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Exploring the Complexities of Dating Violence in Indonesia: Understanding Dynamics, Norms, and Strategies for Prevention

Ani Purwanti, Zahroh Shaluhiyah, Bagoes Widjanarko, Aga Natalis
Universitas Diponegoro, Semarang, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Dating violence is still being a pervasive issue globally, affecting the health and rights of millions young individuals. Despite its prevalence, dating violence often receives less attention compared to domestic violence. This study delves into the complexities of dating violence in Indonesia, employing a mixed methods design to propose strategies for prevention and intervention. The research utilized qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods to comprehensively understand the phenomena under study. Using a thorough analysis, the research underscores the entrenched power dynamics and cultural norms that perpetuate gender-based violence. It also examined the role of gender norms in shaping attitudes towards intimate partner abuse, highlighting the influence of patriarchal beliefs, and hegemonic masculinity. Furthermore, the study evaluates the effectiveness of existing legal frameworks in combating dating violence, noting challenges related to implementation, and gender biases. In proposing solutions, the research emphasized the importance of empowerment initiatives for women and community development efforts to challenge harmful stereotypes and foster societal change. By addressing these multifaceted issues, this study contributes to the broader discourse on dating violence prevention and underscores the urgency of comprehensive interventions in Indonesia and beyond.

KEYWORDS

dating violence, gender norms, empowerment, prevention strategies

Introduction

Dating violence becomes a significant problem that affects public health and human rights, with a widespread impact on millions of young individuals globally (McNaughton Reyes et al., 2021). Its violence comprises a range of abusive behaviors, including physical, emotional, economic, and activity limitations, that are directed towards unmarried couples (Brown & Hegarty, 2018). Although it usually follows instances of domestic violence, this form of violence is generally disregarded by both the victims and the offenders, garnering less focus compared to domestic violence (Rakovec-Felser, 2014).

Wincentak et al. (2017) found that 20% of teenagers aged 13–18 experience physical abuse, while 9% experience sexual violence globally. In 2021, the World Health Organization emphasised the significant occurrence of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) among young individuals. It was shown that 24% of teenagers between the ages of 15 and 19 had encountered physical and sexual violence from their partners at least once in their lives.

Violence against women in Indonesia persists as an unresolved matter (Purwanti, 2020). Several efforts have been undertaken by the government, civil society, universities, and communities to resolve this issue through a range of preventative and intervention programs. Nevertheless, these efforts have proven ineffective in diminishing the quantity of instances. The data provided by the Indonesian National Commission on Violence Against Women indicates a progressive increase in the number of incidents annually. Cases increased from 119,107 in 2011 to 348,446 in 2017, and growing to 431,471 in 2019 (Kholifah, 2022; Suprihatin & Lestari, 2019). The Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection of Indonesia has reported a total of 19,593 registered incidences of assault in Indonesia between January 1 and September 27, 2023. Out of the total number, 17,347 individuals who suffered were female, while 3,987 were male. The age cohort of individuals between 13 and 17 years old comprises the most significant proportion of victims, representing around 38% of the overall victims of violence during that specific timeframe. Sexual violence is the most prevalent form of violence experienced by victims, with 8,585 incidents reported. It is followed by physical violence with 6,621 cases, and psychological abuse with 6,068 cases (Muhamad, 2023).

The 2023 Annual Report of the National Commission on Violence Against Women highlighted that dating violence cases had the highest prevalence among all forms of personal violence reported to service organizations in 2022. According to data from service institutions, dating violence is the most prevalent with 3,528 reported incidents. It is followed by violence against wives with 3,205 cases and violence against daughters with 725 occurrences. In 2022, the National Commission on Violence Against Women received the majority of complaints related to violence perpetrated by ex-partners, with 713 cases reported. Violence against wives accounted for 622 cases, while dating violence cases reached 422. According to the National Commission on Violence Against Women, the trends in personal violence, as indicated by complaints received, are consistent with the previous year. Psychological

violence is the most prevalent, accounting for 40% of the complaints, followed by 29% sexual violence, 19% physical violence, and 12% economic violence (Komisi Nasional Anti Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan, 2023).

Dating violence encompasses a range of forms, including physical, emotional, economic, sexual, and activity restrictions. Physical violence refers to several acts, such as striking, slapping, and kicking, whereas emotional violence involves behaviors, such as making threats and using insults. Economic violence refers to the situation where one partner manipulates or takes advantage of the other's assets or places excessive demands on the other to meet all their requirements. Sexual violence encompasses the act of compelling someone to engage in sexual intercourse against their desires. Furthermore, partner activity limitation, which includes possessive behavior and exerting control over every aspect, is a frequently observed manifestation of violence (Patra et al., 2018; Putri et al., 2021).

The correlation of violence can be attributed to some factors, such as limited educational attainment, traditional gender roles, substance abuse, and authoritarian parenting practices. Female individuals who are victims of violence frequently experience a sense of helplessness and tend to grant forgiveness to their relationships, especially in cases where the partner's demeanor becomes affectionate after an episode of violence (Whittaker et al., 2014).

Dating violence can have detrimental effects on both physical and emotional health. Women who are subjected to physical or sexual assault are more likely to face health and psychological issues, including sadness, anxiety, and even suicidal thoughts (Karakurt et al., 2014).

Pastor-Bravo et al. (2023) propose that a valid method for comprehending teenagers' perspectives on dating encounters and their tactics to prevent violence aims to evaluate their roles, relationships, and coping mechanisms. Noviani P et al. (2018) have found that assertiveness training helps empower women and victims of sexual violence to decline and effectively communicate their emotions confidently. Budiastuti (2018) emphasizes the importance of community engagement as companions and supervisors of youth in effectively addressing and mitigating the impacts of dating violence.

The prevention of dating violence among teenagers is gaining prominence as a critical concern for global public health and human rights organizations. This is due to the growing recognition of implementing effective prevention methods in policies and practices. The core of research on avoiding dating violence among teenagers is expanding. However, evaluations primarily concentrate on underdeveloped countries, disregarding the substantial prevalence of dating violence in these nations.

A study undertaken by McNaughton Reyes et al. (2021) emphasizes the significance of establishing dating violence prevention programs for adolescents that can influence different forms of violence and health risk behaviours in underdeveloped nations. Additional study is required in both developed and developing nations to create and assess programs that focus on the factors that lead to dating violence among teenagers at the community, family, and peer network levels. This involved evaluating the actions and methods contributing to the success of programs and identifying the programs' objectives to prevent dating violence among teenagers.

The objective of this research is to address the issue of dating violence in Indonesia by proposing two distinct strategies: preventive measures aimed at empowering women, and repressive actions directed at perpetrators who commit acts of violence.

Research Methods

This research employed a mixed methods design involving collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell, 2014). This method enables the researchers to gain a more comprehensive understanding of research questions by integrating the strengths of qualitative and quantitative research methods. Quantitative research methods were utilized to gather and analyze numerical data. These methods typically involved using standard surveys, questionnaires, and experiments to collect data from large participant samples. On the other hand, qualitative research methods were employed to gather and analyze non-numerical data. These methods usually involved interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and observations to collect data from small participant samples.

There are several reasons why the researchers may preferred to employ a mixed methods approach. Research questions might require quantitative and qualitative data to fully comprehend the phenomena under study. By utilizing quantitative and qualitative data, the researchers are able to compare and contrast findings from each method to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research questions.

Based on the research methods described above, this study was conducted in two stages. The first stage of this research involved the collection of qualitative data through FGDs with women who have experienced dating violence. FGDs were conducted in a safe and supportive environment, exploring participants' experiences of dating violence, as well as their views on empowerment interventions.

The second stage of this research involved the implementation of empowerment interventions with a group of women who have experienced dating violence. The intervention was based on a program developed and evaluated previously. This intervention involved a series of sessions to empower women and build their self-esteem and confidence. The effectiveness of the intervention was evaluated through the collection of quantitative data using surveys before and after the intervention. These surveys included validated measures of dating violence, self-esteem, and empowerment.

Revealing Power Dynamics: A Study of Gender-Based Violence and Safer Sexual Negotiations in Dating Relationships Within the Indonesian Context

In 2023, Indonesia was surprised by a reported incident of assault involving a female student at a prestigious private university. The domestic abuse case came to light initially as a result of the victim's disclosure on her social media platform. The victim confessed to experiencing domestic violence perpetrated by her male partner since June 2022. The violence she endured encompassed both verbal and physical abuse,

which recurred on multiple occasions. The perpetrator attacked the victim with a lack of concern for the consequences because she declined his want to accompany him home. The victim admitted to being forcibly pulled into the car by the perpetrator and forcefully placed into the vehicle (Azizah, 2023).

The scenario above is not an isolated incident, as several such occurrences may have remained undisclosed to the public due to the culprits' reluctance to reveal them. The absence of bravery must be reassessed because intimate partner abuse is solely a form of gender-based violence. Hence, examining its origins cannot be detached from gender *per se*. In Indonesia, the society primarily follows a patriarchal structure and firmly upholds tight gender role distinctions as a requirement (Ernanda, 2023). In Indonesian society, masculinity is correlated to bravery, self-reliance, resoluteness, dominance, and assertiveness.

In contrast, femininity is also associated to tenderness, composure, caregiving, compliance, and docility. Masculine characteristics are commonly regarded as superior, while femininity is perceived as lacking masculine features. This impression contributes to the establishment of gender inequality. Men and masculinity are commonly regarded as possessing greater prestige and authority in comparison to women and femininity. The existence of this power imbalance results in a state of domination that has the potential to escalate into acts of violence (Kachel et al., 2016).

Research indicates a strong correlation between individuals' beliefs about gender roles and their encounters with intimate partner violence. Individuals who hold traditional beliefs about gender are more likely to exhibit a higher level of acceptance of violence within relationships. Women who conform to gender norms are at a higher risk of experiencing intimate partner violence. Likewise, men who conform to gender norms are more prone to participate in intimate partner abuse.

"Hegemonic masculinity" refers to a form of masculinity considered ideal and performed by men who possess the most power and innate characteristics. These individuals also happen to hold positions of global influence. These individuals are typically white, Western, upper-class, heterosexual men who possess complete privileges in terms of gender, race, class, nationality, and sexuality (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Indeed, these power dynamics are considered commonplace and rational if the participants abide by the rules established in legal systems or the prevailing societal norms. Nevertheless, these power dynamics can pose significant risks when exploited by individuals with superior authority or influence within these relationships. Frequently, criminals exploit these power dynamics to perpetrate their illicit activities.

Individuals' relative status, power, and dominance significantly impact interpersonal interactions. These factors influence the mutual expectations and behaviors of participants, which in turn shape their communication styles. This concept is also known as reciprocity. The power dynamics discussed here are a crucial element of interpersonal communication. They can be observed in the correlations, such as asymmetrical, complementary, parallel, and symmetrical connections.

Furthermore, dominance and subordination relationships can be observed in several contexts, including stratified social systems and international relations

(e.g., the West vs. the rest). Foucault's (1982) approach provides an additional level of comprehension, highlighting diverse forms of control and opposition in different social contexts. He emphatically stated that the existence of power relations is an indispensable element of any society, drawing attention to the inherent presence of power dynamics throughout societal frameworks (Foucault, 1982, p. 791).

Historically, it has been believed that rape within close relationships is attributed to physical qualities exhibited by the victim, such as her provocative clothing or perceived flirty conduct. Additionally, others argue that suitable settings can contribute to the perpetrator feeling secure enough to conduct the act of rape. However, during the period of dominant masculinity, the primary factor is the unequal distribution of power between the perpetrator and the victim.

According to Aryana (2022), sexual violence, including violence in romantic relationships, is an inherent manifestation of power imbalances between the offender and the victim, particularly within personal relationships. The existence of gender bias behavior can be traced back to patriarchal culture, which establishes rules that confer privileges to men while placing women in subordinate positions that can be easily controlled. This control can be observed through geographical constraints, determinations of position, and distinct behaviour patterns. The influence of patriarchal principles, as shown in social, cultural, and religious conventions, often leads to the mistreatment of women, both physically and psychologically, resulting in humiliating treatment towards them. The increase in sexual assault endured by women can be attributed to the presence of a patriarchal culture and permissive attitudes that are widespread in society. Women are susceptible to sexual violence as a result of societal standards that position them in subordinate, marginalized, oppressed, and exploited roles. The societal idea of male dominance and hegemony over women might foster an environment that is favourable to sexual assault against women. This is due to the perception of women as subordinate individuals and the prevalence of gender-based prejudices that contribute to acts of sexual violence against them.

The study conducted by Sholikhah and Masykur (2020) on women who have experienced intimate partner violence indicates that the three participants had distant relationships with their fathers. The subjects engaged in decision-making when choosing to enter, sustain, or terminate the connection as they deemed it the optimal choice for preserving the relationship. The behavior of persons who are subjected to violence will exhibit commonalities. The violence that typically transpires encompasses physical, emotional, verbal, economic, and sexual forms of aggression. However, in cases of intimate relationship violence, the victim typically adopts a passive attitude and does not resist. The perpetrator's aggression escalates when the victim resists. The causes of violence can be attributed to various factors, including the spouse's inability to satisfy the wants of their significant other, feelings of powerlessness, disapproval from parents regarding the relationship, possessiveness, a lack of self-restraint on the part of the partner, and the partner's desire to exert dominance. Victims of intimate relationship violence frequently experience physical, economic, social, sexual, and emotional consequences. The primary and long-lasting

effect on individuals who experience violence is psychological. The subjects utilized forgiveness as a stress-coping method. The three individuals continue to make efforts to forgive their spouses as they are currently in the process of working through their issues. They have come to understand the significance of forgiveness and the negative consequences of holding onto bitterness. The subjects continue to experience the repercussions of their partner's actions during the relationship.

The presence of this power asymmetry adds to disparities in sexual behavior between genders. For instance, men tend to have a more significant number of sexual partners compared to women. Additionally, men typically possess the ability to determine the timing, location, and manner in which sexual activities occur. This power dynamic makes it challenging for women to properly discuss and agree upon safer sexual practices, such as using condoms.

The presence of unequal power dynamics within sexual interactions greatly influences the significance and understanding of condom usage, as well as the occurrence and mode of its use. For example, in a romantic relationship, a strong influence or access to more resources that promote the use of condoms might be of great importance. When one lacks influence in a relationship to suggest using condoms, even if they have a positive attitude towards them, they may face difficulties in discussing or promoting condom use due to the power imbalances that already exist. Moreover, the use of condoms might create a barrier to communication, leading to a decrease in condom usage. This is because individuals may opt to avoid uncomfortable discussions within the context of their relationship.

The extent to which women may exercise control and influence over decisions about when to engage in sexual intercourse and use condoms is a crucial determinant of sexual and reproductive health outcomes. Recent research and sociological theories recognize the enduring presence of power imbalances within heterosexual sexual interactions. Such power imbalances influences the decision-making process regarding the use of contraceptives and condoms, as well as the timing of sexual intercourse. Power in relationships consists of two distinct elements: "power to" (the capacity to act by one's wishes) and "power over" (the ability to assert one's desires, even when met with opposition).

A study conducted by Pulerwitz et al. (2002) suggests that gender-based power disparities can impede women's capacity to engage in negotiations. Subsequent investigation employing the Sexual Relationship Power Scale showed that women possessing elevated levels of power are five times more inclined to declare consistent utilization of condoms than women having diminished levels of power. This discovery emphasizes the crucial significance of power dynamics in partnerships when making informed choices regarding sexual safety.

The research conducted by Alam and Alldred (2021) sheds light on the dynamics of trust and power within heterosexual relationships, particularly concerning deceitful sexual behavior, such as "stealing," which refers to the covert removal of condoms by one's partner, is recognized as a type of gender-based violence. This study demonstrates the influence of gender-based inequality on discussions around safer

sex, which might potentially undermine women's ability to make informed decisions about protecting their sexual health.

Exploring Dating Violence: Legal Frameworks, Social Biases, and Law Enforcement Challenges in Indonesia

Gender-based violence is a significant social phenomenon that need to be investigated. This phenomenon is driven by various aspects of intricate societal systems, including socio-religious ethics, cultural perspectives, economic settings, ideologies, and supportive legal frameworks. As a result, these social systems often lead to the occurrence of violence based on gender. This violence commonly includes various individuals residing in a family, including spouses, children, domestic servants (housemaids), or extended relatives. Gender-based violence predominantly arises from patriarchal ideologies, wherein men continually assume the role of perpetrators while women consistently bear the brunt as victims (Purwanti, 2020).

Violence against women is widely recognized as a violation of women's fundamental rights within the framework of gender-based violence (Manjoo, 2016). This predominantly victimises women and comprises a broad spectrum of abusive behaviors, such as verbal abuse, physical violence, and violations of women's fundamental rights. Hence, the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was established as a worldwide mechanism to protect and uphold women's rights. The statement posits that acts of aggressiveness, intimidation, and fear impede women's capacity to participate in society pursuits fully (Agung, 2022).

Indonesia adheres to fundamental concepts that embody the idea of humanism, reflecting in the second moral principle of Pancasila, referred to as "Fair and Civilized Humanity". As a result, the nation's core values and legislative structure have developed concepts on the fair and just treatment of human rights for both males and females. According to Article 27, paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution of Indonesia, all citizens are considered equal in the eyes of the law and the government. They are obligated to support and abide by these principles without any exemptions. Indonesia is legally bound to pursue gender equality actively, as mandated by the CEDAW and Law Number 7 of 1984. This obligation is based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of Indonesia (Undang-Undang Dasar Republik Indonesia Tahun 1945, n.d.).

In the context of dating violence, criminal law plays a crucial role in upholding justice and protecting victims. Relevant to this issue is section 351 of the Criminal Code [Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Pidana], which regulates the crime of assault and the consequences faced by those who engage in acts of violence (Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Pidana, n.d.). However, to delve deeper into the subject, it is essential to analyze a real-life case that has occurred.

As a defendant, identifying as NK, who perpetrated an act of attempted rape and physically assaulted their partner. This case has substantial implications and necessitates a comprehensive understanding of criminal law and the circumstances surrounding dating violence.

On a particular day, NK committed an act of violence against their spouse with the explicit intention of forcing non-consensual sexual intercourse. The activities involved in physical abuse include forcibly kicking their partner's chest, causing them to fall subsequently. In this case, Article 351 of the Criminal Code is relevant. As per the article, committing assault can lead to imprisonment, and the severity and outcomes of the assault determine the duration of the punishment.

In this case, NK's conduct involved not only an attempted act of sexual assault but also resulted in physical harm to their spouse. According to Article 351, paragraph (2) of the Criminal Code, the perpetrator can be sentenced to five years if the action results in significant physical harm. The attack carried out by NK fulfils this criterion, as their actions significantly damaged their associate.

However, in this specific situation, some factors can mitigate or lessen the seriousness of the problem that should be considered. Regarding Article 49 of the Criminal Code, engaging in self-defence is deemed legal when an individual perceives a threat or is in immediate peril (Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Pidana, n.d.). In this particular case, NK's partner took measures to safeguard themselves by intentionally cutting NK's palm with a knife. It can be inferred that NK's husband felt endangered and reacted by engaging in actions that were seen as protective measures.

Dating violence includes not only physical acts but also the use of threats or force to engage in sexual intercourse. Article 285 of the Criminal Code deals with the offence of rape, which has a maximum prison term of twelve years for those who forcefully engage in sexual intercourse or use threats of violence against a woman who is not their spouse (Flora, 2015).

Furthermore, criminal law also considers the motives and premeditation of the individual responsible for the act of violence. Article 353 of the Criminal Code pertains to the deliberate act of engaging in assault, which is punishable by a prison sentence of four years (Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Pidana, n.d.). If it can be proven that NK's behavior was deliberate, the imposed penalty could be more severe.

The Law No. 12 of 2022 on Sexual Violence includes regulations about sexual violence along with relationship violence (Undang-undang Nomor 12 Tahun 2022 tentang Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Seksual, 2022). According to Article 5, individuals who engage in non-physical sexual acts to demean another person's dignity based on their sexuality and morality will be penalised for non-physical sexual harassment. The punishment includes a maximum prison sentence of nine months and a fine of up to IDR 10.000.000,00 (ten million rupiah) (Rahayu et al., 2023).

Article 6 outlines the prescribed penalty of physical and sexual harassment as follows: any individual who engages in physical, sexual acts to demean the dignity of another person based on their sexuality and morality, and this act does not fall under more severe criminal provisions, shall be subject to a maximum prison sentence of four years and a fine of up to IDR 50.000.000,00 (fifty million rupiah). Any individual who engages in non-consensual sexual acts involving the body, sexual desires, and reproductive organs to unlawfully dominate another person, regardless of marital status, shall be subject to a maximum prison sentence of 12 years and a fine of up to IDR 300.000.000.000,00 (three hundred million rupiah).

Individuals who misuse their position, authority, trust, or influence by employing deceit, manipulating circumstances, or exploiting someone's vulnerability, inequality, or dependence to coerce or deceive them into participating in or permitting sexual intercourse or indecent acts with themselves or another individual will be subject to a maximum prison sentence of 12 years and a fine of up to IDR 300.000.000.000,00 (three hundred million rupiah) (Santoso & Satria, 2023).

Nevertheless, the difficulty with criminal law, namely within its enforcement system, stems from the inherent legal framework, encompassing the police, prosecutors, and judges, which frequently demonstrate gender biases. According to prevailing societal beliefs in Indonesia, the responsibility for sexual violence, particularly in dating situations, is often placed on the woman. The patriarchal culture is widely seen as a fundamental factor in the tendency to justify and overlook perpetrators of abuse against women. A prevalent societal perspective is to prioritize the honor of the male perpetrator at the expense of the victimized woman, resulting in the degradation of her dignity.

Sexual predators knowingly and joyfully commit their deeds, taking advantage of a patriarchal culture and authorities who fail to take action, therefore providing them with safety. The denial of Baiq Nuril's cassation appeal appears to convey a message to all individuals who have experienced abuse, urging them to refrain from speaking out and reporting the incident, as they may face allegations of defamation, particularly if the offender possesses influence or authority. The disregard for factual information regarding the intention of documenting the assault as a means of self-protection and the sharing of content that the victim did not instigate demonstrates the viewpoint of our law enforcement towards sexual harassment (Akhmad & Arifin, 2022).

The attorney general's assertion that Baiq Nuril was not subjected to harassment and that the judgement aligns with the Electronic Information and Transactions Law terms reflects the gender bias underlies her case's rejection (Undang-undang Nomor 11 Tahun 2008 tentang Informasi dan Transaksi Elektronik, 2008). The inadequate comprehension of law enforcement officials regarding victims and their subsequent disregard lead to actions that deviate significantly from justice.

Empowering Women: Understanding and Addressing the Complexities of Dating Violence and Community Development

There is a case where a woman died while being taken to the hospital. However, based on preliminary suspicion, the perpetrator is her boyfriend. The woman is suspected of having assaulted her boyfriend to the point of his last breath. Hurt feelings and conflicts between them caused by arguments are often triggering factors for violence. This case serves as a reflection for everyone, especially women, not to fully trust others, especially partners who are not yet spouses. However, it is not always true that some people feel they can fully trust their potential partners and everything goes smoothly. The important thing to emphasize is related to various cases of abuse faced by women in a relationship.

Women's powerlessness in cases of abuse is an issue that often arises in the context of violence against women (Ray, 2018). Some factors causing women's powerlessness in abusive situations include economic dependence, where many women rely on partners or family for financial needs, making it difficult for them to escape from violent situations (Setiawati et al., 2022). Additionally, social isolation also often occurs, where the perpetrator restricts women's relationships with others, making them feel isolated and lacking social support, which makes it difficult for them to seek help. Threats and fear are also significant factors. Victims are often threatened by perpetrators, both physically and psychologically; they live in fear and uncertainty, making it difficult to report or seek help. Lack of knowledge about their rights in cases of violence also plays a role. Social stigma and discrimination against victims often make women feel ashamed or afraid to report or seek help. Women's empowerment is an effort to gain access and control over economic, political, social, and cultural resources so that they can regulate themselves and increase confidence to be able to play an active role in solving problems, thus building capacity and self-concept (Komariah et al., 2019). Women's empowerment is both a process and a goal, which cannot be separated from community empowerment. Community empowerment aims to realize an independent community capable of exploring and utilizing existing potentials in their area and helping the community to be free from underdevelopment or poverty.

Empowerment requires addressing several issues, including physical and sexual health, environment (lack of resources, environmental issues leading to displacement), social issues (community displacement, gender inequality, discrimination against women, gender-based violence, family trauma, and social stigma), and psychological issues (low self-esteem and guilt, rejection, anger/hatred, sexual anxiety, self-hatred leading to self-harm). Psychological issues generally receive higher priority than others because they cause a decline in strength and vulnerability (Yea, 2010).

Before initiating an empowerment program, it is essential to identify the emerging issues thoroughly. Identifying issues is not just a formal step but a solid foundation that will provide essential support for the success of the empowerment program. Gathering facts in the field is not just a routine procedure but a natural foundation that will facilitate the smooth implementation of the empowerment program. A deep understanding of the realities on the ground will be the key to success, along with factual support that can guide the program in the right direction.

The findings of this research indicate that dating violence issues are highly complex, requiring focused approaches tailored to the characteristics of each environment. This awareness prevents empowerment programs from being less effective or potentially creating adverse impacts. A successful empowerment program must be adaptive, adjust to the realities and consider women's direct experiences.

After identifying the issues, the next step is to develop an empowerment program. Such a program may include education, economic empowerment, and psychological support. The education program may encompass health education,

literacy and numeracy programs, as well as social skills development. Literacy and numeracy programs for women aim to assist those without educational opportunities. Literacy and numeracy are fundamental skills essential for adapting to various aspects of life, including personal, social, and professional aspects (Brooks et al., 2012). This program is an integral part of empowerment efforts that can positively impact basic skills improvement. Additionally, the program will focus on developing numeracy skills relevant to their daily lives and jobs. Thus, program participants can enhance their ability to participate more actively in society and improve their overall quality of life.

The education program should also encompass the development of social skills. These are the abilities of individuals as part of society to communicate and interact effectively with others. Some social skills that women should possess include oral, written, and sign language communication and the ability to use communication and information technology functionally.

Economic empowerment programs and psychological support are equally crucial as educational programs. Economic empowerment programs can involve job training and entrepreneurship (Sulaiman et al., 2019). They are self-development assets in improving women's economies, aiming to foster an entrepreneurial spirit, particularly by enhancing women's competency in entrepreneurship knowledge and skills. Job training and entrepreneurship should integrate scientific, technological, and sociocultural approaches; their advantage lies in providing a holistic and sustainable approach to assisting women in building stable and sustainable businesses. Economic empowerment programs for women must be solidly based on human rights, including concrete steps to ensure accessibility and equality in economic participation. First, programs should be designed with flexibility in attendance and other requirements according to women's needs and unique situations. Furthermore, economic empowerment is not merely about providing financial assistance but also ensuring the active involvement of women in program design and implementation, ensuring that implemented solutions meet their needs.

Essentially, the expected outcomes of empowerment aim to strengthen bargaining positions and awaken the power and potential of women to balance other powers (Lwamba et al., 2022). The subprocesses of power can be operated in three interrelated domains: power within, power with, and power over (Blanchard et al., 2013). Programs have emphasized the importance of inner strength in developing self-esteem, confidence, and awareness of vulnerabilities. Programs also stress the need for collective empowerment, or power together with others, to effectively address power imbalances and achieve social transformation; therefore, programs must also adopt community mobilization strategies to develop collective identity, trust, and mutual support as the basis for collective action.

Additionally, the domains of power within and power with must be complemented by the ability to exercise power over resources. Therefore, empowerment strategies should be utilized to enhance women's access to social rights, financial credit, and educational opportunities. It is also acknowledged that community mobilization strategies among women must be accompanied by structural interventions to bring

about comprehensive social, economic, legal, and political changes that initially cause disempowerment. Other factors affecting women's ability to benefit from empowerment programs include their socio-demographic characteristics, including age, marital status, level of education, and social status.

Conclusion

Research on gender-based violence and safer sexual discussions in dating relationships in Indonesia reveals intricate power dynamics that are firmly ingrained in societal structures and cultural norms. This statement underscores the role of patriarchal beliefs in sustaining violence against women, as masculinity is frequently correlated to power and superiority, while femininity is oppressed and regarded as inferior. Power imbalances give rise to different types of abuse, such as physical, emotional, verbal, economic, and sexual violence.

The investigation highlights the crucial influence of gender norms and beliefs on individuals' behaviors and attitudes towards intimate partner abuse. Conventional gender norms frequently result in the tolerance of violence in relationships, which increases the likelihood of women being subjected to abuse while also reinforcing men's inclination to engage in abusive conduct. The notion of hegemonic masculinity highlights how males in positions of power manipulate societal standards to commit acts of violence and uphold their authority.

Indonesia's legal system supposedly offers protection against gender-based violence through various statutes, including the Criminal Code and the Law on Sexual Violence, which are designed to prosecute those responsible. Nevertheless, the implementation of these laws is impeded by gender biases present in law enforcement organizations and social attitudes that frequently assign responsibility and stigmatize victims, particularly women. This inherent bias undermines the fairness of the legal system and perpetuates a culture where those who commit wrongdoing are not held accountable.

Empowerment is a vital component in dealing with dating violence and advancing gender equality. Women's empowerment projects seek to facilitate access to resources, knowledge, and support networks to liberate them from harmful circumstances and enable them to claim their rights. These programs incorporate educational, economic, and psychological elements to provide women with the necessary skills and confidence to confront power disparities in relationships and society.

Moreover, community development efforts are crucial in establishing conducive surroundings for individuals who have experienced abuse and in questioning profoundly ingrained gender stereotypes. These projects aim to promote collective action and structural change in order to eliminate gender-based violence by addressing social, economic, and psychological aspects that contribute to women's vulnerability.

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