

Knitting Love in Pain: A Phenomenon of Dating Violence Among Students of Pattimura University Ambon

Rolland Kissya¹, Mus Huliselan², Paulus Koritelu³
^{1,2,3} Pattimura University

Article Info

Article history:

Received: Mar, 2024

Revised: Mar, 2024

Accepted: Mar, 2024

Keywords:

Dating
Relationship Maintenance
Violence

ABSTRACT

Dating violence among students is a crucial issue that needs to be addressed promptly so that students can be freed from various acts of dating violence and obtain a safe environment. Therefore, it is important to conduct research, particularly on the factors causing dating violence and the motivation to maintain unhealthy dating relationships among students, in order to fully understand and address this unhealthy dating relationship, minimizing it as its causes are identified. This study adopts a qualitative approach with a descriptive study method, utilizing data collection techniques such as in-depth interviews, documentation, and literature review. Qualitative findings reveal reasons for dating violence among students of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences as well as the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Pattimura University, including internal and external factors such as mindset, unstable emotions, personality, feelings of dependency, and sexual urges. This indicates that forms of violence perpetrated by students include physical, psychological, sexual, and economic violence. The dominant reason why women or victims of violence remain in dating relationships in this study is because they inherit three key indicators of love: voluntary commitment, sacrifice, and forgiveness.

This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](#) license.



Corresponding Author:

Name: Rolland Kissya

Institution: Pattimura University, Jl. Ir. M. Putuhena, Poka, Kec. Tlk. Ambon, Kota Ambon, Maluku

Email: roland.ambon2017@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Dating is defined as an activity that begins with getting to know and becoming friends with someone. Dating is an interaction to get closer to each other [1]. In dating, couples usually meet, interact, and engage in activities together with the goal of continuing the relationship. Dating or courtship is considered important to go through because its purpose is to deeply understand each other, aiming to avoid any negative outcomes that may occur in marriage. A relationship

with a very personal (intimate) relationship, or also called dating, does not always go smoothly as expected. In some cases, there is a phenomenon where one party feels uncomfortable or even experiences violence in it, known as dating violence.

Unlike healthy relationships where there is affection, mutual attention, respect, and a strong interest in the partner's happiness, relationships filled with violence are quite the opposite, such as discomfort in one partner, selfishness, belittling the partner, excessive criticism, lack of affection, feeling

undervalued, physical abuse, verbal abuse, coercion, threats, materialism, which can traumatize one or both parties and even lead to death. Many people today misunderstand dating violence, many couples find it very difficult to identify that they are in an unhealthy relationship [2] because they perceive violence as proof of love, jealousy as excessive care, fearing loss so they have to restrict, unaware that what is happening to them is a form of dating violence.

This study explains that there are several reasons why women, as victims of violence, continue to endure their relationships. Women being victims of violence in dating relationships are influenced by several causes, including sociological, psychological, and non-psychological factors. Violence in dating relationships shows that there is still inequality or imbalance in male and female relations, which is the source of the problem. However, most women who are victims of violence forgive and accept back their partners who have committed violent acts. In qualitative findings, some victims of dating violence inherit three indicators of love according to Erich Fromm in the art of loving, namely voluntary commitment, sacrifice, and forgiveness to endure the phenomenon of dating violence, but there are also some couples who endure due to other motivations, both financially and out of intimidation.

Pattimura University (UNPATTI) is one of the renowned state universities located in the city of Ambon, Maluku Province. Students studying at Pattimura University come from almost all regions in Maluku Province, resulting in diverse cultures and backgrounds among the students. In the modern era like today, many people are influenced to follow lifestyles and trends, including in dating. It is also important to note that there have been many changes and new phenomena in dating, including dating violence.

Max Weber's theory of social action suggests that social action rationality is based on four forms of rationality: instrumental, value, traditional, and [3]. However, only two forms of rationality are relevant to this

discussion. First, traditional rationality, which is individual action based on things that have been done traditionally, carried out due to past habits and without conscious reasons or planning regarding goals or methods used. Consequently, the upbringing patterns involving violence towards children in childhood, exposure to violence in social circles, frequent exposure to violent media, temperamental family environments characterized by infidelity and conflicts, uncontrolled alcohol consumption, patriarchal understanding, low education, and low economic welfare significantly influence the behavior and character of children, either as potential perpetrators or victims of violence in the future.

Second, affective rationality, which is individual action based on emotions or feelings. Often, these actions are carried out without thorough planning and without full awareness. The phenomenon of dating violence in dating and its relevance to the social behavior patterns of UNPATTI students can be explained by the form of affective rationality considered relevant. Affective action prioritizes feelings over reason. This action can be influenced by love, emotions when angry, sad, or happy, without full consciousness. Therefore, in actions taken by individuals or groups, there are different orientations or motives with different goals.

Each perpetrator also has different motives and goals. In the context of violent dating relationships towards women, not everyone who dates has the same intention in their aggressive actions, whether consciously or unconsciously. When someone becomes aware that they are trapped in a violent relationship but still endure it because of love, it can be considered an affective action, and such actions will tend to affect their social life [4].

The author can understand the motives of the perpetrators when viewed from the mapping of the two types of theories. Affective rationality can interpret actions that are detrimental to oneself only because of irrational love. In addition to harming oneself, actions based on emotions without rational

consideration can also be dangerous for others, as sometimes they not only affect the personality of the victim or the perpetrator of violence in dating relationships but also their social relationships with close people or others may also be affected. Regarding relationships tainted by violence, there are many perspectives from each individual that lead them to act or behave according to their perceptions. From this theory, we can understand why humans act even though it seems irrational because every human has their own rationality.

Violence in dating in this study consists of physical violence, namely (1) Violence that can cause pain, such as hitting, physical assault involving throwing objects. (2) Psychological violence characterized by possessive behavior, restriction of movement, insults, threats, and verbal abuse. (3) Sexual violence characterized by forced sexual intercourse, coercion in kissing. (4) Financial violence is violence that can harm a partner financially, usually through coercion from a partner to spend money (Sari, 2018). Students, in general, are educated individuals, but some students are still trapped in unhealthy dating relationships. This research will answer whether love can indeed coexist with suffering.

2. METHODS

Table 1. Informant Characteristics Matrix

Number	Initials of Informant's Name	Age	Educational Level	Faculty
1	CS	22	S1	FKIP
2	IM	19	S1	FKIP
3	RW	26	S1	FISIP
4	MS	21	S1	FISIP

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Dating violence as a phenomenon observed among UNPATTI students still persists. There is a perception that

This research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive study method. The data collection techniques utilized are in-depth interviews, documentation, and literature review, focusing on the process of exploring and understanding social reality deeply behind a social action based on forms of violence. The purpose of this article is to explore the reasons why women, as victims of dating violence, choose to stay in unhealthy relationships even though they still have the option to end them. These experiences are examined through observation and in-depth interviews as primary data [5], while secondary data is obtained through journals and other relevant readings related to dating violence and will be interpreted using the art of loving approach by Eric Fromm.

The criteria for the subjects of this research are women as victims of dating violence, enrolled as undergraduate students, and aged between 19-26 years old. The status of being a student is linked to women's rational choices in determining their actions. Students are essentially educated individuals, but why are they weak in maintaining their dignity? Interviews were conducted with four female students from Pattimura University in Ambon, representing two faculties: the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP) and the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISIP), each consisting of two female victims of dating violence.

perpetrators of violence are mostly male, but women can also be perpetrators of violence, albeit rarely. Regarding the general issue that will be examined in this study; why do some

women or individuals choose to stay in love relationships even though they experience a lot of violence? Especially physical violence and symbolic violence. Based on this, Erich Fromm's perspective in *The Art of Loving*, he expresses that love is an active force within humans, a force that breaks down the walls separating individuals, love makes one overcome feelings of isolation and separation, yet still allows one to be oneself [6]. Three key indicators can explain this in terms of loving. According to Fromm, why do women as victims of violence choose to stay and accept rough treatment amid the digitalization, transparency, and accountability era?

1. *Voluntary*

Love can bring someone to life socially, it can inspire, but love can also kill and make someone lose the rhythm of life, leading to social death. Being too in love can indeed make a woman easily melt and sacrifice everything for her partner, even though she has been hurt and deceived many times. Love is also the reason to endure. Every woman is valuable and deserves to be treated well. Enduring and accepting all the pain is not a good choice for living.

2. *Sacrifice*

Many people feel like they sacrifice but are not appreciated, some don't want to do it, and some do it together, but still can't maintain their relationship. True love and the struggle of love are not a reality that shows the benefits we get from loving someone, but a willingness to sacrifice for the person we love even if we lose many valuable things, whether it's time, finances, hope, self-esteem, or even life, someone can give it even if they are never loved in their lifetime.

3. *Forgiveness*

Generally, women are more likely to forgive their partners when they make mistakes. Many are willing to return and endure even if they have to endure heartache again. Dating, which is considered a romantic relationship, is actually fraught with threats for women [6]. This was experienced by

informant CS who found it difficult to distinguish between affection and violence. The violence experienced by CS is physical and psychological violence, as seen from the interview quote with informant CS, "*I am often insulted and punched with fists on the face if I hang out with male friends on campus or if I have male friends on Facebook, he will consider that as my affair, but I think if he's jealous it means he loves me*".

The research found that informant CS experienced violence in the form of physical and psychological abuse. Marked by possessive behavior with restrictions on freedom of movement so that CS is only allowed to socialize with female friends both in the real world and on social media. CS feels that her life is controlled by her partner, but CS considers that reprimand as a form of affection, because in principle, jealousy means love, so she is willing to endure the pain and indirectly she has forgiven all forms of violence that have occurred to her.

Similarly, informant IM experienced physical and psychological violence from her partner. "*My boyfriend is very aggressive, he always abuses me, hitting me with his hands, sometimes even with objects (a helmet). I was forbidden to continue my studies to higher education because I would meet many male friends there. I have followed all his wishes but instead he is the one who ruins this relationship, he cheated on me with another woman. I got into a fight with that woman but I was blamed, I was abused and humiliated in front of his affair until we ended this relationship. Four months later he came back to apologize and wanted to start over. With various considerations, I forgave and accepted him back. As the relationship continued, instead of getting better, it only got worse, he appeared more aggressive and cruel, I was mercilessly abused, he still had an affair with the same woman behind my back, but I remained patient and tried to convince myself that I could still change him into the good man I once knew*".

IM has sacrificed many things for her partner, one of which is her own future. She was willing to not continue her education to fulfill her partner's wishes. In her helplessness as a woman, she accepted all the harsh

treatments she received, but the love she possessed was very strong. She forgave her partner and was willing to open her heart to accept him back.

Usually, women experience layered violence, not just one form of violence. Some informants experience two to three forms of violence, like informants CS and IM. Many women experience violence in dating, yet they still endure in situations that are not advantageous to them because they have difficulty distinguishing between love and suffering.

The dating relationship pattern cannot be separated from the motivation of women as victims of violence to maintain the dating relationship based on four cases. Women have different motivations in maintaining dating relationships; not all informants maintain relationships with the approach of voluntary, sacrifice, and forgiveness, but there are other factors behind their decision to continue in unhealthy relationships. For example, MS chose to stay because of financial dependence on her boyfriend. MS stated: *"I can't leave him because he is a good man and has a lot of money. I am often treated to meals, taken to watch movies, and even bought a mobile phone, but behind that, there is suffering that I experience. I am always forced to have sex whenever, even if I don't want to, but if I refuse, I will be insulted and he will threaten to take back all the things he gave me. So, I have to serve his lust"*.

MS is torn between breaking up or staying because she will only be financially assisted if she serves her boyfriend in sexual relations. They no longer appear to be dating but rather engaging in a transaction. MS is forced into this situation due to financial dependence, so she is willing to sacrifice her purity to fulfill all her economic needs. If she doesn't serve her boyfriend, she is threatened with losing all the valuable possessions she received from him.

Based on empirical data in this study, MS's statement indicates that financial need is

a strong motivation driving MS to date, even though she has to sacrifice her dignity. However, the need for material possessions becomes a strong reason for MS to endure in the dating relationship.

Finally, the form of economic violence experienced by RW, who admits to always being exploited to cover expenses and meet the needs of her partner. RW stated: *"At first, this relationship seemed normal like any other dating relationship, but after two months, I felt that this relationship was no longer normal. I felt financially exploited and extorted. Every day, he always wanted to control my wallet and ATM card. If there was money in my wallet, he would take it without asking. For me, this was still acceptable because we were dating, but what was more unacceptable was that he forced me to ask my parents for a large amount of money just for his personal needs, such as wanting to buy a motorcycle. When I couldn't comply, he immediately scolded me. He said I was stingy, no longer loved him. Even though I had sacrificed a lot for him, including my dignity"*.

RW feels that this relationship is no longer normal; she feels financially exploited by her boyfriend. Despite sacrificing many things, both materially and in terms of self-esteem, RW finds it difficult to resist because she is constantly told, *"you're stingy, you no longer love me, you're different now"* - statements that make RW feel guilty and unable to refuse, leading her to take permissive actions. RW is also afraid of losing, as she has already surrendered her dignity to her boyfriend with the hope that they will continue together until marriage.

The myth of virginity is still deeply ingrained in society, which makes women as victims of violence who have already lost their virginity willing to maintain dating relationships, fearing they won't find a partner willing to accept a woman who is no longer a virgin. Moreover, in Maluku culture, virginity is sometimes viewed as something sacred [7].

Table 2. Categorization of dating violence against victims of violence

Subject (women as victims of dating violence)	Types of violence experienced	Perpetrator's motive for violence	Victim's motivation to endure violence	Indicators		
				Voluntary	Sacrifice	Forgiveness
CS	Psychological	Possessive, Egotism, Patriarchy	Avoiding conflict	✓	✓	✓
IM	Physical & Psychological	Possessive, Egotism,	Love (emotional attachment)	✓	✓	✓
MS	Psychological , Sexual	Lust	Materialistic	-	-	-
RW	Economic	Exploitation	Already surrendered honor	✓	✓	✓

In general, the motivation of subject CS to endure in an unhealthy relationship is because she still loves her partner. CS fears losing her partner, so she is willing to let her life be controlled, even though she is scorned, and the possessive attitude exhibited by her partner towards CS is seen as a form of attention and affection towards CS. Therefore, she is willing to endure in such a relationship just to avoid disputes or conflicts in her relationship with her partner, hence she inherits these three indicators. On the other hand, IM also inherits the same three indicators because she believes she can still change all the rough treatment from her partner into the good man she once knew.

In contrast, MS chooses to endure with her partner because MS is financially dependent on her partner for her personal needs, so she is willing to sacrifice her dignity for her financial satisfaction, which she always gets. Therefore, it can be concluded that she does not inherit these three indicators because her motivation to endure is not based on love.

Subject RW chooses to endure because she has already surrendered her body's purity to her partner. She is afraid that if she breaks up and meets another man who cannot accept her because she is no longer a virgin, she inherits these three indicators

because she has already sacrificed and forgiven repeatedly even though she was hurt repeatedly.

4. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the discussion regarding dating violence experienced by female victims cannot be separated from the imbalance in gender relations, as access to and control over men are greater compared to women. Control and domination over women are strongly linked to women's motivations and partner characteristics. Women's expectations, the duration of the dating relationship, and their reluctance to refuse to comply with their partner's wishes shape the pattern of "power and dependence" in relationships. The violence and dependence of women are directly proportional; the greater the dependence of women on their partners, the greater the likelihood of these women being controlled, manipulated, and experiencing violence. Most women who experience violence in dating relationships choose to maintain their relationships, even though they have the option to end them.

Many women maintain their relationships not because of the affection they receive, but because they are trapped in relationships that make it difficult for them to leave their partners, so enduring becomes a

feasible option for a certain period. Especially when considering other actors influencing women as victims of violence to endure beyond their partners, such as peer groups and parents. Dating violence among

university students in this study can be summarized as actions involving physical, psychological, economic, and sexual violence, as well as various motivations for dating and maintaining dating relationships.

REFERENCES

- [1] J. Katz and I. Arias, "Psychological abuse and depressive symptoms in dating women: Do different types of abuse have differential effects?," *J. Fam. Violence*, vol. 14, pp. 281–295, 1999.
- [2] J. W. White, "A gendered approach to adolescent dating violence: Conceptual and methodological issues," *Psychol. Women Q.*, vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 1–15, 2009.
- [3] A. Tazid, *Tokoh, Konsep dan Kata Kunci Teori Postmodern*. Deepublish, 2017.
- [4] F. Fernando, *SOSIOLOGI PEDESAAN*. Zahir Publishing.
- [5] M. Mardawani, "Praktis penelitian kualitatif teori dasar dan analisis data dalam perspektif kualitatif," *Yogyakarta Deep.*, 2020.
- [6] S. G. Apriantika, "Konsep Cinta Menurut Erich Fromm; Upaya Menghindari Tindak Kekerasan dalam Pacaran," *Dimens. J. Kaji. Sociol.*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 44–60, 2021.
- [7] J. Nina, *Perempuan Nuaulu: tradisionalisme dan kultur patriarki*. Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2012.