Balinese Adolescents' Experiences in Romantic Relationship

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Abstract

Romantic relationship is an integral part of individual development. The understanding of romantic relationships that has so far been developed is mostly based on the experiences of teenagers in the setting of Western culture, where numerous ideas about romantic relationships have been developed. This study, which is conducted from an ecological point of view, aims to describe the dynamics of romantic relationships in adolescents who grow up in an Eastern cultural setting with its distinctive features in order to support efforts to develop a more thorough understanding of the significant importance of romantic relationships for individual lives. This study is a qualitative phenomenological investigation of the nature of individuals' perceptions of a certain idea or phenomena, in this case, adolescent love relationships. This exploratory study used a survey method by distributing questionnaires with open-ended questions to adolescent respondents aged 13 to 18 years (n=345). A series of coding analysis procedures were carried out to summarize teenagers' romantic relationship experiences which include dimensions of engagement, relationship content, romantic partner selection, relationship quality, as well as cognitive and emotional processes. The results show that each dimension of romantic relationship experiences is related to the age that is considered normal to start a relationship with the opposite sex, the reasons behind their involvement in a relationship while still at school age, the positive and negative experiences they have had. Besides viewing romantic relationships as a process of self-maturation, the respondent also viewed it in the development of cognitive and emotional aspects in adolescents, starting the experience of sexual behavior as a form of expression of feelings, identifying the characteristics of ideal partner, and parents' influence on the decisions taken by adolescents regarding romantic relationships. The results also highlighted the impact of the influence of social media that brings foreign culture in the aforementioned themes that coexist with traditional style of Balinese adolescence romantic relationship. Thus, it can be concluded that social media shapes relationship styles, where Balinese teenagers use social media as a place to publicize their relationships and gain satisfaction in establishing romantic relationships.

Keywords: adolescent, Balinese, experiences, romantic relationship

Introduction

A romantic connection is an essential component of an individual's psychological growth. When compared to other peer relationships, the idea is described as mutually accepted consensual interactions of varying intensities, often accompanied by expressions of affection and the prospect of present or expected sexual conduct. (Ahmetoglu et al., 2010; Akgül et al.,

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2022). It takes time for people to develop the knowledge, skills, and experiences required to start meaningful relationships and have healthy sexual positivity (van de Bongardt et al., 2015). Adolescents and young adults, in particular, are prominent developmental periods for the exploration of romantic relationships and sexual behavior (Collins et al., 2009).

Collins (2003) proposes five dimensions of a romantic relationship, namely (1) whether or not someone is dating, when (s)he starts dating, the duration of the romantic connection, the regularity and consistency of dating, and the relationship; (2) romantic relationship selection based on ideal partner features; (3) relationship content that discuss activities with the romantic partner and also about "do's and don'ts"; (4) The proportional degree of supports and tensions within the romantic connection is included in the quality of the romantic relationship, (5) Perceptions, attributions, and representations of persons, couples, and relationships, as well as emotional states, are all part of the cognitive process and conversation.

Meanwhile, the ecological perspective applied to research of relationships emphasizes the social and cultural context to comprehend romantic relationship experiences in a specific society. The history, features of social, economic, political, geographic, cultural, institutional, and communal components of ecological consequences (Collins et al., 2009). Values, norms, and expectations in romantic interactions also contribute to forming the background in which the relationship develops (Li et al., 2010). The definitions and knowledge of the dynamics of romantic relationships that have been reached so far are largely based on experiences that take place in the framework of Western culture. Studies on this topic still need to take into account the existence of more varied socio-cultural circumstances, despite the fact that this information might in turn guide early knowledge about romantic relationships. Through their analysis of the literature, Jerves et al. (2013) discovered that there is still a knowledge gap when it comes to comprehending teenage love relationships in various socio-cultural situations. This is an important basis for carrying out a study regarding the experiences of adolescent romantic relationships in a cultural context, especially in Eastern culture. Every individual has some experiences in a romantic relationship that inseparable from their socio-cultural context, as well as Balinese people, which are known to have a unique traditional culture and values of life. On the other hand, Bali, which is known for its international tourism destination, is at risk of experiencing greater modernization influences that brought changes in the society and has an impact on changing beliefs, habits, etc. (Chandalia, 2015). Balinese youth who on the one hand grow up in a cultural environment full of religious values and on the other hand become an inseparable part of the development of globalization can form experiences of romantic relationships which have their own characteristics, which can enrich our understanding of the dynamics of romantic relationships in adolescents in all parts of the world. Departing from this thought, the purpose of this study was to explore the romantic relationship experiences from Balinese adolescents' point of view.

Methodology

Sample

The participants of the study were Balinese adolescent aged 13-18 years (n = 345), consisted of 224 high school students (98 boys, and 126 girls) and 121 junior high school students (56 boys, and 65 girls). All participants are Balinese and Hindu. These participants came from public schools in Buleleng and Badung Regencies, Bali, Indonesia, and who submitted their willingness to be involved in the research.

Data Collection

The present study was conducted under qualitative phenomenology approach where the researchers identified certain individual experience to gain universal description of a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2013). Thus, the researchers gathered adolescent respondents aged 13 to 18 years (n=345) to gain their experience regarding their romantic relationships. The information was gathered using open-ended questionnaires and informed permission (as part of study ethics). Participants were asked to answer questions about five aspects of romantic relationships: engagement in romantic partnerships, relationship content, partner selection, relationship quality, and cognitive and emotional process. Several instances of the queries are: what are your views on dating as a teenager, what was your experience when you were dating for the first time, how did dating affect you as a teenager, what habits do you have when dating, what are the things you consider when dating.

Analysis

To develop findings on adolescents' experiences within the parameters of romantic relationships, the thematic analysis was applied in this research. The thematic analysis allows researchers to find patterns or themes that previously appeared randomly in the available information set. Themes pertaining to aspects of romantic relationships, such as the dimensions of engagement, relationship content, romantic partner selection, relationship quality, as well as cognitive and emotional processes, were identified using coding analysis, such as open coding, to compare, conceptualize, and categorize data; axial coding, to create links between data categories; and selective coding, to select core categories, systematically relate these categories, and to refine and develop them further. After this pattern is found, we will classify the pattern by providing a label, definition, or description (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Credibility checking is carried out by conducting interviews with several respondents to verify the data that has been collected through questionnaires

Result and Discussion

The findings were categorised based on the components of romantic partnerships, which included engagement in romantic relationships, relationship content, romantic partner selection, relationship quality, and cognitive and emotional factors. The experiences of Balinese teenagers are detailed in each of these categories.

Involvement in romantic relationship

Around 76% of the participants had previously been in or were currently in a romantic relationship, whereas the remainder had never been in a romantic relationship. Balinese teenagers, as early as 8 to 9 years old, tended to enter into romantic relationships. They responded that it was not a problem for them to begin and then to cut the relationship as long as they are not married yet, then they still have the freedom and rights to choose a new romantic partner. In addition, these teenagers said that they have to choose the best partner so that the process of knowing through a romantic relationship is natural. They also feel that adolescence is the right age to get to know the opposite sex more freely compared to adulthood because during adolescence individuals are not bound by more responsibilities in life, such as work and household. That was why the frequency of the dating is generally more than once throughout their adolescent years. The shortest romance lasted two weeks, while the longest lasted three years.

Some teenagers who had never been in a romantic connection, especially females, stated numerous reasons for not being involved in a romantic relationship, including age consideration, parental approval, a concentration on education, and an attitude to be more discriminating in choosing a love partner. These teenagers stated that the essential part of adolescence is to get the best education possible. They think that romantic relationships at school will only bring negative impacts, such as neglected lessons, reduced opportunities to get to know more friends and less time for themselves. Generally, they felt they were too young to get to know the opposite sex more intensively. Female students mainly express this in junior high school. Considering the prohibition from parents was also a strong reason for teenagers who have never even had a romantic relationship, both high school and junior high school students. They say that permission from their parents is vital so that the relationship they establish can run well and under parental monitoring. The role of parents, in this case, stands out. In addition, participants who had never been in a relationship saw that it was essential not to choose the wrong romantic partner to avoid unnecessary feelings of disappointment and heartache resulting from selecting a partner in a rush or simply because of a positive first impression. They viewed it as better to spend a lot of time getting to know the characteristics of the people around them through good friendships rather than rushing to choose someone to be a romantic partner just because someone else has already done so.

In addition, the data also reveals that adolescents received many influences from their involvement in cyberspace, such as through social media and viewing access that allows them to see the experiences of adolescent romantic relationships coming from different places. Respondents reported that the understanding of romantic relationships shown through social media more or less became a reference for them in viewing the important value of romantic relationships in their teens. Romantic relationships are perceived as an unavoidable experience during adolescence, and it becomes natural for a teenager to start a relationship with the opposite sex, even at a young age. Involvement in this social media also has influenced the experiences of romantic relationships among Balinese teenagers in other dimensions.

Relationship Content

This dimension relates to the activities carried out by adolescents with their romantic partners, including forms of behaviour as expressions in relationships. Participants said that activities with their partners were more recreational or entertaining, such as watching movies in cinemas, eating together at cafes, walking in shopping centres, and visiting tourist attractions. This activity can be done alone with a partner or with friends. Another activity that is carried out is to visit the partner's house (the man visits the woman's house) in his spare time, such as on weekends or holidays. On this occasion, the couple will usually be introduced to their parents in the hope that the parents will positively assess the couple who comes to the house. This is an example of a polite and respectful attitude for parents that can support a better relationship.

The interactions carried out by the couple are not only outside of school, especially if the partner is in the same school. This results in more opportunities for couples to meet at school, for example, outside school hours or during recess. Joint activities carried out by partners at school generally also involve many friends compared to activities with partners carried out outside of school. Several participants reported that it was easier to explore their partner's character if they were in the same school and often did activities together, considering that most of their time was spent at school. Another activity that is often done with your partner is praying together at the temple on holy days. Usually, they participate in praying together at the temple outside the school in the afternoon or at night. After praying together, they take the

time to have dinner and end the day by driving their partner's home. According to teenagers who actively do it, this activity is a way to maintain healthy relationships and bring goodness to partners.

In addition to face-to-face meetings, romantic relationship activities are also characterized by communication through social media and communication tools in the form of cellular phones or other gadgets. Teenagers generally report they make daily telephone calls with their partners of various durations and always communicate using online chat applications, such as WhatsApp, Line, or Telegram, via video calls and texting. This activity is carried out to find out news from partners, talk about things happening around them, express feelings to partners, and maintain an unbroken relationship. The development of communication technology has become an inseparable part of the experience of today's adolescent romantic relationships.

Activities with partners reported by respondents also included physical contact, such as holding hands, hugging, kissing on the lips, touching each other's limbs, to having sexual intercourse. Holding hands was the most reported physical contact, while sexual intercourse was the least reported activity (by three male respondents at the high school level). Respondents revealed that physical contact is an activity that is inseparable from a romantic relationship because it is understood as a form of expression of interest between partners. In junior high school student respondents, in general, the physical contact that was carried out was holding hands by using opportunities when meeting outside the home and outside the school. High school student respondents reported more intimate physical contact.

Physical contact was expressed by most of the respondents as something they imitated from what their peers did when they were dating, so this was seen as a normal thing and not strange in their group. Specifically, the behaviour of touching limbs and having sexual intercourse with partners reveals the condition of adolescents who are unable to manage their urges and, at the same time, have the opportunity to do so because of a lack of parental supervision. This behaviour is carried out without coercion with awareness of the risks that may occur from this behaviour.

The dating style of most respondents was also reported to be influenced by exposure to content on social media that they often access. When perceptions of romantic relationships are formed as normality, an understanding is formed about how behaviours and activities can be carried out in these relationships. Activities with romantic partners shown on social media include recreational activities to "instagramable" places, celebrating special days, such as Valentine's Day and anniversaries, preparing special events with their partner, and expressing feeling through physical contact without feeling awkward. Those activities are often used as references. Most of the respondents reported that they would also post these activities to their social media; in turn, they saw this as a stimulus for other friends to do the same.

Partner Selection

Partner selection is another critical dimension revealed from the experience of romantic relationships among Balinese teenagers. Partner selection includes a series of criteria individuals use when determining the person to be made as a romantic partner. On this dimension, both male and female respondents gave relatively similar responses. Characteristics of romantic partners considered ideal are generally related to physical appearance, character or personality, competence in academics, sports, and the arts, similarities in religion and caste, as well as hobbies.

The physical appearance that is considered attractive from the opposite sex, which is prioritized as a romantic partner, is a good-looking face, clean and well-groomed appearance, healthy and fit body condition, ideal body proportions, bright skin, and neat hair. Good appearance affects the first impression of an individual towards the opposite sex.

Traits and personality became the most common responses that appeared in this study. Respondents reported that one's personality could guarantee a relationship that lasts a long time and does not hurt each other. The desired personality qualities are maturity, understanding, responsible, ability to communicate well, patience, politeness, friendliness, not being rude, ability to protect, not being selfish, being a good listener, and the ability to accept the shortcomings of a partner. This ideal image of a romantic partner becomes a reference for teenagers in choosing a romantic partner, apart from being attracted to physical appearance.

The ongoing interaction between the sexes in the school setting causes attention to the competencies possessed by a person, which is then considered as a criterion in choosing a partner. Intelligent students in class or at school have a unique attraction for several respondents because this shows the positive qualities of the individual concerned, such as being labelled as a diligent and proud child. Meanwhile, other competencies that are considered in choosing a partner are outstanding abilities in sports or the arts.

In addition to considering the selection of a partner in terms of physical appearance, personality, and competence, several respondents felt similarities as something that could attract their interest in someone. The similarity of religion is important for several respondents, where the opposite sex, both Hindus, will attract more attention than those with different faiths. Apart from that, equality in terms of caste also seems to be a consideration for some respondents, especially those of tri-dynasty descent. They choose a partner from the same religion and caste to avoid conflicts in relationships, especially with parents and family. Another form of the equation considered is regarding hobbies or preferences in carrying out certain activities. Hobbies identified from the participants' responses included reading comics, watching movies, travelling, and exercising.

Teenagers generally have specific references when determining the criteria for a romantic partner they want. For most respondents, the experience of peers is an important reference. They observe that the positive and negative experiences of romantic relationships from close friends are primarily determined by the partner's characteristics, especially those related to internal characteristics, such as personality. In terms of physical criteria, it is generally influenced by references from cultural exposure oriented towards physical appearances, such as from public figures, music idols, actors/actresses, and models presented as ideal physical references through advertisements or social media, such as Instagram and TikTok. These figures are considered perfect romantic partners who look incredible, attractive, and proud.

Quality of Relationship

The dimension of relationship quality includes positive and negative experiences experienced by adolescents when establishing a romantic relationship to determine the quality of their relationship. Respondents can obtain positive experiences related to increased motivation to study at school when their partners also attend the same school, fulfilling the need to get attention from people they like and feeling that people are willing to always accompany them. They also added the motivation came from having partners to share feelings, experiences, and dreams, get an excellent opportunity to get to know the opposite sex more closely and motivate them to grow into a better person. These positive experiences generally cause adolescents to

believe that romantic relationships are an essential part of their lives and positively influence their personal development. These experiences cause teenagers to live their days happier because they feel that they are loved.

In addition to positive experiences, romantic relationships also produced negative experiences for adolescents, which led to low-quality relationships. This relates to events in unpleasant relationships, such as quarrels between partners, dilemmas between romantic and friendly connections, and unfulfilled expectations about ideal relationships.

Quarrels with partners arise due to various causes, namely difficulties in communicating effectively, misunderstandings in partners, impulsivity, possessive and selfish attitudes, problems in setting priorities in relationships, and challenges in maintaining commitments in relationships. Another negative experience in romantic relationships was when these relationships affected friendships with friends in the group. Once they could not ideally balance their time between maintaining their friendship and meeting the demands that arise from the romantic relationship, it resulted in a dilemma that many teenagers report as an uncomfortable experience.

The experience gained from a romantic relationship often differed from what was expected. When this happens, adolescents perceive romantic relationships as a dark period. Unfulfilled expectations include a need for partner acceptance of their shortcomings, changes in their partner's treatment and attitudes, opportunities to use time, and boring activities with partners. In addition, partners who cannot motivate in terms of learning and self-development and partners who do not provide the support needed when experiencing grief. These conditions, in turn, affect achievement in education, such as decreased motivation to study, unfinished assignments, and the emergence of a desire to skip school. In addition, a number of respondents reported that reduced performance in the academic field was also contributed by a failure to manage time properly, where adolescents spend more of their time doing recreational and entertaining activities with their romantic partners. This, in turn, becomes a negative experience that implies poor-quality relationships.

In this dimension, the use of social media by respondents in a romantic relationship is seen as an effective medium to get to know their partner better and establish close relationships, mainly to show the world that they are a couple. Social media is perceived as a medium to discover a partner's characteristics and how they interact with other people in cyberspace. Everything posted on social media shows the status of the relationship and, at the same time, a place to show off the fun activities they do. Social media "life" influences the quality of relationships, including other people's assessment of their romantic life.

Cognitive and Emotional Process

The cognitive process dimension in romantic relationships relates to adolescent perceptions of romantic relationships, including understanding the causes and effects of their behaviour in that context. In contrast, the emotional process dimension relates to the feelings produced in an association. The negative experiences experienced by adolescents, as described in the dimensions of the quality of relationships, are generally associated with the tendency for negative emotions and thoughts to emerge.

From the cognitive process, the result showed that although adolescents can report the impact or consequences of each behaviour or activity in a romantic relationship, they tend not to consider these consequences when carrying out a behaviour or action so that the impact or

result of the behaviour can be repeated or continues to occur. Adolescents generally behave or act without careful consideration yet still hope that negative risks will not happen. Adolescents who know that intimate physical contact with a romantic partner can lead to violations of religious norms and teachings do not use their knowledge to prevent this behaviour from occurring. Adolescents who are very attached to their romantic partners know there is a risk of losing friends but still prioritize their romantic partners over developing a more comprehensive friendship relationship. Likewise, adolescents dependent on their partner in academic matters continued to maintain this behaviour, even though they knew that they needed to have independence in the academic field personally to avoid problems in academic issues if the relationship did not go well. Respondents also reported that they did not consider how much their romantic relationship activities would impact their family or parents. This shows that adolescents generally lack responsibility towards themselves and others when establishing romantic relationships.

For some respondents, especially at the age of 17-18, a romantic relationship was perceived as an experience that supports changes towards a more mature self-growth and provides a more meaningful life, accompanied by the ability to be responsible and accept risks from behaviour. On the other hand, the actions taken reflected careful consideration so that negative risks could be avoided or minimized. This behaviour is like managing friendships and romantic relationships well and in tandem and already involving the role of parents in relationships as figures to share and monitor their relationships. In this group, romantic relationships developed with more profound commitment and affection.

The emotional dimension, in particular, showed how romantic relationships produced certain forms of feelings for adolescents, both positive and negative, including emotions in a romantic relationship. For younger adolescents, romantic relationships rarely involve deep emotion, especially early in a relationship, because relationships often begin with trial and error based on superficial attraction to a partner. This caused the high frequency of romantic relationships in a teenager, characterized by relationships that change frequently and do not last long.

In a relationship, it becomes very natural to start with an interest in a potential romantic partner and then continue to grow feelings of liking and loving one another. The development of this emotional dimension is reported to depend on the assessments made by each other in the approach process between partners, in aspects considered important for each teenager, as used as a reference in the partner selection dimension. The fulfilled expectations and desires will foster deeper emotional involvement and feelings of pleasure and satisfaction. They will produce the opposite emotion when expectations for a partner are not met. Negative emotions in romantic relationships are associated with anxiety that one's partner would hurt and disappoint them. They also worried that parents would forbid relationships or know about romantic relationships that are carried out secretly, jealousy and suspicion of partners, feelings of anger when quarrels occur, and dissatisfaction with relationships that are considered boring and not in line with expectations. In addition, this dimension also reveals that for Balinese teenagers at this time, young girls tend to be assertive and open to expressing their interest and feelings towards the opposite sex they like. For young boys, this is perceived as something normal and not strange.

Respondents reported that the emergence of negative emotions and thoughts was still difficult to manage. Difficulties in dealing with problems in romantic relationships often lead to ending the relationship with a minimal reflection process because of the desire to immediately terminate the conflict that causes this discomfort. In older adolescents, disputes in romantic

relationships can be handled better and prepared by considering the time that has been lived in the relationship and the urge to make themselves and their partners better people. When facing problems that significantly impact emotional stability, adolescents report that they have a number of support systems. Most adolescents of all ages generally have close friends with whom they can share their feelings and provide moral support. A small number point to parents and teachers as figures to be their support when facing problems in romantic relationships. This has not been explored in more depth but can be very useful data input regarding support systems for adolescents that can help them prevent the impact of more significant problems.

The influence of adolescent involvement in social media is consistently shown in this dimension of cognitive and emotional processes. This is related to the formation of perceptions of the expected form of relationship with partners, emotional fluctuations (both positive and negative) resulting from achieving goals or failure to use social media to strengthen relationships or obtain positive responses in cyberspace.

Discussion

The findings of the experiences of romantic relationship among the participants were grouped into five dimensions such as involvement in romantic relationships, relationship content, romantic partner selection, relationship quality, and cognitive and emotional aspect. Those dimensions are dynamically inseparable from the influence of modernization, especially the development of communication technology. The development of communication technology supports a higher intensity of adolescents' romantic interactions. On the other hand, Internet access also allows adolescents to be exposed to influences from foreign cultures. The impact of western culture's globalization on non-western nations and how adolescents see romantic relationships in those cultures cannot be denied. According to a number of researchers in eastern nations, teenagers are now more likely to absorb western culture through various media than they were in the past (Sugiyanto et al., 2020). Dhariwal & Connolly (2013) argued that teenagers who obtained Western influence engaged in greater amorous behaviors; that is, Western media consumption was thought to create more permissive relationships and personal communication. Furthermore, the internet is seen as advantageous for increasing the quality of romantic relationships, as well as for maintaining relationships and finding romantic partners in the future (Bagley & Kimberly, 2017).

Furman & Simon (2014) argue that such relationships give exciting and new experience for adolescent arena. When they get to know this relationship, they will try new behaviour, try different ways of interacting, and can also form new skills as part of their development as individual. They have to surpass many new and often surprising experiences while spending a lot of time to wonder and discuss about their close friends and relationships. Avilés et al. (2021), also found that teens in romantic relationships, wheter they involved early or late, tend to have higher life satisfaction and are less lonely than single. But, the findings alsa showed that some relationships are often preceded by superficial emotional involvement. Romantic relationships in adolescence are usually shallow, and short in period, lasting for only a few weeks or months without the necessity for commitment (Connolly & McIsaac, 2009). On the other hand, adolescents who are not yet interested in romantic relationships can have the opportunity to live on their terms and conditions and form emotional independence in becoming adults. They also can learn a lot about themselves and be open to growth because they do not have other people to cover up their immaturity (Shah & Mistry, 2020). This shows the dynamics of romantic relationship involvement which is conditional with the influence of several factors, such as previous experience, personality and external environment.

The combination of modernization and the dynamics of the role of parents, especially from the perspective of Eastern culture, makes the findings on the dimensions of involvement in romantic relationships of Balinese adolescents surprising. Adolescents begin to recognize and experience their first romantic relationship at a very young age, even though the general concept understood so far is that parents in Eastern society have a major role in children's lives, including aspects of romantic relationships. Ahmetoglu et al. (Ahmetoglu et al., 2010) found that involvement in romantic relationships in younger adolescents is based on higher passion but lower commitment than that of more mature people. Parents may be the major agent of socialization for teen romance in the collective culture, transferring cultural information about romantic relationships and emphasizing respect for families and the necessity of responsibility. (Seiffge-Krenke & Connolly, 2010). Teenagers in collectivistic communities are less romantically involved, have less romantic experience, and have fewer intimate romantic connections than teenagers in individualistic cultures (Connolly et al., 2014). It may be rooted from Asian cultural values where consideration for starting a relationship related to family ties and arrangements set by parents. Markus and Kitayama in (Li et al., 2010) suggest that by postponing romantic involvement, Asian households lengthen the time when parents have the major impact on their children. Adolescents who want to start a romantic relationship but are constrained by permission or parental supervision choose to undergo the relationship secretly. In certain cultures, such as Latin civilization, early adolescents, particularly in the early phase, are more attentively monitored while socializing with the opposite sex. They tend to keep their love relationships hidden from their families because they are afraid of being forced to end them (O'Sullivan & Meyer-Bahlburg, 2003).

In the context of selecting partners in a romantic relationship, conventions, values, standards, or behaviors were passed down through culture. Adolescents generally have ideal types in determining romantic partners, such as physical appearance, personality characteristics, intelligence, similar interests, social abilities, and religious similarities (Hattori et al., 2013; Regan & Joshi, 2003). On the other hand, for whatever reason, traditional traits became a priority in spouse choosing to meet traditional family expectations, and Lalonde demonstrated dependency self-construal, among Asian participants (2004). It is consistent with the prioritization of religious values in the choosing of spouses (Bernarte et al., 2016), which become a big part of a certain culture. In addition to physical beauty, competence, personality, comparable interests and hobbies, Balinese teenagers consider religion and caste while selecting a love partner. Partner selection, in this case, is directed towards fulfilling cultural and family commitments (Zhang & Kline, 2009). The combination of modernization and the dynamics of the role of parents, especially from the perspective of Eastern culture, makes the findings on the dimensions of involvement in romantic relationships of Balinese adolescents surprising. Adolescents begin to recognize and experience their first romantic relationship at a very young age, even though the general concept understood so far is that parents in Eastern society have a major role in children's lives, including aspects of romantic relationships. Ahmetoglu et al. (2010) found that involvement in romantic relationships in younger adolescents is based on higher passion but lower commitment than that of more mature people. Parents may be the major agent of socialization for teen romance in the collective culture, transferring cultural information about romantic relationships and emphasizing respect for families and the necessity of responsibility (Seiffge-Krenke & Connolly, 2010). Teenagers in collectivistic communities are less romantically involved, have less romantic experience, and have fewer intimate romantic connections than teenagers in individualistic cultures. (Connolly et al., 2014). It had to do with Asian cultural beliefs, which give parents' consideration in particular more

weight when beginning a relationship including family ties and arrangements. Markus and Kitayama in (Li et al., 2010) suggest that by postponing romantic involvement, Asian households lengthen the time when parents have the major impact on their children. Early adolescents in some cultures, such as Latin civilization, are more closely observed when socializing with the opposite sex. For fear of being compelled to end them, they frequently keep their romantic connections a secret from their families (O'Sullivan & Meyer-Bahlburg, 2003). Western families, on the other hand, encourage individuality by enabling adolescents to behave as autonomous agents in their relationships. They encourage their children by letting them to pursue romantic relationships on their own terms. Adolescents who are confined by parental approval or supervision decide to pursue the connection covertly.

Dhariwal & Connolly (2013) suggest that adolescents experience variety of autonomy in selecting their partner based on their cultural background. In collectivistic cultures, families are often involved in the mate selection process, where parents screen and find partners who are considered appropriate and match the qualities that match cultural and family standards (Bejanyan et al., 2014). Meanwhile, in western societies, dating starts in teenage years, provided with autonomy in selecting the partners and less necessity for commitment. Individualistic people often view romantic partnerships as exclusive bonds made between two people who are attracted to each other and love each other while also meeting their own need (Moore & Leung, 2001). Therefore, the characteristic desired in a spouse is a personal matter resulting from one's ideals and subjective preferences. Western youths start to experiment with many types of relationships through dating, and their parents typically support them in doing so. In order to ensure compatibility and shared interests with their partners, Westerners are required to start the dating process (Bejanyan et al., 2014).

In Balinese adolescents, in addition to preferences that are influenced by their belief in tradition, the selection of romantic partners generally refers to their personal preferences, which aim to fulfil their individual needs about the ideal partner figure, often apart from efforts to seek referrals from family members, including parents. In addition, the role of media such as television, magazines, songs, and social media on the internet has made passionate love popular, further promoting autonomy among adolescents in choosing partners. Adolescents can adapt local culture to other cultures they accept, intending to meet their needs (Sugiyanto et al., 2020).

In the dimension of activity in romantic relationships, Balinese teenagers have a number of activities that are carried out together with their partners, such as recreational activities, religious activities by doing worship together, activities in the school environment with partners who are school friends, to moves to introduce parents at school. House. Free time spent with partners in satisfying and stress-free activities was positively related to the quality of romantic relationships (Dobson & Ogolsky, 2022; Girme et al., 2014). Activities carried out by individuals with their partners can facilitate closeness and help maintain relationships (Girme et al., 2014), including recreational activities in nature with romantic partners, which will affect satisfaction in relationships (Sumner, 2020). In addition, for Balinese youth, praying together with their partner is an everyday activity. Activities with religious nuances can positively influence the well-being of relationships, break negative cycles and facilitate positive thoughts, including promoting problem-solving and reconciliation in conflict contexts (Ogolsky et al., 2017).

The relationship content dimension also reveals Balinese adolescent's sexual behavior during dating which seems quite surprising to occur in Eastern culture society. Concerning sexuality, there is no doubt that romantic relationships play an essential role in the development of

adolescent sexuality. This is because romantic relationships are the primary context for sexual behavior and learning about sexuality (Furman & Shaffer, 2003). When the modernization greatly influences the adolescents' perspective and behavior and on the other hand there is a decreasing parental supervision, the dynamic of romantic relationships contents becomes uncontrollable. This is where parents step up to provide risk prevention and guidance for their teenage children. Parents and teens can disagree about choosing friends or social activities to participate in. In terms of romantic relationships, parents may want to control them because of the risks associated with sexual behaviour where adolescents wish to preside over these personal matters (Furman & Shaffer, 2003). Most parents apply dating rules to gain knowledge about adolescent dating activities, prohibit the unwanted activity, or suggest desired behaviour (Madsen, 2008). Confident parenting, adolescents' openness, and a close parent and child relationships can protect adolescents from risky behavior (Kapetanovic et al., 2019).

Adolescent activity in dating is also inseparable from perceptions of involvement and activity in romantic relationships by peers. This can predict the seriousness of relationships forged by adolescents (Furman & Winkles, 2010), including its relation to sexual behaviour in romantic relationships (Suleiman & Deardorff, 2015). Peers influence and motivate adolescent sexual relationships and behaviour, build popularity and social status, and create relationship norms and expectations (Suleiman & Deardorff, 2015).

The research results show that technological developments, including social media, have an essential role in a relationship. Besides helping couples who are far apart stay connected, technology plays a role in a variety of processes, including the formation of romantic relationships and maintenance of romantic relationships. Partners report that sending text messages is a comfortable, controlled, and private way to maintain a connection with their partners (Ogolsky et al., 2017). In particular, social media has provided new tools and opportunities for romantic couples to build their relationships and communicate them to others, especially by enabling teams to post publicly about their commitments, including to quickly initiate or avoid romantic interactions, present shared memories, build a sense of togetherness, up to editing online content about their partner (Goldberg et al., 2022). Online communication positively affects relationship satisfaction and closeness, but only for those for whom online communication is essential (Sullivan et al., 2020).

In the dimension of relationship quality, in general, the relationships that began solely from curiosity about the partner or the kind of the relationship itself could lead to irresponsible behavior. However, relationships that began at a fairly mature age can have a positive influence on adolescents, such as the increasing of learning motivation and also psychological maturity. Shared experiences with romantic partners influence career plans and aspirations possessed by adolescents (Furman & Shaffer, 2003), as well as the emergence of beliefs and expectations about how life will be in the future based on past relationship experiences (Furman & Simon, 2014). Avilés et al. (2021) suggests that diverse backgrounds in adolescent romantic relationships significantly affect individual long-term and short-term subjective well-being. In addition, the quality of romantic relationships is related to psychological well-being, such as resilience in dealing with situations that are unfavourable for individuals (Akgül et al., 2022). In particular, romantic relationships substantially affect psychological well-being due to increased emotion and cognition in these close relationships (Kansky, 2018). In love relationships, ongoing emotional conflict can lead to psychological and emotional tiredness and raise the danger of unpleasant feelings. Teens' feeling of self-worth, on the other hand, might be increased through romantic relationships. They will discover how to look out for one another

and preserve close bonds, which will help them build their interpersonal abilities. (Honghao et al., 2021). This also shows that the relationship quality dimension is closely related to emotional and cognitive experiences in romantic relationships, so the discussion in this section will comprehensively cover both of these dimensions.

Furman & Shaffer (2003) suggest that romantic relationships and their quality influence how adolescents perceive themselves; adolescents with a positive experience will see themselves as an attractive partner, whereas adolescents with the opposite occasion will have little confidence to attract partners or build successful relationships. The self-concept formed from this romantic relationship is also related to acceptance of physical appearance and peers. The majority of adolescents viewed experiencing romantic relationship influenced them positively and felt more mature from the various emotional dynamics in their relationship. Positive experiences in romantic relationships are related to the characteristics of romantic relationships where the majority are characterized by affection, love, and tenderness (Quittschalle & Herzberg, 2017), where the relationship between attachment behaviors and displays of respect in romantic relationships is mediated by love itself. (Dillow et al., 2014). Individuals in romantic relationships are more likely to feel happy as a result of this experience than people are not (Bao, 2012).

Negative experiences in romantic relationships are often related to the occurrence of more and more intensive conflicts than when adolescents are not in a romantic relationship (Furman & Shaffer, 2003). Some of the negative experiences were related to the emergence of negative thoughts about the relationship, such as anxiety about being hurt. Honghao et al. (2021) concluded that romantic interactions pose various challenges for adolescents, including contributing to emotional instability, which affects academic performance and interpersonal skills. High stress and anxiety in romantic relationships, in turn, have a very high risk of causing decreased academic performance (Bernales & Colonia, 2012; Gouda & D'Mello, 2021; Honghao et al., 2021). In addition, low academic performance is also caused because they cannot balance time between romantic and academic relationships (Bernales & Colonia, 2012). Another negative experience relates to the dilemma between friendships and romantic relationships, where sometimes choices between peers and romantic relationships become a source of conflict between adolescents and peers or with their partners (Furman & Shaffer, 2003). Peer groups become less critical when romantic relationships are prioritized, although, on the other hand, peer romantic relationships can be a reference for activities in relationships (Suleiman & Deardorff, 2015). Shah & Mistry (2020) found that adolescents in romantic relationships show emotional immaturity and tend to run away from conversations important for the growth of their relationship or the future. They also show shallow emotional closeness. In times of stress, they withdraw instead of providing support, and they do not like to compromise and want everything as they see fit. They become defensive at the slightest criticism, so there is little chance of overcoming problems in the relationship. They do not like to be responsible for their actions, are self-centred, tend to hold grudges and affect their productivity. Furthermore, to improve the quality of relationships from experience with a partner, teenagers can learn to manage their behaviour or regulate their emotions (Farley & Kim-Spoon, 2014). To maintain a higher quality relationship, the partner performs conflict management, has a forgiving demeanour, shows sacrifice, and attempts to cope on both sides, including having gratitude (Ogolsky et al., 2017).

One of the other findings in the dimension of the quality of romantic relationships is that nowadays, young girls are more assertive and egalitarian in showing their emotional expressions to men. Whereas in Eastern culture, parents generally impose more control over girls than

boys, which causes adolescent boys to be more comfortable with intimate feelings compared to teenage girls (Moore & Leung, 2001). It has been proposed that young girls' self-image is directly tied to their relationship concept, aside from the impact of globalization, which impacts increased openness in interactions. They invest more time, passion, and effort into developing and sustaining romantic relationships (Honghao et al., 2021). This, in turn, causes romantic relationships to have a more substantial impact on teenage girls due to their higher risk of experiencing negative emotions and their effect on interpersonal skills (Honghao et al., 2021).

Conclusions

It has long been thought of as a sign of puberty that teens have a greater interest in romantic relationships. Teenagers' daily lives now include romantic interactions, and attempting to have romantic relationships or having romantic feelings is a key sign of adolescent experiences (Honghao et al., 2021). Adolescents' emotional health is significantly impacted by romantic interactions (Janardhana & Manjula, 2020). Romantic partnerships typically have a unique intensity compared to the majority of other peer interactions; they are typically characterized by recent or predicted displays of affection and sexual behavior. Indeed, there are actions that are both sexual and affective at the same time.

The romantic experiences of Balinese adolescents are influenced by the interpersonal setting, in this case, the parental role and the presence of modernity due to the influence of technology advancements. Understanding typical romantic relationship growth patterns is crucial since these connections grow within historical and cultural contexts and are influenced by social and technical development (Ogolsky et al., 2017). Adolescent romance, on the other hand, should be viewed as a normal physiological development and a crucial chance for teenagers to learn how to maintain intimacy and establish a healthy self-concept. (Honghao et al., 2021). In addition, the impact of technological developments, including social media, appears in every dimension of the romantic relationship of the adolescent experience. Digital media has taken root in the lives of adolescents because devices such as cell phones or the internet have become an integral part of their interaction and communication. Adolescents use social media to initiate and develop romantic relationships, which is part of their developmental task, although it comes with actual risks that are more related to individual or contextual factors (Hatchel & Subrahmanyam, 2015; Richards, 2021). In general, the use of social media is related to adolescent satisfaction in establishing romantic relationships (Kewalramani & Hazra, 2018).

In-depth interviews or focused group discussions (FGD) would be preferable to the survey methods utilized in this study for the analysis of the deeper romantic relationship experiences of the two generations. Given that the findings of this study are at odds with the tendency for romantic relationships to change, a more thorough examination of romantic relationships within a cultural context is required. This is related to the study of how Balinese cultural values have changed over time, as well as how each generation's couples have interacted. In this instance, a broader research approach can look into what and how Balinese people's romantic relationships are related to the transmission of values so that they can understand the idea of romantic relationships in modern Balinese society.

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