to feel sad and angry rather than happy because my partner engaged in too much rude or negative behavior toward me. He once asked me to stay with him at a hotel and demanded my money for economic reasons. Since then, I had been worried. He used harsh words and sentences against me, and he also physically abused me.” (Informant ANA).

ANA's confession demonstrates how harshly her partner treated her. ANA admitted that she gave the money because her partner's financial situation was bad, and in order to protect her partner's privacy, she decided not to inquire further about the reasons for her partner's frequent borrowing of money. Aside from being concerned about her partner becoming emotional, ANA also desired privacy for her partner. However, due to ANA's treatment of always giving in and being overshadowed by fear, her partner always does the same thing at other times. This conflict clearly grew worse over the course of the three-year relationship.

Victims of dating violence go through a similar cycle to victims of domestic violence (KDRT), including the honeymoon phase, tension, violence, and the regret and redemption phase (Takaliuang 2013). The five cycles will continue to move with an increasingly fast time period based on the level of violence experienced, both physical and psychological violence. This is what AYA experienced with her partner:

“Everyone must have bad memories from their past. My partner's emotions became unstable whenever he recalled my past. When that happened, my partner called me a slut and said hurtful things to me. He was always asking me to leave. He evicted me and stated that he no longer need me. I felt worthless. If he's feeling down, he'll go out with other girls without telling me. I always forgive him because I believe everyone has strengths and weaknesses.” (Informant AYA).

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AYA stated that she would always apologize repeatedly for her partner's actions because, according to AYA, what his partner did was the result of something done by her. AYA eventually experienced psychological vulnerability and required the assistance of a psychologist or psychiatrist to cope with her mentality. AYA considered that her partner had the power to organize and direct AYA's life. The same thing was conveyed by ICA:

"I know the true character of my partner after a year of being in a relationship. He's a good person, but some of his actions made me emotional. For example, he cheated on me and approached other women besides me and it happened several times. After he was caught, I always argued with him. He always refused to admit he was wrong and eventually snapped at me as if I was accusing him. He eventually apologized, but he did it again." (Informant ICA).

ICA's confession provides an illustration of the violence she experienced. ICA wanted to ask for an explanation for her partner's actions every time. However, this has happened repeatedly. Unknowingly, ICA's partner manipulated the situation so that she always felt guilty and apologized every time her partner made a mistake. On the other hand, ICA admitted that she apologized because she had feelings of affection and was afraid of losing her partner.

For a man, the presence of masculinity makes them more capable of dominating a relationship. Hegemonic masculinity is a culturally idealized form of masculine character, namely the ideal male form constructed by society (Yang 2020). Without realizing it, this makes men try to meet masculinity standards in order to feel like they are ideal men who are accepted by their peers and society. This characteristic of masculinity tends to glorify male domination and superiority (Mermelstein 2019). According to ADY, as a man and as a partner, he has the right to possess his partner:

"...It's normal for me to argue with my partner, but I'm never rude; I just snap. At that time, because of jealousy and emotion, I finally threw my partner's cell phone. I have a temperament and possessiveness that I struggle to control. I have toxic masculinity. I don't want to be controlled by my partner and I as a man have the right to know everything about her. Men are leaders, so I have the right to control my partner's life. Women are weak creatures." (Informant ADY).

The same thing was conveyed by WAN as follows:

"I dislike it when my partner does not do what I want. I'm sure what I'm asking is for our good. We are already planning to get married. We are both Muslims, but we follow different Islamic organizations. This causes conflict to arise between me and my partner. I did not give permission when she wanted to take part in the religious activities she was participating in because these activities were unimportant. (Informant WAN).

In his statement, ADY described how he became dominant in his relationship. ADY also does not hesitate to take actions that have the potential to hurt or traumatize his partner. Men, in his opinion, must be able to position themselves as superior to women. According to ADY, he has more experience and knowledge than his partner; thus, ADY always manipulates his partner to make her feel powerless so that ADY can maintain the symbol of masculinity that exists in him as a man even if it should be done in such a manner.

This was also conveyed by WAN. WAN said that his partner has to comply. WAN indirectly provided a statement that women must follow what is ordered by men. In order to make his partner inevitably obey what he said, WAN used "religion" to control his partner.

A man's inability to control himself, especially his anger and their strong desire to dominate and control their partner are inextricably linked with dating violence (Fawole et al. 2005, Wulandari 2019). Men view acts of violence as a means of controlling their partners, and men frequently believe that dominating women is natural. Men's violence against their partners is often viewed as a way to impose their desires by changing certain circumstances to conform to their perceptions and expectations.

“My partner’s relationship with his father is strained. Because my partner’s father disliked my partner, his father frequently physically and verbally abused him when he was a child. When he was little, he often saw his mother and father fight. His mother was beaten by his father. No one interferes when his parents fight. He is the youngest child. When faced with that incident, he could only cry. He felt uncomfortable when he was at home. His father had a violent character and dominated the family.” (Informant AYA).

According to the information provided by AYA, his partner was a child victim of domestic violence. AYA’s partner grew up in a family that experienced violent conflict. AYA’s partner grows into a tough and emotional person because of his father’s bad treatment. His existence is often not appreciated by his father. AYA admitted that her partner had a traumatic experience from his childhood so in the end this experience shaped him as someone who is easily provoked by emotions when in conflict with AYA.

Dating refers to a relationship in which two people develop an intimate relationship. Some people believe that violence is impossible in dating relationships because there is always something romantic and fun to do, so everything is fine (Ellis & Wolfe 2014). Some couples, however, do not even feel the warmth and romance in their relationship. However, this cannot cause the victim to flee the situation. According to the information gathered, every victim wishes to end the relationship. Victims are always under the impression that everyone has both strengths and weaknesses. In their opinion, the partner’s negative characteristics (including rude behavior) are flaws in the partner’s character. As a result, the victim always understands his partner’s rude behavior.

The experience of dating violence experienced by adolescents can have an impact on their welfare and future prospects. The consequences of dating violence can cause problems, including mental health and academic decline (De La Rue et al. 2017, Cortens et al. 2021). Various forms of violence are experienced by students who are victims of dating violence, ranging from verbal violence, and physical violence, to causing mental health problems. The violence committed by the perpetrator stems from the violence they witnessed when they were little. Based on previous research, experiences of past violence can shape a person’s subsequent violence, such as witnessing domestic violence as a child can affect the formation of one’s emotions and cause long-term trauma (Kaukinen 2014, Mardiyati 2015, Nurhayati & Setyani 2021, Luft et al. 2022).

As stated by Awwad & Afriani (2019), parents certainly provide a sense of security for their children, but in reality, parents hurt their children. Some parents still do not understand the impact of violence on their children. Children who are abused or subjected to domestic violence may become violent in their relationships with others. Dardis et al. (2015) said that domestic violence is one of the causes of dating violence. This violent incident instills in a child a new perception of violence as a normal thing to do in everyday life to resolve a conflict. As a result, they justify violent acts.

The impact of dating violence on female students

Women who have been victims of violence may forgive their partners for their abusive behavior and always want to return to a toxic relationship. Even when their partners commit violent acts, women as victims try to change themselves in order to be happy, hoping that their partner’s abusive nature will disappear 40% to 70% of women who are victims of dating violence maintain a toxic relationship (Maselesele 2011, Duley 2012).

“As long as I am in a relationship with someone, I will always accept my partner for who they are regardless of the character they have. If my partner is rude to me, I prefer to cry and bottle up my sadness. I experience unstable emotions and feelings of hopelessness, which can lead to self-harm. Based on my experiences with my partner, I can only hope that he will change, and I will also try not to make mistakes that will irritate him. I was afraid that if I married him, or anyone else, I would be treated the same way.” (Informant AYA).

As we all know, love has the power to blind us to everything. Because of love, all mistakes can be forgiven. According to the information provided by AYA, she admits that whenever she is in a relationship

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with someone, she always tries to fully accept her partner's personality. AYA said that she prefers to hide her feelings and cry when she is in conflict with her partner, which makes her mentally worse. She also frequently injures her hands with scissors or a knife until they bleed, which makes her want to kill herself. AYA believes her mental health is in jeopardy. She decided to go to the hospital, and she is currently receiving treatment and direct treatment from a psychiatrist.

"The feeling of trauma within me is still there today, even though my ex-partner and I are no longer in a dating relationship. As a result of my previous relationship experience, I was afraid of starting a new relationship. My ex-boyfriend threatened me several times that if he found out I had a new partner, he would ruin my face with alcohol or chemically treated water so no one would want me." (Informant ANA).

ANA's fear and trauma persist despite the fact that her relationship with her partner has ended. She is so traumatized by her previous bad relationships that she is hesitant to commit or get married. ANA's four-year experience with violence has left her in deep pain and fear to this day. Because of her bad experience, she is afraid of starting a new relationship with someone because she believes the violence she witnessed four years ago could happen again, even with a different person.

Even if ANA, AYA, and other victims had traces of physical violence on their bodies or did not leave scars from psychological violence, dating violence should not be tolerated. In fact, the effect can be more dangerous because it causes trauma, and if left unchecked, there is a chance that the violence will escalate into even more severe physical and psychological violence with far-reaching consequences. When victims believe they are unable to separate themselves from the perpetrators, the role of family and close friends is critical in assisting victims in breaking free from the shackles of the perpetrators of violence. This is stated by AYA.

"If there is a problem, I always tell my friend. I feel at ease talking to her because she understands how I feel. I decided not to tell my parents because I felt awkward. Lately, I choose to be silent. My partner doesn't allow me to tell others about my relationship problems with him." (Informant AYA).

When AYA is bored or ill, she will sometimes confide in her best friend, SAR. According to AYA, this activity was enough to alleviate her sadness, but she was hesitant to tell her parents. AYA described that there was a distance between her and her parents, which made her feel awkward, and did not want to share stories or complain about her feelings. Sometimes, when AYA doesn't want to tell her friends or she feels dissatisfied with the response she gets from her friends, she vents her frustrations on social media platforms such as Twitter or Instagram.

"I choose social media as a place to vent my sadness, such as complaining on Twitter or Instagram through the "close friends" feature. I feel more comfortable complaining about it on social media. To be honest, I prefer telling someone to listen, but when I do, I remember the rules and boundaries my partner has established." (Informant ADA).

From the information obtained, AYA's partners forbade her to tell her friends about the conflicts that occurred in their relationship. It is considered that this will cause unwanted things, such as AYA's friends badmouthing AYA's partner so that AYA will be distracted by the input she receives from her friends and think that what her friends say is true. It is opposite to what ANA did. When there is a problem in their relationship, ANA prefers to be silent. However, ANA does occasionally tell their closest friends, but not completely.

"When there is a problem, I prefer to be silent and hold it in, sometimes I also cry alone. When I feel the need to tell someone, I tell my friends. I do this to feel more at ease and relieved. So far, I have never complained about my problems on social media because I am not a social media addict. I adore my partner, so I'd rather just give up." (Informant ANA).

This was also conveyed by ICA as follows:

“I prefer to harbor feelings if there is a problem with my partner and after that, I rest myself so that tomorrow I will be fresher for activities. I don’t want to tell anyone about my current relationship. If a disagreement arises, I try to resolve it alone with my partner, even if it prolongs my sadness. I never post stories on social media because my relationship is not only for public consumption.” (Informant ICA).

According to ICA, the existence of social media and friends cannot make her feel relieved because the relationship she is in is not intended to be disseminated and consumed by the public. According to ICA, the problem will be resolved if the two parties involved communicate.

Supporting and accompanying friends who are victims of dating violence is not easy. SAR admitted to repeatedly telling AYA as a close relative to leave this unhealthy relationship, but AYA still adhered to the principle that everyone has strengths and weaknesses and believed that her partner would change one day.

“She can rely on me as a friend. To be honest, it hurts me to hear her talk about what she’s going through and how it’s affecting her mental health. Whenever she complained to me, I always responded the same way. I occasionally request that she end her relationship with her partner. But I feel I don’t have the right to do it. I try to be someone who is there whenever she needs me.” (Informant SAR).

SAR said that the burden of all the stories of violence experienced by AYA was felt by SAR herself as AYA’s closest friend. SAR believes that AYA’s situation also includes SAR’s responsibility as AYA’s closest friend. Sometimes SAR asked AYA to end the relationship as soon as possible, but SAR realized that as a friend, SAR had no right to do so. This was also conveyed by IDA as a friend of ANA as follows:

“I believe it is difficult to let go of someone we care about, and I know ANA has strong feelings of compassion and love for her partner. As ANA’s friend, I had always assured her that everything would be fine. Whatever happens to her will be fine. I always stand by her so she knows someone still cares about her.” (Informant IDA).

According to IDA, conveying good or motivational sentences is very important and useful for improving someone’s bad feelings when they are sad. IDA tries to give encouraging words when ANA is feeling sad. IDA hopes that her efforts will be successful so that ANA’s condition will not get worse. IDA hopes that these motivational sentences will help ANA feel better. IDA and ANA have been friends since junior high school, and as a friend, IDA strives to be a good friend who is always available when ANA needs her. The same thing was conveyed by NAD as a friend of ANA as follows:

“Personally, when I found out ANA was in a bad state. try to devote my time in such a way that I can contact her as frequently as possible. Because the main issue she is having is related to her feelings, I think we need to approach her to better understand her feelings so that she finally has the courage to get out of the toxic relationship.” (Informant NAD).

From NAD’s statement, it is very difficult for victims of violence to receive advice. But at least we can pay attention to the feelings of the victims. That is, NAD tries to understand what ANA feels, and what ANA wants. NAD does not want to make a decision too quickly by telling ANA to break up with their partner and the problem can be solved quickly too. However, NAD focused on listening to ANA’s complaints first, helping ANA to make her a little better, then inviting ANA to do fun activities together. According to NAD, this can assist ANA in relaxing and thinking clearly, because if a friend is a provocateur who can only tell others to break up with their partner, that is a difficult thing to do, and even a friend who has experienced violence may feel pressured. Such requests actually make the victim more stressed because there is pressure, and lead the victim to do unexpected things.

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According to the data collected about students' experiences with violence, acts of psychological violence, such as threatening, intimidating, possessive, and manipulating victims, can have a negative impact on victims' mental health, such as depression and anxiety, as well as acts of physical violence, such as hitting, slapping, kicking, and attacking, which can result in light or heavy injuries for their partners (Kaura & Lohman 2007). This is something ANA feels as a victim of her partner's violence.

Dating violence has an impact on both psychosocial and physical health (Kaura & Lohman 2007, Thompson 2014), such as anxiety, fear of meeting new people, and thoughts of suicide (Widyasari & Aryastami 2018). Even though it has a negative impact on the physical and psychological health of victims, some victims of dating violence choose to stay with their partners (Syukriah 2020). As we know, when someone is hurt by another person, that person will try to stay away or run away from the perpetrator. However, this does not apply to victims of such violence. They choose to stay with their abuser out of dependence and love despite repeated experiences of violence and ultimately experiencing mental health problems.

Even though the victim may have traces of physical abuse on her body or there may be no visible signs due to psychological abuse, this does not mean that dating violence is tolerated. In fact, the impact can be even more dangerous because it is in the form of trauma and if left unchecked can also develop into more severe physical and psychological violence with more serious impacts. When the victims believe they cannot escape the perpetrator, the role of family and friends is critical in assisting the victims in breaking free from the shackles of the perpetrator of violence.

Conclusion

Before dating (courtship), people tend to show their positive traits until they finally get the person they want. In this case, the partners think that they know and understand each other very well. For them, dating at their age is no longer the puppy love that occurs in middle and high school students, so they choose to survive even if the relationship is unhealthy. They are aware of what their partner is doing, but they do not consider it an act of violence, but rather something that their partner would do out of love and concern. The existence of a power relationship implied in this dating relationship makes women believe their partners have the right to manage themselves and their lives.

According to the findings of this study, victims were willing to do whatever their partner asked them to do, such as refrain from participating in activities they enjoyed. Obeying their partner's orders is proof of affection for them, and it can make their partner feel happier and more in love with them. However, the partner's power to control and move the lives of victims of violence is maintained. Strong power relations in dating relationships make students who have been victims of violence dependent on their partners so that their partners eventually have complete power over them. Most women do not consider this reality to be a problem in their lives. In fact, this is a major issue that must be addressed. Victims of dating violence are willing to do whatever their partner requests in the hope that it will make their partner happier and love them more. The impact of violence obtained is verbal, physical, and psychological violence, which requires victims to seek psychiatric assistance in order to overcome their mental disorders.

This study is expected to be a reference, particularly for the central government and city governments as policymakers, that there is a need for more attention, particularly to women, in fulfilling their right to live comfortably and safely. Women require a safe and comfortable environment in which to express themselves without fear. The importance of disseminating an understanding of gender equality at every level of society is to raise awareness for every individual that men and women have equal opportunities. Theoretically, this study is also expected to be a reference in gender sociology studies regarding gender inequality which is still prevalent today, as well as to expand Michell Foucault's understanding of the concept of power relations.

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