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Am I Ready for Dating? From Violence to Romance, Negativity to Positivity, Friendship to Marriage, and Love to Responsibility

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ABSTRAK

Pacaran telah menjadi gaya hidup yang umum di kalangan remaja, namun menimbulkan perdebatan mengenai urgensi dan dampaknya terhadap perkembangan individu. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi perkembangan literatur akademik terkait fenomena pacaran melalui metode systematic literature review. Sebanyak 50 artikel yang paling banyak disitasi dari 865 dokumen terindeks Google Scholar dianalisis untuk mengidentifikasi topik utama, pendekatan penelitian, dan temuan penting. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa diskursus tentang pacaran terus berkembang, mencakup isu-isu seperti dampak negatif pacaran, pola komunikasi, jenis hubungan, serta strategi pencegahan perilaku menyimpang. Salah satu temuan menonjol adalah meningkatnya risiko pacaran terhadap kekerasan, seks bebas, dan eksploitasi emosional, terutama bagi remaja perempuan. Selain itu, terdapat perhatian yang tumbuh terhadap pentingnya pendidikan relasi sehat yang berorientasi pada tanggung jawab dan nilai moral. Kajian ini menyimpulkan bahwa perlu adanya pergeseran paradigma dari hubungan romantis yang bersifat impulsif menuju hubungan yang membangun kedewasaan, komitmen, dan karakter positif. Tinjauan ini juga memberikan implikasi penting bagi pengembangan kebijakan pendidikan dan layanan konseling remaja, serta merekomendasikan penelitian lanjutan yang lebih mendalam dan kontekstual.

ABSTRACT

Dating has become a common lifestyle among adolescents, yet it raises debates regarding its urgency and impact on individual development. This study aims to explore the development of academic literature related to the phenomenon of dating through a systematic literature review. A total of 50 highly cited articles out of 865 documents indexed in Google Scholar were analyzed to identify key topics, research approaches, and major findings. The results indicate that discourse on dating continues to grow, covering issues such as the negative impacts of dating, communication patterns, types of relationships, and strategies for preventing deviant behaviors. A notable finding highlights the increasing risks of dating, including violence, premarital sex, and emotional exploitation, particularly for adolescent girls. Furthermore, there is a growing emphasis on the importance of education that promotes healthy relationships based on responsibility and moral values. This review concludes that a paradigm shift is needed—from impulsive romantic relationships toward those that foster maturity, commitment, and positive character development. The study also provides important implications for developing educational policies and adolescent counseling services, and recommends further research that is more in-depth and contextually grounded.

1. INTRODUCTION

There is no clear consensus among scholars regarding when the term *pacaran* (translated as dating, date, courtship, or being in a relationship in English) first appeared in Indonesian cultural literature. Some scholars suggest that dating has its roots in Malay culture (Anggraini & Kerona, 2022;

Isworo et al., 2020). In ancient times when a man loved a girl and wanted to make her his wife, he had to meet her parents first (Ayu et al., 2022; Putri et al., 2022). Then, if the parents and the girl accept, then they both, each of their fingers, will be decorated using processed henna leaves, or what is now popular with henna. So, if there are other young men who are also interested in the girl, they will immediately know that she is being "girlfriended" by someone else. Meanwhile, the Javanese culture (the largest ethnic group in Indonesia) recognizes some hierarchical stages from friendship to marriage. First, friendship or "pertemanan" in Indonesian. It is a relationship with no romantic feeling or attraction to each other (Retnowati, 2020; Syafitriani et al., 2022). Second, dating or "pacaran" in Indonesian. Dating involves romantic feeling between two people, and they are committed with this relationship to know each other closer, commonly with or without commitment to marriage (Brown & Hegarty, 2018; Syah & Sastrawati, 2020). If a couple are dating with commitment to marriage, commonly if they decide to get married, they will directly go to the marriage stage without any engagement. But if they are dating without commitment to marriage, usually if they decide to get married, they will undergo the engagement stage first (Alfa, 2019; Widodo, 2021).

Third, engagement or "pertunangan" in Indonesian. Engagement is a relationship which is more serious than dating, since when a couple are engaged, they are committed to get married in the future (Forsdike et al., 2021; Tari et al., 2017). Thus, the engagement is a period in which the couple are to get closer to the partner's family and to prepare their marriage. During the engagement period, both man and woman will be equipped with insights by parents and community leaders about married life that will be useful when they are married (Lyatuu et al., 2018; Safitri & Mustafa, 2021). Then, there is a concept of "peningset" or "seserahan", a procession in which a man gives an item such as money, gold, and clothes to a woman as a symbol of his seriousness to marry her (Abduh et al., 2023; Siregar & Rochelman, 2021). At last, marriage or "pernikahan" in Indonesian. Marriage is a serious relationship since it is a lifetime commitment in which the couple are binding legally – according to their religious law and state law (Azkiya, 2024; Endriastuti et al., 2018). This current study focuses on the second stage, in which dating refers to a relationship that involves romantic feeling between a man and a woman aiming to know each other closely before marriage.

Dating has been defined as friends who have a relationship based on love before marriage (Retnowati, 2020; Siahaan et al., 2023). In this study, we define dating as the process or period of introduction between a man and a woman before marriage that is known by both parties' families. As an "informal" pledge, dating is a means for couples to learn about each other's mindsets, health conditions, family conditions, and share views on how a family is built (e.g., job, parenting style). The relationship is built on trust, commitment, and mutual emotional support. Because it is a period, each couple's dating will vary; therefore, they should determine when the dating period can be continued to marriage, so that they do not experience the disadvantages of dating for too long. On one hand, dating in contemporary Indonesian society is instrumental as a way to find a life partner; on the other hand, in the past, dating was considered a taboo (Isworo et al., 2020; Mariani & Murtadho, 2018). However, with this view, the ancients when they dated upheld the honor, self-respect, ethics, and morals of society (Kusuma & Bantas, 2021: Runtuwene et al., 2019). In this point of view, dating is a special relationship to get the ideal husband or wife. In it there is a sanctity of love that must be maintained together and strengthen each other. In the end, they are expected to find true love and live together in marriage. In any condition, they support each other, still want their girlfriends to be partners, stand beside them, hold their hands, and do not leave their partners.

During the 2000s, adolescents' perceptions of dating based on the sexual education they received in the family environment. While their conclusions varied, their studies continued to focus on dating as a means for adolescents to find an ideal partner before marriage by emphasizing positive relationships. Previous researches used a qualitative research design to investigate changes in adolescents' dating behavior (Aprianti et al., 2020; Kusuma & Bantas, 2021). Their study documented that dating as a relationship that aims to get to know each other has shifted in meaning to a relationship that is oriented towards sexuality alone. Dari and Ratnawati (2015) highlighted the important role of parenting to provide support for teenagers to date healthily (Chen et al., 2019; Shaw et al., 2021). In addition to scientific studies, several recent studies have found that problems related to dating relationships can reduce adolescents' mental health (Azkia et al., 2024; Hali & Lebuan, 2024; Nugraha et al., 2024). Adolescents need high expectations to be able to resolve conflicts effectively and maintain good dating relationships (Indrawati et al., 2018; Kalamsari & Ginanjar, 2023). When in a romantic relationship, they can also evaluate the quality of their dating relationship, whether their relationship is a positive or negative relationship. As a relationship, dating should have clear goals and visions, so that their dating relationship is more directed and valuable.

However, this ideal about dating raises skepticism, because there has been a phenomenon of dating teenagers today who no longer pay attention to the norms and ethics that apply in society (Huda & Hashim, 2021; Sobieraj & Humphreys, 2021). Weak communication between parents and their children pushes teenagers away from moral values (Asmin & Mainase, 2020; Gustina, 2017). This results in the younger generation no longer having role models and footholds to establish relationships with the opposite sex. Moreover, the influx of foreign cultures that are not in accordance with local culture such as promiscuity between men and women is also a trigger for them to date outside the boundaries (Alfadhil et al., 2021; Hasan et al., 2024). This gap raises the question nowadays, is dating still important? Therefore, in the current study, we used a systematic literature review to review research that aims to investigate the evolution of Indonesian scholarship on dating. We believe by investigating the intellectual journey that illustrates the changing viewpoints on dating over the past two decades holds lessons not only to improve the understanding of this concept, but also as an effort to re-promote a more ethical, moral, and cultured concept of dating among today's youth.

This study presents a novel exploration of adolescent dating by reframing the discourse from mere emotional engagement to a developmental journey encompassing psychological preparedness, relational dynamics, and sociocultural influences. Unlike previous studies that predominantly focus on the risks of dating violence or the psychological effects of early romantic involvement, this research provides a comprehensive framework that maps the transition from harmful to healthy relationships, from casual friendships to committed partnerships, and from infatuation to mature, responsible love. The primary objective of this study is to analyze adolescents' readiness for dating by examining their understanding of romantic relationships, the values they hold, and their ability to navigate the complexities of emotional connection and responsibility. Through this approach, the research aims to contribute to the development of educational and counseling programs that foster healthy relationship skills and prevent toxic dating patterns among youth.

2. METHOD

This review uses a systematic literature review to synthesize the features of the dating knowledge base (Zupic & Čater, 2015). Systematic literature review allows a review to map and analyze a number of documents retrieved from the database of scientific article indexing engines (Oztemel, 2020). In recent years, systematic literature review has become a popular method that is increasingly used by the scientific community in various fields (Jiang et al., 2023; Pathak & Singh, 2023). This review describes, evaluates, and analyzes scientific publications by examining their impact and citation factors, dissemination tactics, and reports on the production of scientific articles to gain a broad insight into dating studies. Consistent with other forms of systematic literature review, this section clarifies the procedures used in source identification and data analysis. Previous reviews have established Google Scholar as a widely recognized leading indexing engine in Indonesia that hosts more study results and scientific works from scholars in various fields (Elmi & Librianty, 2023). Therefore, Google Scholar was chosen as the source document database for this review. This review followed PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) to guide document identification in conducting a systematic review of research (see Figure 1). Using Publish or Perish software, data collection was conducted with the keyword "pacaran" (in Indonesian) with article titles, abstracts, and keywords from 2001 to 2023, a total of 948 documents were identified. Consistent with previous research reviews, we decided to limit this review to journal articles in the belief that journal articles are subject to peer review and contribute significantly to the scientific literature. After excluding proceeding papers, review articles, early access, editorial materials, meeting abstracts, theses, and book chapters, a total of 865 documents remained. The search performed in March 2024. Table 1 presents the inclusion and exclusion criteria applied to select the data to be analyzed.

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria	Included	Excluded	Rationale
Language	Indonesia	Other languages	The current study focuses on the cultural context in Indonesia
Document type	Journal articles	Proceeding papers, review articles, early access, editorial materials, meeting abstracts, theses, and book chapters	Focus on peer review process and contribute significantly to the scientific literature
Context	All social institutions	Other countries	The current study focuses on the

Criteria	Included	Excluded	Rationale
	in Indonesia (e.g.,		cultural context in Indonesia
	school, university, family)		
Database	Google Scholar	Other databases (e.g., ERIC, PubMed, CrossRef, etc.)	Broader coverage of journals articles

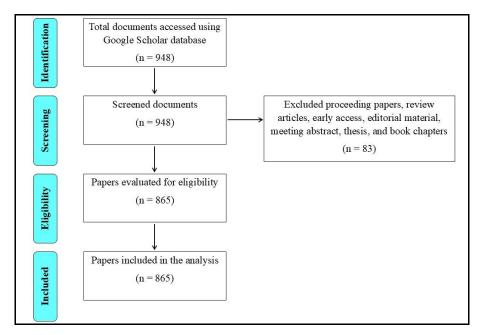


Figure 1. Flow diagram of study selection process on dating

The database associated with 865 documents was exported and saved in an Excel file for use in growth trajectory analysis, most cited documents, and co-word analysis. Growth trajectory analysis to determine the number of publications trends each year. Furthermore, from the 865 documents in this review collection, we synthesized the 50 most cited documents using content analysis. Content analysis is to interpret the study findings of a document in the collection through a process of classification, coding, and identification of themes or patterns to make a valid conclusion. Moreover, using content analysis, this review constructs analytically by operationalizing what the analyst has reported, discovered, and concluded about the content context in dating studies. The conclusions are the basic achievements and validating evidence that constitute the final justification of a study. Based on this content analysis rule, we grouped the articles in the collection by systematically classifying them through the identification of article themes (i.e., clusters). This rule makes it possible to make replicable and valid syntheses and inferences from the body text of the articles to their broader context of use. Given that the central concept of a scientific paper is reflected in the keywords that represent the construct under investigation, we used co-word analysis to identify the topic focus and themes studied in the dating literature (Pathak & Singh, 2023). Co-word analysis determines how many keywords appear in an article, the more often a keyword appears in a set of articles, the more closely the articles are related (Lei & Liu, 2019). Keyword maps can be found in the title or abstract of an article based on accuracy and uniqueness to see the subject matter that represents the concept and construction of the article. Standardized keywords result in uniform terms, so it is important for researchers to use a thesaurus to help standardize the terminology they use in their articles. This also serves the purpose of making sure that keywords have the same meaning in different texts of the article so that they can be referred to in a single phrase.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

During the Second Generation period scholars expanded their studies on the topic of aggressive behaviors and anxiety of adolescent girls during dating. Using a phenomenological approach, identified aggressive behaviors of dating adolescents, such as abusive speech, badmouthing, threatening, demanding, restricting relationships, and physical assaults on partners (e.g., hitting, slapping, pulling hair, and forcing kisses) (Khaninah & Widjanarko, 2017). Adolescent girls are most vulnerable to experiencing

anxiety due to violent boyfriends including sexual violence, physical violence, and psychological violence, which in turn they feel disadvantaged because they are broken off, left alone, and even their boyfriends cannot be contacted to be held accountable. Self-esteem has a significant effect on the sexual behavior of adolescents dating, while moral reasoning is not proven to have a significant effect. Adolescents who ignore their values and self-esteem are prone to premarital sexual behavior. Their findings are a warning to parents and educators because adolescents today view premarital sexual behavior that goes against moral ethics as normal.

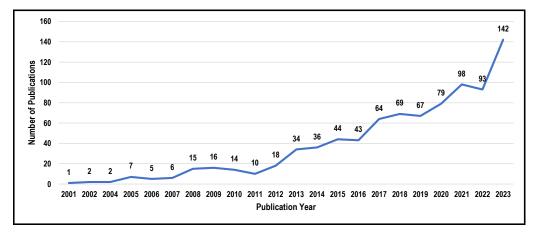


Figure 2. Number of Published Articles on Dating between 2001 to 2023

Figure 2 presents the results of a descriptive analysis illustrating the development of the number of publications on dating between 2001 and 2023. Over two decades, three generational time periods can be identified. From 2001 to 2008, it was the First Generation, with only a few publications and the number of publications each year did not show a significant difference. The number of publications in the First Generation amounted to 38 publications with an average of 5 publications per year. Then came the Second Generation between 2009 and 2016 with a total of 215 publications, almost six times that of the First Generation. The average number of publications increased significantly with an average of 27 publications per year. From 2017 to 2023 was the Third Generation with the number of publications continuing to increase significantly each year, almost three times that of the Second Generation. The number of publications in the Third Generation amounted to 612 publications with an average of 87 publications per year.

Key papers published during the Third Generation period focused on the topics of dating violence, parent-adolescent communication, and risky dating behavior. Relationship status influences risky dating behavior among students. Using a qualitative approach, despite being able to end the dating relationship, adolescent girls who experienced dating violence preferred to maintain the relationship due to the length of the relationship, a sense of dependence on the partner, being trapped from an adverse situation, and if exposed by the community, it would be a disgrace for both them and their families. Hence, to minimize risky sexual behaviors in dating adolescents, Parent-adolescent communication is the dominant factor that can promote more positive dating among them.

Table 2	2. Significan	t publications	on dating in	different	generation

Time Period	Rank	Author(s)/Year	Topic	Cites
1st Generation	1	(Ardhianita & Andayani, 2005)	Marriage satisfaction	178
(2001-2008)	2	(Uecker, 2008)	Premarital sexual behavior	139
	3	(Leidy et al., 2009)	Marital quality	4
2 nd Generation	1	(Veroude et al., 2016)	Aggressive behavior	74
(2009-2016)	2	(Guse et al., 2012)	Adolescent sexual behavior	67
	3	(Dorn et al., 2009)	Anxiety of adolescent girls	53
3 rd Generation	1	(Sari, 2018)	Violence in dating	66
(2017-2023)	2	(Gustina, 2017)	Parent-adolescent communication	50
	3	(Ohee and Purnomo, 2018)	Risky dating behavior	50
All Generation	1	(Ardhianita and Andayani, 2005)	Marriage satisfaction	178
(2001-2023)	2	(Setiawan and Nurhidayah, 2008)	Premarital sexual behavior	139
	3	(Khaninah and Widjanarko, 2016)	Aggressive behavior	74

Family, peers, and community are social institutions that can prevent dating violence (Kalamsari & Ginanjar, 2023; Rusyidi & Hidayat, 2020). Intensive interaction among family members (i.e., father, mother, children, and siblings) reduces the risk of dating violence among adolescents. It is important for parents to establish a good relationship with their adolescent children so that they can control their behavior positively. It is undeniable that adolescence encourages individuals to build independent relationships outside the family. Peers exert a significant influence on adolescent behavior. Adolescents who are affiliated with friends who behave well according to the norms of society support them to obey the rules, and vice versa. Moreover, the community also has an impact on adolescent behavior. Communities that view men and women as equal support adolescents to value and respect each other. Social norms that promote constructive supervision of adolescent relationships are social capital to prevent dating violence.

Cluster 2 Dating impact, studies in this cluster highlight the impact of dating on the psychological condition of adolescents, e.g., anxiety, deviant behavior, depression, and adolescent emotions. Dating that exceeds the limit (e.g., kissing, premarital sexual intercourse) as deviant behavior. Other finding said that dating violence causes anxiety such as restlessness, excessive worry, difficulty concentrating, difficulty sleeping, nightmares, and frequent daydreaming (Hasmayni, 2015; Putriana, 2018). This condition, if not addressed immediately, results in depression in victims of violence (Dwiastuti, 2015; Siahaan et al., 2023). Depressive conditions are characterized by deep sadness, fear, feelings of uselessness, suicidal ideation, feelings of guilt, withdrawal from others, loss of appetite, stress, loneliness, a disturbed sense of security due to feeling terrorized, decreased self-confidence and life satisfaction, and loss of interest and pleasure in activities that are usually done daily (Hasmayni, 2015; Putriana, 2018). Adolescent girls who are victims of violence have emotions that are constantly changing along with the feelings they feel. The emotional dynamics experienced by adolescent girls who are victims of violence make their psychological condition unstable and easily fragile.

Cluster 3 Deviant behavior in dating, studies in this cluster focus on the deviant behavior of teenagers who are dating. Using a phenomenological approach, Aggressive behaviors committed by teenage dating abusers that hurt their partners such as physically attacking, verbally harming, damaging reputation, and spreading hatred (Khaninah & Widjanarko, 2017; Natasya & Susilawati, 2020). The lack of self-esteem and moral reasoning among adolescents' results in them committing deviant behavior when they are in a dating relationship. Adolescents who do not control their sexual desires encourage them to have sexual relations with their partners (Atuti & Sulistyowati, 2021). In addition, adolescents who have negative associations easily fall into drug abuse, fights, and drunkenness.

Adolescents who reported engaging in positive dating behaviors such as chatting, joking, and walking together; increased their motivation and learning achievement (Isworo et al., 2020; Tandrianti & Darminto, 2018). Vice versa, adolescents who engage in negative dating behaviors lower their self-efficacy by withdrawing from social life and friendships (Abduh et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2019). Further investigation conducted by similar study revealed that the pattern of dating behavior (i.e., starting from the process of introduction, the process of approach, the process of falling in love, the process of expressing love, the process of dating, the process of the emergence of problems, the process of solving problems, and the process of making decisions to get married) guides them to avoid deviant behavior while dating (Guse et al., 2012; Lyatuu et al., 2018). Deviant behavior among adolescents who are dating is the result of their imperfect socialization process in society. Intense communication between parents and adolescents has been proven to improve adolescent behavior by instilling values and ethics of socializing in society in a civilized manner.

Cluster 4 Establishing positive dating, the studies in this cluster contribute to the growing body of research promoting how to establish positive dating relationships with the aim of reducing the risk of dating violence. On 400 students in Jakarta showed that social support from family has a significant effect on adolescents' interactions with the opposite sex that are healthier and more constructive (Azkia et al., 2024; Mardiah et al., 2017). A study on 104 students in Surabaya concluded that adolescent assertiveness manifested in dating behavior (e.g., assertiveness in attitude, being able to avoid the possibility of violence, mutual respect and appreciation, and establishing relationships by upholding the value of equality) is needed to realize a positive dating style. Their findings are consistent with the results obtained by Syafira and Kustanti (2017) who reported that women's assertiveness plays an important role in promoting a positive dating style. Using a phenomenological approach, resilience is necessary for female victims of past dating violence to grow and bounce back (Abduh et al., 2023; Ola et al., 2023). Their ability to recover promotes their physiological, psychological, and social relationship balance after experiencing distressing conditions, which in turn they focus more on establishing a positive relationship with their new partner. Cognitive behavior therapy has been empirically proven to increase the self-esteem level of victims of dating violence, which in turn can promote their psychological well being.

Anyhow, victims of dating violence need support to maintain their self-esteem, rise from despair, and adapt to the social environment to start a new life with a new, more positive partner.

Indeed, adolescence is a time for them to learn to live in society; therefore, they need social support to be able to comply with the ethics and norms that apply in society (Grace et al., 2018; Putri et al., 2022). In addition, religious norms must also be considered in establishing relationships. Harmadi and Diana (2020) argued that from a theological point of view, sex before marriage is destructive to the lives of the perpetrators. It is important for teenagers who are dating to be equipped with insights into theological values and norms to prevent them from engaging in dating relationships that are out of bounds. This is an effort to control their lust and desire so that they avoid premarital sexual behavior that can harm their future. Cluster 5 Romantic dating, the studies in this cluster echo romantic dating among teenagers. Promote romantic values that dating couples should maintain. Dating students in Jakarta revealed that romantic partners increased their enthusiasm for learning. For couples who are separated by distance (i.e., long-distance dating), their romance is done by communicating with their girlfriends, thinking positively, being patient, trusting each other, understanding each other, sending news to each other, and strengthening commitment. Teenagers' reasons for dating such as needing someone to share with, getting to know and understand each other, encouragement in learning, and having a reliable partner who is always there when needed; affect their romance in dating (Santika, 2021; Tari et al., 2017).

Table 3. Topical Themes on Dating Studies

Themes	Keywords
Negative impact of	aggressive behavior, anxiety, depression, deviant behavior, emotional distress,
dating	symptoms of depression, violence in dating, dating relationship violence,
	psychological violence, conflict, premarital sex, female victims of dating violence,
	violence, violence against women, violent, victims of violence, premarital sexual
	behavior, heterosexual dating relationships, victims of violence in dating, dating
	violence, risk of dating behavior, risk factors, domination, mastery
Communication in	assertiveness, communication, construction, couple evaluation, emotional
dating	dynamics, psychological dynamics, social support, communication effectiveness,
	psychological state, post relationship dissolution, premarital, trust in romantic
Relationship types	relationships, exploration, intimacy, forgiveness insecure attachment, long distance relationship, dating relationship, romantic
Relationship types	relationship, dating, acceptance commitment therapy, overseas student, long
	distance dating, stages of interpersonal relationship, romantic song lyrics, dating
	relationship status, influence
Prevention of	conformity, factor analysis, self-esteem, relationship quality, marriage quality,
negative impacts	self-esteem, moral reasoning, resilience, Islamic law, <i>imago dei</i> , self-disclosure,
of dating	marital satisfaction, peer roles, social penetration, assertiveness, prevention, the
	teacher's role, cognitive-behavioral therapy, coping strategies, protective factors,
	self-esteem, hope, internal & external factors, motives, parents, social change,
	phenomenology, phenomenon, health
Dating behaviors	behavior, dating behavior, risky dating behavior, sexual behavior of teenagers
	dating, love, dating, dating and non-dating couples, dating style, psychological
	well-being, subjective well-being, behavior, sex, sexual behavior, sexuality,
Datinanaiad	determinant, gender relation
Dating period	teenager, early adolescent, teenage girl, the students, girl, women, young
	adulthood, adolescence, adolescent, high school student, college student, early adult woman, female, male adolescent, couple, early adulthood, young adulthood
	adult wollian, remaie, male adolescent, couple, early adultilood, young adultilood

These themes highlight trends in dating studies. The patterns that were revealed found more negative impacts of dating, especially the impact of dating violence on adolescent girls (Andayu et al., 2019; Sholikhah & Masykur, 2020). The impact of this violence can lead to depression, anxiety, and ongoing sadness (Dwiastuti, 2015; Putriana, 2018). Moreover, deviant behaviors such as kissing, petting, and premarital sexual intercourse are negative behaviors performed during dating (Elmi & Librianty, 2023; H. P. Wulandaru et al., 2019). This confirms that dating has more negative impacts than positive impacts, so this kind of behavior should not be left unchecked, but must be seen as an important phenomenon to find solutions for the welfare of adolescents. Various preventive efforts so that adolescents can establish positive relationships, for example, provide a comprehensive understanding of male and female relationships in terms of psycho-theology and Islamic law. Hence, couple evaluation is needed to assess the extent to which their relationship is going well which in turn is expected to lead to

marriage. For victims of violence, those who undergo cognitive behavior therapy and acceptance commitment therapy are reported to increase their perception of self-esteem, happiness, and recover faster from trauma (Grace et al., 2018; Kusumawardhani & Poerwandari, 2018). Given that students (i.e., adolescents) spend the most time at school, the role of teachers to guide students and promote positive dating relationships cannot be ignored (Veroude et al., 2016; Yuniati et al., 2017).

Discussion

This research review sought to expand the study of the knowledge base in the dating literature. Using a systematic literature review, we analyzed the 50 most cited articles published in 45 Google Scholar indexed journals between 2001 and 2023. Moreover, the current study synthesizes the main trends associated with the literature, the most influential documents, and the hot topics in dating studies. In this section we offer an interpretation of the findings, and discuss theoretical and practical implications. This review includes the 50 most cited articles out of 865 Google Scholar indexed articles that explicitly focus on dating studies. Although the literature in this collection are journal articles that are in themselves substantial in a study, please note that this review excludes Google Scholar indexed proceeding papers, review articles, early access, editorial material, meeting abstracts, theses, and book chapters. This review concludes that the knowledge base in dating studies has grown over the past 23 years. Moreover, the dating knowledge base covered in the collection is growing steadily and this growth trend has gained momentum over time (612 documents) of the complete corpus published between 2017 and 2023. This finding regarding the size of the dating knowledge base becomes even more important when we consider that this review included dating-related articles published in journals with the scope of psychology, educational psychology, and developmental psychology (Andayu et al., 2019; Sholikhah & Masykur, 2020).

A review of current studies noted that romance in dating enhances learning enthusiasm and is a source of happiness (Kusumawardhani & Poerwandari, 2018; Santika, 2021). These finding echoes previous results that report that a couple's social bond built with a sense of romance reflected in attitudes, attention, mutual love, and care for the partner is the key to fostering a dating relationship (Chang et al., 2021; Heifetz et al., 2020; Stein et al., 2023). Romance in dating such as doing activities with a partner, going to a meeting with a partner, and showing affection, admiration, and friendship to a partner; supports adolescents' psycho-social maturity, affective competence, and positive relationship bonds, which in turn develops positive adolescent morale (Beckmeyer & Weybright, 2020). Empirically, romantic relationships promote the autonomy of adolescents in Malaysia, as they reduce dependence on their parents and explore relationships outside the family (Chang et al., 2021; Hasan et al., 2024). In addition, romance can also be expressed by simple things between couples, such as riding a motorcycle around the city, climbing a mountain with the partner, hanging out together in a city park, and talking about the future over tea at a cafe. Eating together with the partner is a mediator for them to get to know each other, share their views, and evaluate the status of their relationship, with the possibility of becoming long-term partners (i.e., get married).

Although this review highlights negative behaviors in dating among teenagers, the hope for them to date by promoting positive behaviors is not eliminated. Dating in the terminology of Islam (the religion most embraced by Indonesians) is unknown; however, in reality the phenomenon of dating exists among adolescents (Rohmah et al., 2021; Syah & Sastrawati, 2020). Hence, a middle way needs to be taken by equipping them on how to establish relationships with the opposite sex, for example not having sexual intercourse before marriage. This is a moral boundary that should not be violated by them, and there is no reason whatsoever to justify such actions (Putri et al., 2022; Triatmojo, 2021). School-based sexual education that involves teaching students about sexual health needs to be promoted to help them adopt healthy behaviors in dating (Harris et al., 2022; Siva et al., 2021). Given that adolescence is a time when they face a reality that for them is contradictory between the values of sexuality that they get from family, school, society, and religion with the reality of teenage relationships; they need role models who can help them go through puberty well (Reed et al., 2020; Syafitriani et al., 2022). Teachers should promote positive dating styles among students, such as encouraging them to study together in the library, work on class projects, complete homework from teachers, prepare lesson materials, and create class presentation materials with a partner. Referring to Kohlberg's theory of moral development, adolescents have reached the conventional moral level which indicates that they tend to agree with society's rules and expectations. We believe they listen and obey the teacher's directions on how to have a good dating style.

From friends to marriage. Marrying a friend (i.e., girlfriend or boyfriend) is a milestone in a dating relationship; however, recently dating for adolescents is not considered a path to marriage (Anggraini & Kerona, 2022; Freeman et al., 2023). Adolescents should marry people they know thoroughly, including emotional, social, financial, sexual, spiritual, and age readiness (Hali & Lebuan, 2024; Huda & Hashim, 2021). Investigating the behavior, attitude, and condition of the prospective family before marriage should

be done early on to ensure the sustainability and romance of the marriage relationship in the future. This needs to be done to avoid regrets later on when they are married. Marrying a friend whom one has known for a long time, understands each other, and whose family is also aware of their relationship, supports them to have a harmonious relationship when they get married. Indonesian culture upholds marriage and all the consequences that come with it including sexual relations, working, and caring for children. Therefore, it is strictly forbidden for those who are not married to have sexual intercourse. Virginity for both women and men are a dignity that must be upheld, defended, and respected, which may be given to a partner after marriage (Asmin & Mainase, 2020; Nugraha et al., 2024). This means that it should not be given to anyone for any reason before marriage. On one hand, teenagers are expected to be able to establish dating relationships with the opposite sex without having sexual relations before marriage; on the other hand, parents still have the perception that discussing sexual matters is taboo (Atuti & Sulistyowati, 2021; Natasya & Susilawati, 2020; Tandrianti & Darminto, 2018). This causes teenagers to face the dilemma of getting sexual education in the family. Parents need to change their perspective on sexual education for their children. Children need social support from their parents to prepare and sustain marriage.

From love to responsibility. Marrying someone you love is a wish, loving someone you marry is an obligation. This is an important point when a couple decides to get married. Love is a responsibility to take care of each other and marriage is the door to realize that. Love is more than an instinctive and defensive configuration specific to adult heterosexual relationships (Siahaan et al., 2023; Veroude et al., 2016). In this perspective, to love means that one is emotionally, thoughtfully, and actionably bound to the person they love. Consequently, they assume responsibility and commit to maintaining that love. Love needs to be nurtured by romantic relationships so that it does not fade (Rokach, 2024; Sobieraj & Humphreys, 2021). Responsibility in this context, in addition to maintaining love with a married partner, they must also be able to fulfill their partner's needs for affection, economic, financial, security, protection, and other needs (Endriastuti et al., 2018; Harris et al., 2022). Taking a closer look at the person they are choosing to be their partner allows them to assess whether the potential partner has responsibility, physical and mental health, commitment, and compassion (Freeman et al., 2023; Siva et al., 2021). Choosing a partner must be done carefully, because a relationship in dating is not just love; rather, it is a process through which a person learns to navigate life with the final episode being marriage. People who do not do well in this process experience losses including time, energy, and finances (Mardiah et al., 2017; Tandrianti & Darminto, 2018). In the end, marriage is not just about the beauty and good looks of your partner; rather, it is about living together with all their characters, behaviors, and flaws. Couples who understand each other are important to complement each other and fill in each other's shortcomings so that they can live happily until they grow old together.

This review offers several implications for research. First, this review provides support for the need for further investigation of dating through experimental research designs, longitudinal studies, and mixed methods. Ironically, in focusing on deviant behaviors in dating, the importance of moral and religious education pathways in families and communities, may have been overlooked (Alfa, 2019; Lyatuu et al., 2018). By elucidating the pathways of moral and religious education, future studies in different cultural contexts can be expanded. Second, the findings of this review highlight the trend of dating among adolescents leading to violence to the detriment of adolescent girls. In other words, there needs to be sustained efforts aimed at promoting positive dating, supporting well-being, and maintaining self-esteem to those who are dating. Third, we postulate that studies that position romance in dating as a positive pathway to marriage are essential, as through such a pathway, dating adolescents can be effectively nurtured. To further refine this review, we suggest that further studies include adolescents' attitudes (e.g., beliefs, mindfulness, efficacy, and faith in dating) as a focus of investigation on dating.

Since the papers in this review collection refer to Indonesian culture; hence, the results of this review cannot be generalized to other cultural contexts. Further studies would benefit from reviewing dating from the perspective of other cultures. Fourth, this review explored dating based on positive norms. Investigating adolescents' dating styles from a religious perspective (i.e., Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Kong Fuzi - religions officially recognized by the Indonesian government) could extend and validate the findings of this review. In addition, it would be valuable if further studies explore online dating and its impact on their relationships based on a sociocultural framework. Fifth, this review presents papers that have high citations in the Google Scholar indexing engine without examining the linkages between documents. Extending the analysis to include, e.g., cocitation and co-authorship relationships, would also allow comparison of the results obtained to date. Reviews conducted using software (such as VOSviewer, CiteSpace, and SciMAT) may provide interesting results.

4. CONCLUSION

This study applied science mapping methods using Publish or Perish to identify and describe the knowledge base of dating research. Three generational time periods, namely First Generation, Second Generation, and Third Generation were identified along with the most influential studies in each generation. Content analysis conducted revealed not only the knowledge base but also the intellectual structure of dating studies in each generation. As suggested by co-word analysis, keywords including "violence in dating", "adolescent", "dating", "violence", "dating violence", "young adult", "adolescent", "courtship", "forgiveness", and "women, indicated also emergent fronts. This review has limitations that need to be noted. First, the findings in this review were obtained from Google Scholar-indexed literature; thus, the review in this paper is limited to assessing the evolution of the Google Scholar-indexed publication corpus. Further studies can use databases from SINTA, GARUDA, and Semantic Scholar to extend the current study. Second, using search terms in Indonesian limits this review to papers in languages other than Indonesian. To advance this review, using English search terms from Web of Science, Scopus, and DOAJ databases is recommended.

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