

## Reasons for Women to Stay in Violent Dating Relationships: Literature Review

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**ABSTRACT:** In reality, dating relationships are not always fill up by positive romantic relationships. There are many deviant dating behaviors that lead to cases of violence. Interestingly, although dating violence clearly has many negative impacts on various aspects, some women decide to stay in the relationship. This article aims to analyze and summarize research findings regarding the reasons for why women persist in violent dating relationships. This research uses literature study methods. Article searches were conducted through Google Scholar and Garuda with the keywords "kekerasan dalam pacaran", "dating violence", and "abusive relationships". The results of the study raised ten main themes about the reason why women stay in abusive dating relationships, namely: pessimistic feelings about new relationships, feeling trapped in dating violence, fulfilling affection needs, dependence on partners, positive expectations in relationships, positive views of partners, considering conflict in relationships to be normal, social influences, scared to talk about dating violence, and other factors such as religion, duration of relationship, and individual age.

**Keywords:** Dating Violence; Dating Relationship, Woman



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## INTRODUCTION

Since adolescence, humans generally begin to show interest and need for intimacy towards the opposite sex which is then manifested in dating relationships. Dating is an intimate relationship that aims to find compatibility or compatibility with each other between two people of the opposite sex (Sharma, 2015). Dating relationships are relationships that involve intense interactions and processes of mutual support, love, and respect (Rihandita, 2018). Ideally, positive relationships are based on *insecure attachment* or secure attachment (Dwijayani, 2020). However, in reality, courtship relationships are not always characterized by fun and positive romantic relationships. There are many deviant dating behaviors that give rise to negative things such as cases of violence.

Dating violence (KDP) are all forms of action that contain elements of pressure, coercion, destruction, and physical or psychological abuse committed by men and women in relationships that are not bound by marriage (Ismail & Lestari, 2022). However, in general, women are more vulnerable to becoming victims of violence, especially because of the social structure and

patriarchal culture that places women as objects or subordinates who are weaker than men (Eriyanti, 2017). In 2021, according to the Annual Records (CATAHU) data published in 2022, there were 1,685 cases of KDP, including 1,222 cases reported through service agencies and 463 cases reported directly to Komnas Perempuan. Globally, almost 1 in 3 women worldwide (35%) have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner, and 38%-50% of female homicide cases are committed by *intimate partner*. Young women, girls, women from ethnic minorities, waria and people with disabilities are at higher risk of various forms of violence. Unfortunately, the majority of women (55%-95%) survivors of violence do not disclose or seek any assistance (WHO, 2021).

Dating violence includes physical violence, emotional or psychological violence, sexual violence, economic violence, and activity restriction violence (KPPPA, 2018). Physical violence includes actions such as hitting, slapping, kicking, scratching, pushing, burning, gripping tightly, and other physical actions that cause pain or injure the partner's body. Emotional or psychological violence includes threatening, insulting, publicly humiliating, verbally harassing, and others (KPPPA, 2018). Psychological violence also includes acts of defamation, destruction of property, emotional manipulation, efforts to distance partners from their social environment, spreading false news, threatening suicide, spreading images or information that undermines the partner's self-esteem (Offenhauer & Buchalter, 2011). Sexual violence includes acts of touching, groping, hugging without the partner's consent or with threats, forcing sexual intercourse, attempted rape, including non-physical sexual behavior such as spreading sexual images of partners (KPPPA, 2018; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). Economic violence occurs in the form of behavior asking a partner to fulfill their material needs and depletes the partner's assets. Activity restriction violence occurs through rules in possessive relationships such as restrictions on association and regulating how to dress (KPPPA, 2018). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020) also mentions other forms of KDP, namely *stalking* or stalking, which is the constant giving of unwanted attention that causes a partner to feel afraid.

Unhealthy and violent relationships lead to unpleasant effects such as symptoms of anxiety, depression, antisocial behavior, engaging in smoking and drinking alcohol, drug abuse, and suicidal thoughts (Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention, 2020). In addition, WHO (2021) states that violence against women, especially by intimate partners, can result in murder or suicide, injury, unwanted pregnancies, genital diseases, miscarriages, depression, post-traumatic stress, sleep difficulties, eating disorders, headaches, pain syndromes, digestive disorders, and increased risky sexual behavior.

Interestingly, even though dating violence clearly has many negative impacts in various aspects, some victims of KDP decide to stay in their relationship. Duley (2012) mentions that around 40%-76% of women who are or have been in a relationship with violence tend to stay or return to the relationship several times. In fact, people who are often rude tend to continue to repeat their actions because it is part of their personality and way of dealing with conflict (KPPPA, 2018).

Many studies have tried to explore and then obtain different reasons why victims of KDP do not separate even though the violence is a strong reason to end the relationship. What's more, courtship bonds are not as complex as marriage bonds, so breaking up should be much easier.

However, it seems that for some people, ending a relationship is not that easy and involves various reasons and complex considerations until they finally decide to stay. Understanding these reasons is of course important as knowledge will help relevant parties to make the right decisions and actions for women victims of KDP. This paper aims to analyze and summarize research findings regarding the reasons women persist in violent dating relationships.

**METHOD**

This study uses the method of literature review. Article search is done online via *google scholar* (<https://scholar.google.co.id/schhp?hl=id>), and Garuda (<https://garuda.kemdikbud.go.id/>) with the keywords "dating violence", "*dating violence*", and "*abusive relationships*". A keyword search yielded 515 articles, then carried out *filtering* as well as selection through titles and abstracts according to inclusion criteria: (1) articles discussing dating violence, (2) constituting *research-based article*, (3) published between 2016-2022, (4) female research subjects, and (5) research conducted in Indonesia. The articles that were excluded were articles that did not discuss the reasons for women to stay in a relationship with violence, articles that did not mention the gender of the subject, articles *reviews* and *meta-analysis*, as well as articles written in other than Indonesian and English. Based on this search, 10 relevant journal articles were found to be used in *literature review* This.

**Table 1.**

List of Research Journals *Literature Review*

No.*	Title	Writer	Year
1.	Aggressive Behavior Experienced by Victims of Dating Violence	Khaninah, A. N. & Widjanarko, M.	2016
2.	Violence in dating relationships among college students: A study of reflections on women's experiences.	Sari, I. P.	2018
3.	<i>Learned Helplessness</i> in Early Adult Women Victims of Dating Violence Who Still Survive with Their Partners.	Ananda, N.C. & Hamidah	2019
4.	Experience of Victim Women <i>Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)</i> Surviving Violent Relationships.	Revaughanii, N. A.	2020
5.	“IN THE NAME OF LOVE, I WILL BE HURT” (Phenomenological Study on Women Victims of Dating Violence).	Sholikhah, R. S., & Masykur, A. M.	2020
6.	<i>Experience of Dating Violence’s Victims in Indonesia: A Photovoice Study.</i>	Asikin, A. S., Aipipidely, D., & Kiling, I. Y.	2021

7.	Factors Behind Women's Decision to Survive in <i>Abusive Dating Relationship</i> .	Sintyasari, N.L.D., & Fridari, I.G.A.D.	2021
8.	The Meaning of Love in Couples Who Get Dating Violence.	Kumala, R.	2021
9.	Psychological Dynamics of Adolescent Female Victims of Dating Violence Who Choose to Maintain Their Dating Relationship	Prameswari, F.H.K	2021
10.	Forms of Dating Violence (KDP) and Its Psychological Impact on Early Adult Women as Victims of Violence.	Lestari, P. P., Abidin, Z., & Abidin, F. A.	2022

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The results of the literature review show the 10 articles above (Sari, 2018; Revaughanii, 2020; Sholikhah & Masykur, 2020; Asikin et al., 2021; Sintyasari & Fridari, 2021; Kumala, 2021; Prameswari, 2021; Ananda & Hamidah, 2019; Lestari et al, 2022; and Hegel et al., 2022) contains a discussion of the reasons women persist in dating relationships with violence. All articles use qualitative research methods with a case study research design (Sari, 2018; Ananda & Hamidah, 2019; Prameswari, 2021; Sintyasari, 2021), and phenomenology (Sholikhah, 2020; Kumala, 2021; Revaughanii, 2020; Lestari et al, 2022; Khaninah & Widjanarko, 2016). The number of subjects in the article is 2-8 women with ages ranging from 10-30 years. Analysis of the ten articles resulted in ten themes related to the reasons women stayed in relationships with KDP and are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.**  
Result

No.	He	Appears on number*	articleWeight
1.	Pessimists start new relationships	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9	80%
2.	Satisfy the need for affection	2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9	70%
3.	Positive expectations on relationships	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9	70%
4.	Dependence on a partner	2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10	60%
5.	Positive view of partner	1, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10	60%
6.	Felt trapped in KDP	2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10	60%

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7.	Social influence	2, 3, 7, 8	40%
8.	It's normal to see conflict in relationships It is taboo to talk about KDP	6, 7, 10	30%
9.	Religiosity, duration of relationship, age of subject	1, 2, 10	30%
10.		4, 6, 7	30%

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Feelings *insecure* or pessimistic about starting a relationship with a new girlfriend is the theme most frequently disclosed in literature articles (80%). Women tend not to want to start a new relationship because they feel lazy and it will be burdensome if they have to repeat the approach process from the beginning, assume that all men will be the same, and think that it is not certain that they will get a boyfriend and a better relationship than the current conditions (Sari, 2018; Revaughanii, 2020; Sintyasari, 2021; Kumala, 2021; Ananda & Hamidah, 2019). In research conducted by Sari (2018), Revaughanii (2020), Sholikhah (2020), Asikin (2021), and Prameswari (2021) this reason is related to subjects who have had sexual relations with their girlfriends so they feel afraid of not being accepted by men other men and the community because they are no longer virgins.

Reasons related to affection are the second most common theme disclosed in literature articles (70%). Women tend to maintain their relationships because they feel partners can provide affection, love, attention, feelings of security, understanding, acceptance, comfort, support, and feelings of satisfaction with relationships (Sari, 2018; Revaughanii, 2021; Solikhah, 2020; Sintyasari, 2021; Kumala, 2021; Prameswari, 2021; Lestari, 2022; Ananda & Hamidah, 2019) so it's hard to leave your partner. A number of female subjects also chose to stay because they had positive expectations for the relationship (70%) in the form of the hope that their boyfriends would later keep their promise to continue marriage and become husband and wife (Sari, 2018; Revaughanii, 2021; Sintyasari, 2021; Kumala, 2021; Prameswari, 2021; Khaninah & Widjanarko, 2016; Ananda & Hamidah, 2019).

Some articles (60%) also reveal dependence as a thing that keeps women in abusive dating relationships. Material dependency in the form of economic assistance, namely boyfriends meet life needs, often give goods, buy meals, and send money for food and travel (Sari, 2018; Solikhah, 2020; Kumala, 2021; Prameswari, 2021; Lestari, 2021). Whereas non-material dependence appears in the form of feelings of anxiety when a relationship breaks up because you feel afraid and it is difficult to get a new partner because you are not good at getting along (Sari, 2018), a boyfriend is a place to tell all problems so you will feel broken and lost if you are not together (Revaughanii, 2021).

As many as 6 articles (60%) found that women persist because they still have a positive view of their boyfriends. Women feel that their boyfriend still has a good side, intimacy and commitment

(Revaughanii, 2021; Kumala 2021; Lestari, 2022). In addition, a positive view of the partner also appears in the form of the belief that the boyfriend will change for the better and will not repeat his violent actions, violence is an attempt by the couple to admonish and protect and change the subject for the better (Revaughanii, 2021; Sintyasari, 2021; Prameswari, 2021; Khaninah & Widjanarko, 2016). A positive assessment because the boyfriend respects the subject's principle not to have premarital sexual relations appears in research by Revaughanii (2021).

A total of 6 articles (60%) contained the theme of being trapped in a cycle of violent dating relationships so that the subject could not quit the relationship or choose to survive. One of the triggers is a boyfriend who uses *intermittent reinforcement* by apologizing using all means, expressing regret, crying, coming to the subject's house, giving gifts, taking them out, and promising not to repeat these actions so that the woman melts and returns with her boyfriend (Sari, 2018; Sintyasari, 2021; Prameswari, 2021). In addition, the manipulative character of the couple by turning the blame onto the subject and getting angry excessively when their wishes are not obeyed causes the woman to only cry and obey to avoid violence. A manipulative boyfriend makes the subject think that the violence is the result of a mistake made by the subject (Revaughanii, 2020; Solikhah, 2020; Lestari, 2022). The existence of pressure from a partner in the form of threats to spread disgrace and tarnish reputation also makes women feel powerless and forced to endure relationship (Revaughanii, 2020; Prameswari, 2021).

Social influences influence women's reasons for staying in various forms (40%). The social environment places courtship status as *aprestige* and recognition of oneself as a person of interest to the opposite sex, so that women feel proud to have a boyfriend and use their dating status to avoid *social bullying* (Sari, 2018;). Breaking up with a girlfriend will make the subject feel ashamed (Ananda & Hamidah, 2019). Another form comes from family closeness (Sari, 2018; Revaughanii, 2021; Kumala, 2021; Prameswari, 2021). The subject feels close and accepted in the partner's family, as well as the two families already know each other and trust the subject's partner so they feel sorry if the relationship has to end. Apart from that, the opinions of people around the subject and the mass media which stated that love really needs sacrifice as proof of love also influenced the subject's decision to survive (Asikin, 2021). The existence of emotional support, information support, and *social companionship* from a friendly environment that makes the subject feel like he has a place to spend time and calm down also affects the individual's ability to forget problems with a partner (Sintyasari, 2021).

It turned out that a number of subjects thought that partner violence was normal and understandable (30%). This relates to the background of the subject's partner who comes from a family that is too restrictive and often uses violence so that the partner also tends to do the same thing (Sari, 2018; Sintyasari, 2021), the subject's partner's behavior comes from past dating experiences that are still carried over until now (Sintyasari, 2021), and subjects who understand their partner's actions because they are not aware that this includes violence (Lestari, 2022).

Research by Sari (2018), Lestari (2022), and Khaninah & Widjanarko (2016) uncovers the theme of taboo feelings about the KDP case. Female subjects feel hesitant to tell stories and report them to others for fear of being seen as 'stupid' because KDP is violence in the private sphere and weak

in the eyes of the law. This then causes the subject to keep his own feelings and experiences because he feels ashamed and will not receive input or support.

Other themes revealed in the literature articles are religiosity, age of relationship, and age of the subject. Reasons related to religiosity were found in research by Asikin (2021) where the subject stated that he survived in a relationship with violence because he tried to forgive the actions of his girlfriend, because religion teaches to always forgive those who do wrong to him. The age or duration of a relationship that has lasted for years makes women feel sorry if they have to end it (Sari, 2018; Sintyasari, 2021). In addition, the subject's age, which is considered to be no longer the time to play around in relationships, is also a reason for survival (Revaughanii, 2021; Sintyasari, 2021).

Women who repeatedly experience violence will give rise to feelings of helplessness (Syafira & Kustanti, 2017). This helplessness is called *learned helplessness*, which means the belief that individuals will not be able to change the current conditions because they have repeatedly failed when they tried to handle them (Seligman, 1972). Women who experience violence more and more will learn that all efforts they make to be free will not succeed (Syafira & Kustanti, 2017). *Learned helplessness* is a risk factor for decision-making that makes women trapped in abusive relationships (Pertiwi, 2020). This condition of helplessness appears in the mind that all men are the same and new relationships are not necessarily better, as found in research by Sari (2018), Revaughanii (2020), Sintyasari (2021), Kumala (2021), and Ananda & Hamida (2019). This is also in line with the research of Akmaliya, Indrayani, & Rifiana, (2020) which states that women generate pessimistic feelings after experiencing violence in relationships. Having a history of sexual relations also exacerbates helplessness because they feel they need responsibility from their boyfriend. In addition, with regard to Indonesian culture which still upholds virginity as a symbol of female chastity, Madjid's research (2020) proves that women who engage in premarital sexual relations experience a decrease in self-esteem which causes feelings of worthlessness, in line with findings from Sari (2018), Revaughanii (2020), Sholikhah (2020), Asikin (2021), and Prameswari (2021).

Humans have a tendency to gain *secure attachment*, namely feelings of being trusted, relied on, and feeling loved in interpersonal relationships (Primanita, 2018). This causes affection to be one of the reasons to survive in a relationship. This is in line with Sudarmiati and Irrawadhi (2016) who found that affection is the biggest factor in the decision to stay in a relationship with violence. This factor was found in research by Sari (2018), Revaughanii (2021), Solikhah (2020), Sintyasari (2021), Kumala (2021), Prameswari (2021), Lestari (2022), and Ananda & Hamidah (2019). This feeling is also a form of non-material dependence when you feel your boyfriend is the only person who can love and understand women, as found in research by Sari (2018) and Revaughanii (2021).

Serious plans to continue the relationship to the stage of marriage are significantly associated with individual commitment to the relationship (Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2010). This is also in line with Ogolsky and Surra (2014) who stated that long-term plans that individuals have when in a relationship are a strong predictor of the sustainability of a relationship. This factor is related to the promise of the boyfriend who will marry the subject, such as research findings by Sari (2018), Revaughanii (2021), Sintyasari (2021), Kumala (2021), Prameswari (2021), Khaninah & Widjanarko (2016), and Ananda & Hamida (2019).

Meanwhile, in line with research by Sari (2018), Solikhah (2020), Kumala (2021), Prameswari (2021), and Lestari (2021) material dependence is caused by women who rely on boyfriends to meet their needs. Blau's exchange theory explains that people will be interested in connecting with other people based on the benefits or rewards obtained. An imbalance in rewards will create power differences in relationships (Raho, 2021). Women who are economically and affectionately dependent on their boyfriends will find it difficult to leave the relationship. This is also in line with Kisriyati's research (2012) which found that one of the reasons women date is to meet economic needs that are not fulfilled by their families, so women tend to surrender and accept what their boyfriends do or ask for in order to keep these needs met.

The existence of consideration by looking at the good side of the partner is also a reason to survive, according to Mattson, Rogge, Johnson, Davidson, & Fincham (2012) that a positive attitude in dating relationships is positively related to the level of satisfaction in the relationship being lived. This is proven by the research of Revaughanii (2021), Kumala (2021), Lestari (2022), Sintyasari (2021), Prameswari (2021), and Khaninah & Widjanarko (2016).

Walker (in Syafira & Kustanti, 2017) mentions that violence that occurs in dating relationships occurs in three stages that form a cycle, namely the stage when conflict occurs and tension peaks (*tension building*), the stage when violence occurs (*acute battering incident*), and the stage when the offender apologizes and the couple gets back together (*honeymoon*). Women who melt when their boyfriends express regret have entered this cycle and created a trap. Women who obey their boyfriends' wishes even though they feel uncomfortable in order to avoid conflict are also a motivating factor for staying in a relationship with violence (Samantha, 2018). This is in line with research conducted by Sari (2018), Sintyasari (2021), Prameswari (2021), Revaughanii (2020), Solikhah (2020), and Lestari (2022).

Adolescents who are used to an environment full of violence will get used to using violence as a problem solution (Sekar, 2021). Mass media exposure normalizes violence against women by leading to the opinion that violence occurs because of the behavior of the victims themselves (Indainanto, 2020). In line with the research findings of Sari (2018), Sintyasari (2021), and Lestari (2022), these two things affect public knowledge so that women think about condoning violence committed by their boyfriends as a reaction to conflict. Teenagers think dating is something *trend yes/lifestyle* that must be followed by today's youth can feel pleasure and sexual satisfaction. Teenagers who don't have a girlfriend will be considered not *gaul* to vilify and lead to *social bullying*. This causes adolescents to engage in dating as well as a form of increasing self-esteem and maintaining prestige among their peers (Krisiyati, 2012), as revealed in research by Sari (2018), Ananda & Hamidah (2019), and Asikin (2021). . In addition, feelings of taboo or embarrassment in reporting as revealed in research by Sari (2018), Lestari (2022), and Khaninah & Widjanarko (2016) because they consider KDP to be a private matter in relationships and are afraid of other people's views cause women to choose silence and cover up the problem of violence (Manurung & Simanjuntak, 2021).

Religiosity has a significant positive relationship to early adult happiness (Yuliana, 2015) and forgiveness behavior (Zulfi, 2017). The higher a person's religiosity, the higher the motivation for kindness and the lower the motivation for revenge (Zulfi, 2017). Pattiradjawane (2019) in his



research stated that *forgiveness* is a form of recovery for women who experience violence, and this is in line with research by Asikin (2021). One of the developmental tasks in adulthood is choosing a life partner and building a family life. This task is important to complete to achieve happiness and so as not to disrupt further developmental tasks (Putri, 2019), so that people who are in young adulthood feel that dating is really a phase for choosing a future husband and they are trying to defend it. This reason appears in research findings by Sari (2018) and Sintyasari (2021). According to Miller, Lund, & Weatherly (2012) the duration of courtship relationships also allows individuals to stay in the relationship *abusive dating relationship*, in line with research by Revaughanii (2021) and Sintyasari (2021).

### CONCLUSION

The results of the literature study show that women have various reasons for staying in abusive courting relationships, including feeling pessimistic about new relationships, feeling trapped in KDP, meeting affection needs, dependence on partners, having positive expectations of relationships, positive views of partners, considering conflict in relationships is normal, there are social influences, a feeling of taboo to talk about KDP, and other factors such as religiosity, relationship duration, and individual age.

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