

THE TRAP OF TOXIC RELATIONSHIPS IN DATING: THE CASE OF FIVE FEMALE STUDENTS IN PALU CITY

Sofya Lestari¹, Zaiful², Moh. Nutfa³

^{1,2,3} Fakultas Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik, Universitas Tadulako, Palu, Indonesia

Email: sofyalestari1@gmail.com, ipulkamal@gmail.com,

moh.nutfa@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Toxic Relationship becomes a trap in teenage dating relationships so that one party feels depressed and disadvantaged, even threatening life safety, especially for women. This study aims to explain the forms and motives for maintaining toxic relationships in dating relationships. A descriptive qualitative approach was used to explore the stories (cases) of five female students who were victims of toxic relationships in Palu City, Central Sulawesi. Data were obtained from in-depth interviews and brainstorming and reinforced from literature studies and news sources. Data were analyzed interpretatively. Data reliability was obtained from data triangulation. The results showed that the forms of toxic relationships in dating are physical violence, sexual harassment, verbal violence, intimidation, and possessiveness. The reasons why teenage girls maintain toxic relationships are because: (1) hope that the partner can change bad behavior to good; (2) the family has known each other; and (3) still have trust in the partner even though they have experienced physical violence, sexual violence and poor mental health. Getting out of a toxic relationship is not easy because the factors of hope for love, family, and trust are still the motives for maintaining a dating relationship.

KEYWORDS Toxic relationships, adolescent girls, dating violence, women



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INTRODUCTION

Building a serious relationship with someone requires empathy and intimate involvement from both parties. One form of close and private human social relations between a man and a woman is usually called a dating relationship. (Chansa et al., 2017). Adolescent girls who are or have been in private relationships or dating are often involved in private conflicts with their partners. (Arifin and Rahmawati, 2015; Yanti, 2023).. In addition, dating relationships often lead to unhealthy or toxic behavior for both partners (Dafiq et al., 2023; Maharani, 2023).

Toxic relationship is one form of unhealthy relationship (conflict) in dating. (Cera Keny, Febrian Syahputra and Pratomo, 2023; Putri, 2023). Toxic

How to cite: Sofya Lestari, et al. (2024). The Trap of Toxic Relationships in Dating: The Case of Five Female Students in Palu City. *Journal Eduvest*. 4(11), 10391-10406
E-ISSN: 2775-3727

relationships certainly have a negative impact on adolescent mental health (Indrawati, 2021) because it continues to be in private conflict. According to research results, private conflicts experienced by students often come from dating relationships due to experiencing harsh treatment and even intimidation from their partners so that all aspects of student life can be disrupted. (Wahyuni, Komariah and Sartika, 2020).

Many studies prove that the private relationships (dating) that adolescents live tend to be unhealthy because they have been trapped in toxic relationships (Aurelie, 2022; Dafiq et al., 2023; Saskia, Idris and Sumiaty, 2023). Conditions like this, cause one party to feel depressed and can be an indication of an unhealthy relationship (toxic relationship). Reinforces that toxic relationships are relationships that occur between two or more people without mutual benefit (Yani et al., 2021). Dafiq et al., (2023).

Toxic relationships are based on unhealthy relationships, which certainly have a negative impact both mentally and physically. Patients with toxic relationships become unproductive, experience mental disorders and can trigger emotional outbursts that lead to acts of violence. (Praptiningsih and Putra, 2021). Among students, it not only has an impact on mental health and social relationships, but also has an impact on low creativity and academic achievement. (Puteri et al., 2022).

Some studies say the internal factors that cause toxic relationships in adolescents are due to harsh and rigid parenting, limited parental knowledge about how to educate children and weak attention to children (Erna Mesra, Salmah and Fauziah, 2014). Toxic relationships also have consequences, namely leaving a sense of trauma, disrupting personality, and destroying the body. Whether we realize it or not, this toxic relationship has an impact on a person's mental health. The longer someone is in a toxic relationship, the more likely they are to experience stress, depression and anxiety. So a toxic relationship is a relationship that is very detrimental (Puteri et al., 2022).

The National Commission on Violence Against Women reports that in Indonesia there has been an increase in cases of violence, from 4,322 cases to 4,371 cases. (Komnas, 2023). Komnas Perempuan in 2022 stated that sexual violence was the most dominant form of violence against women (2,228 cases/38.21%), followed by psychological violence (2,083 cases/35.72%). In the data from service institutions, physical violence dominated (6001 cases/38.8%), followed by sexual violence (4102 cases/26.52%). (Komnas Perempuan, 2023).

Research Wahyuni et al., (2020) on students of the Indonesian University of Education found that in general the phenomenon of dating violence in students includes physical, psychological, sexual violence and financial violence. Cases of violence like this are caused by external factors such as the influence of the social environment, the influence of the place where violence occurs and patriarchal culture.

Other research suggests that violence/exploitation against women is also caused by men's power relations over women. (Nutfa, Magfirah and Alingkas, 2022).. According to Michel Foucault, power is exercised through certain rules that influence each other (Wiradnyana, 2018). According to Foucault, power does not come from outside, but from within. Power carries out its duties through certain rules and systems, resulting in a chain of power (Foucault, 2020).

There is a close relationship between power and knowledge and they cannot be separated from each other. Power produces knowledge, and knowledge produces power (Syafiuddin, 2018; Foucault, 2020). Power is not a power to control people physically and as a dictatorship. Power today has experienced a pattern of normalization, namely power is hidden, and veiled so that it seems invisible. Power no longer works through oppression and physical force, and violence against women is no exception (Elindawati, 2021; Nutfa, Magfirah and Alingkas, 2022).

Violence in dating relationships grows under a mask called love, where love seeks fulfillment through dominative and manipulative actions. In this case, individuals feel entitled to force, manipulate emotions and limit all actions of their partner, because the partner actually has objects that always want to be owned and controlled. (Gilar Apriantika, 2021).

Generally among students, dating is considered as a source of happiness in life (Ismail, Lestari and Ahmad, 2022). But on the other hand, it is a source of suffering for those in the relationship - including toxic relationships that are often sexually oriented (Hikmah and Ihsan, 2023). Many couples who look romantic on social media actually experience various acts of violence in dating relationships or even certain life-threatening violence. This is what is called a toxic relationship (Maharani, 2023).

This study explores the phenomenon of toxic relationships in dating relationships among adolescent girls. The subjects of this study were female students at a public university in Palu City who experienced toxic relationships during their studies. The identification results found that female students tend to experience sexual violence, physical violence, intimidation, and even experience trauma due to attempted rape by their partners.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach that explains phenomena in depth and holistically. This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to explain phenomena in depth and holistically regarding toxic relationships experienced by adolescent girls in Palu City, Central Sulawesi through a multi-analysis case study. Interpretation of the natural context of the research subject is also carried out (Moleong, 2014; Bungin, 2015) (Creswell, 2014). In this case study, a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon analyzed from the view of the victims of toxic relationships was produced. According to Yin, a case study is research that explores a particular case or event through why and how questions. Through these questions, the case can be explored in detail (Yin, 2006).

The research was conducted from December 2023 to March 2024 on five (5) female adolescents with female student status in one of the universities in Palu City, Central Sulawesi. The research unit of analysis is the individual, which is the subject who experiences the event directly (Bungin, 2012). The research unit of analysis is the individual, namely the subject who experiences the event directly, namely five female teenage victims of toxic relationships who experience sexual harassment, physical violence, verbal violence, intimidation, humiliation, as well as possessive and aggressive attitudes from their partners. The research informants were obtained purposively - through specific criteria set by the researcher (Denzin

and Lincoln, 2009), namely those victims of toxic relationships who are currently and have been in a dating relationship at some point in time.

The researcher became the main instrument (key instrument) in this study. The researcher became the main instrument (Creswell, 2014; Bungin, 2015), then supported by other instruments in the form of interview guidelines. Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews and brainstorming and reinforced from literature studies and news sources (Sugiyono, 2009; Moleong, 2014). Data analysis was carried out descriptively interpretative and using the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model through data reduction techniques, data display and conclusion drawing (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Marvasti, 2004). Data reliability was carried out through triangulation, namely conducting repeated interviews and clarifying data with key informants, analyzing related issues, and comparing data.

Data were obtained from in-depth interviews and brainstorming, and reinforced from literature studies and news sources. The data were then analyzed interpretatively using the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model with the stages of data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing. Data reliability was carried out through triangulation, namely conducting repeated interviews and clarifying data with key informants, analyzing related issues, and comparing data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Forms of Toxic Relationship in Dating

Relationships should ideally have a positive impact on each other. But in reality, many people are still trapped in toxic relationships, whether they realize it or not, and these toxic relationships are most often found in women (Dafiq et al., 2023). Toxic behavior in a relationship is often limiting and causes problems for its victims, causing discomfort in a relationship (Mola and Nurhadiyanto, 2023). In the case of toxic relationships, women become victims of these unhealthy relationships. The results showed that there were five forms of toxic relationships in dating relationships experienced by female students in Palu City, namely:

Sexual Harassment

According to Suprihatin and Azis (2020) sexual harassment is behavior characterized by unwanted and inappropriate sexual comments, sexually oriented physical approaches in the workplace or other social environments. Sexual harassment is also an act of sexual nuance committed by a person or group of people.

According to Mansour Fakhri (2022) there are at least five forms of sexual harassment, including:

1. Making a vulgar joke to someone.
2. Intentionally hurting or embarrassing someone with dirty words.
3. Interrogating someone about their sexual life and activities, including their private life.
4. Asking for sexual favors in exchange.
5. Touching body parts without the person's interest or permission.

In contrast to Fakhri's findings, in this case the sexualized actions experienced by female students in romantic relationships (dating) are sexual harassment by their partners forcibly. As revealed by one of the female students T (22 years old) that during dating she often experienced sexual harassment:

"My boyfriend was very possessive, I was forbidden to be friends with my male friends, and worst of all I experienced sexual harassment, where he forced me to have sexual intercourse if I did not do it he would break up with me and he looked for another woman" (interview February, 2024).

Based on the informant's statement, it is known that: (1) many cases of sexual harassment are found in dating relationships (private); (2) the possessive attitude of one partner will create acts of sexual harassment; (3) the main form of sexual harassment experienced by women is forced intercourse; (4) sexual harassment is always accompanied by threats as a male determination of women who are considered helpless; and (5) finding another partner is the reason for men to realize sexual desires for their female partners.

Based on this, according to Foucault, in every relationship power will work and one will become an object or be objectified through certain forms of domination (Foucault, 2020). Furthermore, in relationships between individuals, the relationship is mediated by discourse or knowledge - in this context, the discourse of "affection", "love", "sincerity", "sacrifice" - built by the subject (man) as hegemonic knowledge on his partner (woman). So that without realizing it (women) have been objectified by their partners in the name of affection, love, and so on.

If Foucault views toxic relationships in dating as a relationship of power (domination) of men over women, then Jean Paul Sartre recognizes that the relationship (love relationship) as a form of objectification of others and oneself in resignation so that for Sartre love is a symbol of individual failure in maintaining himself as a subject. That is why Sartre believes that love is an invisible prison (Nugroho, 2014).

Besides Sartre, Erich Fromm also said that in such a relationship (romance) there is a motive of "having". The motive of having is not true "love" because there is a hidden intention and aims to "objectify" the partner. The motive of "being" is the true "love", because it is accompanied by sincerity without demanding anything in return, let alone imposing one's will (Nugroho, 2014; Apriantika, 2021).

Based on this, it is known that sexual harassment is a form of male power relations over women where in this relationship the concepts of "love", "affection", "sincerity" and so on are knowledge that is attached to women so that they experience self-consciousness (hegemony), making them objects of domination.

Intimidation

According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) intimidation means threatening, including forcing others to act through bullying or threatening. Ratno Lukito defines intimidation as an action that forces others to do something, where the perpetrator benefits from the action. Intimidation is aggressive behavior that is intentional and puts pressure on others both physically and mentally. This hurtful behavior is usually repeated over and over again (Adam, 2019).

Bullying in dating relationships often occurs when the relationship between partners is not harmonious. In this case, female students often experience intimidation from their partners both face-to-face and indirectly (online). Some forms of intimidation experienced by female students in dating relationships from their partners (men) such as: (1) receiving harsh words or high-pitched yelling; (2) being shown sullen (angry) facial expressions accompanied by gestures; (3) receiving a threat to drop mentally/psychically (fear); and (4) social relations with other parties are always under control.

The confession of female student L (22 years old), a victim of *toxic relationship*, according to her that intimidation from her partner is often experienced when the atmosphere of the relationship is deteriorating. In addition, according to him, various forms of intimidation such as self-restraint to harsh treatment were obtained from his partner as expressed below:

"My life is very restrained by my boyfriend, my boyfriend is very angry if I make friends with male friends, he forbids me to reply to my male friends' chat messages, even the male contacts on my *cellphone* are only my father and my younger brother" (interview February 2024).

Based on what the informant said, it is known that there are three forms of bullying he experienced, namely: (1) experiencing restraint from a partner so that they feel mental pressure that makes them psychologically disturbed or uncomfortable in themselves or in relationships with others (friends, family); (2) partners constantly try to control electronic devices so that they interfere with the communication process with other parties, especially the nuclear family; and (3) partners are prone to anger accompanied by harsh treatment or other unpleasant actions.

According to informants, when one partner intimidates the other or feels intimidated, the communication process between the two partners is disrupted from that point on, which often leads to arguments that have negative consequences (breakup or otherwise). In this case, it was found that intimidation by men was driven by several motives, such as: (1) jealousy of the partner; (2) wanting to be dominant in everything; (3) not wanting to lose the partner; (4) considering the partner easy to obey the will/order; and (5) intimidation is considered as a form of affection for the partner. The last mentioned for Foucault is a discourse that is deliberately maintained in a relationship (romance) so that one party feels that this is normal and taken for granted.

Reflecting on this case, no dating relationship is free from partner bullying, from small-scale to large-scale bullying. Intimidation is oriented towards taking away the position between individuals about who has power over whom. In Foucault's power relations, women do not realize that men have power over them through certain discourses (romance). Meanwhile, Deluzze and Guattari consider romantic relationships with all their forms and sides as a liberated desire (Piliang, 2011a). Sigmund Freud saw it as the id that is detached from the control of the ego and super ego so that the "id" is a free sexual libido (Nugroho, 2021).

Possessive

Possessiveness is the trait of someone who feels that their partner belongs to them, so they will do anything not to lose their partner. They even control what their partner can and cannot do and feel jealous when their partner violates them. Research Syafitri & Khoirunnisa, (2023) concluded possessiveness as an attitude that dominates something or someone and an excessive desire to have a partner. This attitude can take the form of passive actions, such as feeling dissatisfied and annoyed, to aggressive actions, such as attacking a partner.

While possessiveness is usually a female trait, in this case it is the man who always shows possessive behavior. This research proves that dating relationships produce possessive behavior from one partner. One of them feels that their partner is "property" that can only be owned so that they will control activities and even stalk. This possessive attitude is found in the behavior of controlling devices (*cellphones*) including regulating partners, such as regulating who is friends with, making sure to call whom, to being suspicious of the partner.

Another thing that was found is that the most common possessive behavior is limiting friendship with a partner, jealousy over trivial things, too strong desire to have a partner and excessive fear of losing a partner. As stated by female student A (21 years old) that her boyfriend has such a strong possessive nature that she often receives possessive attitudes when meeting or communicating.

"He also forbade me to meet my friends, but I still went to meet my friends. My boyfriend is so jealous that he often checks my *cell phone* just to see if I'm cheating on him, and it turns out he's the one cheating on me" (interview February 2024).

Several things were found from the above statements regarding the forms of possessive attitudes of men towards women, namely: (1) the attitude of always limiting the partner's socialization; (2) always showing excessive jealousy; (3) always controlling (checking) the partner's device; (4) always being suspicious of the partner; and (5) accusing the partner of having an affair.

When experiencing this situation, women are always the object of harm because they experience mental pressure and even social restrictions from their partners (men). Women are often the target of emotional release from their partners, even in dating relationships it is not uncommon to have to serve some of the needs of their partners (men) like in a married relationship. In the concept of dating millennials today, it seems that there are no more taboo things, everything is talked about, thought about, freed, and even done like a husband and wife. Especially for teenagers, all of this is claimed in the name of love.

Then this love is manifested in various forms such as affection, attention, and sacrifice, which ultimately becomes the reason for the formation of arbitrary rules. These rules are mutually accepted and considered normal in dating where they do not allow couples to meet the opposite sex, ask permission when going out or doing something, set limits or unilateral rules, and so on. Therefore, symbolic violence leads to symbolic power relations that tend to reproduce and strengthen power relations that shape the structure of social space. In this context, power relations refer to the subjects and objects involved in dating. (Apriantika *et al.*, 2023). Whether

we realize it or not, the current situation has hegemonized women into the trap of male power relations and eliminated the boundaries between the two.

According to Yasraf Amir Piliang, the contemporary era, which he calls the postmodern era, is an era of thinning between what is taboo and what is not taboo, or melting the boundaries between what is natural and unnatural. Human behavior has transcended cultural boundaries (Piliang, 2011b). or according to Felix and Gut-tari as the era of liberation of desire.

In relation to possessiveness, according to Helen Graham's humanistic psychology perspective, the subjective culture (including nature) of Asian societies has an impact on individual attitudes that are seen as irrational compared to the rational characteristics of Western societies (Graham, 2005). Based on this view, it is understood that our society is generally possessive of their partners, not only women but also inherent in the nature of men. In Foucaultian analysis, possessiveness shown to someone is a form of power (domination) over one of them. Similar to Antonio Gramsci's form of hegemony.

Physical Violence

Generally, female teenagers (female students) who are in a dating relationship argue that the reason for dating is an attempt to challenge themselves to get to know the "self" of others (men) further than just being ordinary friends. But from that trial and error, it is then considered an official relationship and has a status - claimed to be based on feelings of falling in love or liking each other. There are also those who argue that choosing to date is an affective act - a need for affection and attention from the opposite sex.

But whatever one's motives for dating, they have lost value rationality (taking into account meaningful benefits) so that they ignore rational calculations about the consequences received when they have undergone the dating relationship. One of the consequences or risks ignored by teenage girls is the risk of experiencing physical violence - an act that results in pain, illness, or serious injury. thus seen in relation to the consequences of violence, namely pain, illness or serious injury. (Limbat, 2014).

Based on information from informants who have received various physical violence when dating, such as that experienced by female student D (22 years old) who said: "When we fight, my boyfriend often gets drunk, when he is drunk he often hurts himself and threatens to kill himself" (interview, March 2024). Physical violence is one of the major risks experienced by women when they are in a dating relationship, especially when they have a partner who consumes alcohol. Arguments are often accompanied by physical touching (beatings), even to the point of attempting suicide when in high levels of frustration.

Passionate adolescence makes it difficult to control emotions and difficult to accept positive input, let alone advice from others. In fact, according to informants, the violence experienced was kept quiet from family, including close friends because they considered such actions as part of privacy in a dating relationship. There are also those who consider physical violence as normal or normalize it because it is considered that men have an aggressive character.

In line with what was experienced by student D, student L (22 years old) also confirmed that she had experienced physical violence from her partner which was triggered by a heated argument because of a painful event: "he cheated on me behind my back, when I found out about it we had a big argument until physical violence occurred, he hit my head, kicked my legs and even pulled my hair" (interview March 2024).

Physical violence is always preceded by fundamental relationship problems. Because men always feel power over women and consider women as weak and controllable objects, it is easy to treat harshly along with violence that can injure physically. Some forms of physical violence committed by men to their partners (female students) such as beating, injuring, kicking, pulling hair, and hitting vital parts of the body.

Verbal Abuse

Verbal violence experienced by female students is recurrent violence - occurring due to the emotional drive of both partners. Verbal violence is different from the physical violence experienced by the victims (female students). Physical violence is experienced through direct physical contact, while verbal violence is without physical contact. According to informants' confessions, verbal violence that is often experienced is when the boyfriend says harsh words so that it reduces mental (psychological) conditions such as feeling sadness and even fear and anxiety.

Student F (22 years old), one of the victims of a *toxic relationship*, said that her partner verbally abused her when she faced a problem and got emotional: "the thing that I really remember is when my boyfriend scolded me by using harsh words, I was always restrained, I didn't feel free" (interview March 2024).

Most teenage couples consider violence to be normal even though it has a negative impact on mental health such as anxiety disorders, fear, and even prolonged trauma. As the informant above admitted, the verbal violence he experienced was anger accompanied by harsh words by his partner, causing him to feel depressed and the feeling of being shackled from the unhealthy relationship.

Some experts such as Sholikhah and Masykur (2020) said that verbal violence that generally occurs is emotional violence by saying harsh words without physical contact, insulting words, words that threaten, intimidate, offend or exaggerate mistakes. In line with the results of this study which found that verbal violence is an emotional expression of the perpetrator. Emotional expressions are accompanied by threats, harsh words, gestures, and unpleasant facial expressions to the partner.

Women are vulnerable to verbal violence from men (their partners) so that women feel helpless. Even perpetrators and victims of verbal violence often consider such actions as normal and easily tolerated. If we refer to Bourdieu's thinking (Ritzer, 2012), it means that verbal violence is considered an understandable habituation. Whereas (verbal) violence is a form of male oppression of women due to the strengthening of patriarchal culture. (Elindawati, 2021; Nutfa, Magfirah and Alingkas, 2022; Saskia, Idris and Sumiaty, 2023; Yanti, 2023).. Verbal

violence can even be experienced by women on social media (Azijah and Asriani, 2023).

A dating relationship is thus a relationship laden with verbal violence. It was concluded that: (1) the main form of verbal violence is harsh words; (2) verbal violence is considered normal; (3) men are the main subjects (perpetrators) of verbal violence and women are the victims (objects) of violence; (4) gestures and facial expressions that do not please the victim are the mildest verbal violence; (5) inviting a partner to have sex is sexually oriented verbal violence; (6) verbal violence is always based on emotional and sexual libido; and (7) violence is part of patriarchal culture.

Toxic Relationship: The Relationship That's Hard to End

Whether they realize it or not, teenagers (college and university students) who are dating are often trapped in unhealthy or *toxic relationships*. According to Dafiq *et al.*, (2023), ending a *toxic* relationship is not easy. To get out of the relationship certainly takes a long time, especially when someone realizes that he is trapped in a *toxic* relationship, so whether he likes it or not, he needs to break away from the relationship.

Interestingly, although many of them are aware, most victims are reluctant and even afraid to get out of the trap (relationship). As a result, women are the subjects who feel the most negative impact of *toxic relationships*. Christie *et al.* (2022) for example, said that even though a person realizes that his relationship with a partner is unhealthy, most of them are unwilling and even afraid to get out of the relationship, so they choose to stay and are forced to bear the consequences.

The results of this study show four reasons why *toxic relationships* are difficult for teenage female students to end:

Spousal Dependence

Some informants admitted that it is difficult to end a relationship because of the feeling of dependence on the partner. According to them, usually one party is afraid of losing and feeling lonely so they choose to maintain a dating relationship even though it is *toxic*. According to informants, feelings of dependence are a manifestation of feelings of longing, affection or feelings that are claimed to be love, making it difficult to end the relationship even though they realize the relationship is *toxic*.

Dependence on a partner is a form of attachment to another person in a particular relationship. Dependence in a dating relationship is considered a form of *toxic relationship* because the dependence is oriented from negative behaviors during the dating period. (Saskia, Idris and Sumiaty, 2023; Yanti, 2023)..

According to informants, although they experience *toxic relationships*, on the other hand, they are dependent on their partners. They realize that a *toxic* dating relationship is a relationship that is accompanied by various negative things such as violence, sexual harassment, and even intimidation, which directly has a psychological impact such as trauma. However, because they still feel dependent on their partner, they deliberately ignore these impacts. Thus, the feeling of

dependence on a partner is a psychological trap or trap that resides in an individual who considers the existence of another person inseparable from himself.

Feeling ashamed if the relationship ends

Shame is a feeling that exists within the individual. Sociologically, the feeling of shame is a social pressure that comes from the assessment of good and bad in the eyes of others. Thus shame is related to the society in which the individual exists. Emile Durkheim (Yakkaldevi, 2014) categorizes shame as a non-material social fact that exists in humans but is objective because it has to do with values and norms in society. Therefore, shame is present in the self when things that are private (secret) are considered to be known by others, which threatens the existence of individuals.

For Durkheim, shame becomes a social fact that controls and even forces individuals to act, think and even feel as the social will (standard) in which they are located (Ritzer, 2009). In this case when the dating relationship ends (breaking up) both partners will have a sense of shame when the status of the relationship is questioned by friends or close people. According to informants, embarrassment arises because the dating relationship has been established for a long time and many people know the couple's relationship. Therefore, couples in a dating relationship will not risk being judged by others, including family.

Most women consider dating relationships that have been lived long enough to make the choice difficult to end just like that, especially if the relationship that has ended is known by close friends and family, causing embarrassment or strong social environmental pressure. There are also those who think that if a relationship ends with someone, it is difficult to start with someone new. That is why shame in the social environment is a strong reason for adolescent girls to find it difficult to end a dating relationship even if the relationship is *toxic*.

Suicide Threats

Unhealthy dating relationships result in negative behaviors such as threats from one partner when experiencing emotional situations. A *toxic* relationship is accompanied by threats as a form of intimidation to the partner. Threats in *toxic* relationships are negative actions that force partners to commit to the relationship.

According to the informant's confession, she found it very difficult to get out of the *toxic* relationship she was in during the dating period. The difficulty was experienced when the partner always gave verbal threats when he wanted to end the relationship. The threat that is always thrown by his partner is to commit suicide, such as the following confession from student F (22 years old): "when I wanted to break up but he always threatened to kill himself and my boyfriend once committed physical violence by biting my hand until it had marks" (interview March 2024).

Based on the above statement, it is understood that when one partner (boyfriend) makes threats that can have life-threatening consequences, continuing the relationship becomes a difficult choice that must be made. In this context, the position of women (female students) is the object of verbal threats/intimidation from their partners (men), let alone verbal threats - suicide - as a fatalistic and high-risk action.

Families Have Known Each Other

Although some adolescents hide their romantic relationships from the closest people such as family, some of them reveal their romantic relationship identity to a third party, namely the family. adolescents in a dating relationship, the involvement of the family is considered part of the relationship with the intention of strengthening the personal relationship between the two.

But when problems are present, it is not only the personal relationship that is damaged or disrupted but also the relationship with the family of the partner. Such conditions become a rational consideration for teenage couples whether to break off the relationship or choose to continue. Because the romantic relationship has been known by the family such as parents, it becomes difficult to end the romantic relationship even though there are many problems (*toxic*). The choice to continue the relationship is a rational action even though it is considered contrary to conscience (emotional).

Family intervention also causes teenage couples to feel guilty and unwilling to leave their partners, thus making people delay getting out of *toxic* relationships. According to the confession of female student D (22 years old) when the romantic relationship has been known by their parents then when there is a dispute it is very difficult to end the relationship: "It is not easy to get out of this relationship because we already know each other's parents well and our relationship has been very long" (interview March 2024).

In line with this, student F (22 years old) also said: "the reason why I still survive is because I really regret our relationship that has been going on for a long time and we already know each other's parents well and I really love him even though he makes me always hurt" (interview March 2024).

Based on the statements of the two informants above, it can be concluded that: (1) the establishment of a close emotional relationship with the family and the partner's family is an obstacle to ending a *toxic* relationship; (2) the relatively long duration of dating is also a supporting reason for the difficulty of ending a romantic relationship; and (3) the embedded feelings of affection for the partner are also an obstacle to getting out of a *toxic* situation.

The current permissive context of society considers dating as a private relationship that must be respected and even gives discretion without considering personal risks such as the emergence of *toxic* traits in individuals (adolescents) who are dating. Although *toxic* victims (women) feel disadvantaged from the relationship, for these reasons, victims decide to remain committed to each other in the hope that their partner's character can change in a positive direction.

Based on the results of the above research, it is known that four factors cause the difficulty of female students ending *toxic* relationships, namely: (1) dependence on the partner; (2) feeling ashamed if the relationship ends; (3) the threat of suicide; and (5) the establishment of a close emotional relationship with the partner's family.

The results of another study concluded that the reason why victims continue to survive in *toxic* relationships is because there are several factors, the first is that they still believe and hope in the relationship, even though on the other hand they already know that their partner is unhealthy in the relationship, the next factor is *path thinking*, which is a condition of individuals in unhealthy relationships who hope to change the behavior or character of their *toxic* partner into a better person

and stop doing bad things. Hi this actually makes the relationship unhealthy (Sulastri and et al, 2023).

Negative relationships in dating are driven by power relations that lead to violence and exploitation. (Aryana, 2022; Wahid and Legino, 2023).. A *toxic* relationship jeopardizes a person's physical and mental state. It can be concluded that *toxic* relationships can also have psychological and spiritual impacts. As experienced by the victims, when they were in a *toxic* relationship, they experienced trauma, difficulty adapting to the social environment, lack of confidence while still in the relationship, and difficulty building good relationships with others (Sahabang *et al.*, 2023).

Efforts to get out of the trap of *toxic relationships* are not easy for teenagers, especially teenage girls. However, some research results voice solutions to get out of *toxic* relationships, namely: (1) find the root of the conflict by talking with a partner or consulting with the closest person, (2) consider solutions as an alternative way out, (3) implement the considered solution and evaluate the results of the problem. (Putra, Hayu and Tyas, 2023).

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study show that toxic relationships are private relationships that are unhealthy for the mentality and behavior of adolescents who are in dating relationships. This research proves that no dating relationship is truly healthy because it is always overshadowed by toxic relationships such as violence, sexual harassment, intimidation, and excessive possessiveness from partners. Then, from these toxic relationships, adolescent girls become subordinate subjects and find it difficult to end relationships with their partners.

This research fills the gaps of previous studies and shows a form of toxic relationship experienced by adolescent girls, especially female students, from the dating relationships they live in. Although this study describes the problem of toxic relationships, not all aspects of toxic relationships experienced by women (female students) can be described due to differences in social situations, time, locus, research subjects, and research perspectives. Therefore, further research on toxic relationships in adolescents needs to be developed by using the primary data of this study as a reference.

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