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# ACADEMIC JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGY AND COUNSELING

Pelatihan Pelajar Hebat Untuk Menurunkan Perilaku  
Tidak Disiplin Siswa SMP Negeri 1 Yogyakarta  
**Ayatullah Kutub Hardew**

Hubungan Antara Efikasi Diri dan Kecemasan Pada  
Mahasiswa Yang Sedang Mengerjakan Skripsi  
**Priscilla Claudia Ruth Telussa, Ratriana Y. E. Kusumiati**

Strategi Bimbingan Karier Melalui Pengembangan  
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SMA Al-Firdaus Sukoharjo  
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Emotion Regulation Strategies In Women  
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**Zaen Musyrifin, Afifah Nur Hanifah**

The Impact of Dating on Mental Health In Adolescents  
**Yunda Fithriyah**



**Fakultas Ushuluddin dan Dakwah  
Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Mas Said Surakarta**

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## THE IMPACT OF DATING ON MENTAL HEALTH IN ADOLESCENTS

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### Abstract

**Keywords:**  
adolescent; dating;  
Islamic teaching;  
mental health

Adolescents still do not realize that many Islamic teachings are established to protect their well-being and mental health. Dating, which is forbidden in Islam, has become more common among adolescents in recent days. Adolescents use love as the main reason for dating. This article aimed to examine the impact of dating on adolescents' mental health. This study used a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. Data was collected through observation and interviews with ten informants aged 19 to 22 (five informants had dated and the others did not). The study found that adolescents who have romantic relationships before marriage have greater stress levels than those who stay single. Prohibiting romantic relationships outside marriage is considered a form of Islamic teaching that safeguards human well-being.

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**Kata kunci:**  
remaja;  
hubungan  
percintaan di  
luar pernikahan;  
peraturan agama  
Islam; kesehatan  
mental

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### **Abstrak**

Banyak dari peraturan Islam yang menjaga nilai-nilai kemanusiaan dan menghargai kesehatan mental manusia yang masih tidak disadari oleh para remaja. Hubungan percintaan di luar pernikahan (berpacaran), yang dilarang oleh ajaran Islam, semakin dianggap wajar di masa kini. Para remaja menggunakan cinta sebagai alasan utama untuk berpacaran. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menelaah dampak berpacaran terhadap kesehatan mental remaja. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi dan wawancara terhadap sepuluh informan berusia 19 hingga 22 tahun (lima informan berpacaran dan lima lainnya tidak). Hasil penelitian ini membuktikan bahwa remaja yang berpacaran memiliki tingkat stres yang lebih tinggi daripada remaja yang tidak melakukannya. Larangan menjalin percintaan sebelum menikah dapat disimpulkan sebagai bentuk ajaran Islam untuk menjaga kesehatan mental manusia.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Islam is a religion that promotes submission, subservience, salvation, and nobility of mind. Islam introduces rules to help people differentiate between good and bad actions (Noorhayati & Fata, 2017). Current research reveals that many Islamic scriptures cover human prosperity, welfare, and mental health (Hibban, 2022).



World Health Organization states, “Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well, and work well.” Mental health is more than the absence of mental disorders or disabilities (World Health Organization, 2022). Many recent studies elaborate on how religiosity – reciting the Holy Quran and devotion to Islamic teachings – may build mental health, neutralize stress, and enhance the level of sincerity or happiness (Cohen & Koenig, 2004; Koenig, 2009, 2012; Koenig & Al-Shohaib, 2014, 2017; Moreira-Almeida, Lotufo Neto, & Koenig, 2006). As mentioned in the Qur’an in Chapter Ar-Ra’d verse 28, “Those who believe and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah.” It can be attested through compliance with Islamic teachings, and remembering God is the best way to discover peace of heart (Samsuddin, Misbahuddin, Hamka, & Ardi, 2021).

On the other hand, many young Muslims do not believe that complying with Islamic teachings will benefit their mental health. Adolescents experience emotional fluctuations amid the self-identity searching process and hormonal changes. Moreover, many adolescents have romantic relationships before marriage, known as dating. A recent study shows that dating is considered normal for adolescents, including Muslim teenagers, even though they recognize that it contradicts Islamic teachings (Sumarno & Rosidin, 2022).

Adolescence is the developmental transition from childhood to adulthood. In this phase, adolescents experience significant changes, physically or mentally (Zhang, Cao, Feng, & Yang, 2020). They also experience heightened physical symptoms and instability in emotions, which results from the process of apprehending their entity (Damayanti, Trisus, Yunanti, Ingrit, & Panjaitan, 2022; Indriyani & Aniroh, 2023; Salianto, Zebua, Suherry, & Halijah, 2022). Because of hormonal changes, adolescents also possess high curiosity and a desire to try new things (Dung, Samuel, & Yashim, 2022; Kar,



Choudhury, & Singh, 2015). Adolescents see an increasing production of luteinizing hormone, which stimulates the Leydig cell to produce testosterone, resulting in lust and sexual desire (Herissone-Kelly, 2022). As adolescents experience a strong desire for affection, they cope by searching for somebody to give them attention and comfort. Most adolescents establish and gather social circles, including dating (Ikhsanudin, 2022).

Dating in adolescents is mainly caused by their desire for a support system, motivation, and curiosity toward the commitment of love itself. According to The Indonesian Adolescent Reproductive Health Survey, 25% of adolescents begin dating at 12. Furthermore, 92% of adolescents in romantic relationships engage in “skinship” or physical touch with partners, such as holding a hand, and 82% have kissed their dates. The National Family Planning Healthy Agency reported that 63% of adolescents have engaged in “petting” or touching sexual organs (Ratnawati & Astari, 2019). Adolescents consider these actions as a form of love affirmation.

Falling in love is a normal psychological symptom for humans (Sternberg & Weis, 2008), influencing one’s cognition and emotion. Because of complex chemical reactions, love can induce euphoria, ecstasy, and even obsession (Bruni, 2021). Dopamine and serotonin are humans’ most active hormones when they fall in love (Fisher, 2005). Dopamine is associated with ecstasy, increasing one’s focus and proneness to addiction (Turton & Lingford-Hughes, 2016). Addiction is showcased by the feeling of longing for the loved one. Dopamine correlates with testosterone, a sex-linked hormone, with dopamine increasing the level of testosterone (Fisher, 2005). However, love can also induce negative emotions like sorrow, fear, and anxiety. It can cause stress in humans.

Stress is a negative psychological state triggered by various life challenges (Zhang et al., 2020). Although stress can be beneficial

in certain cases, a high stress level can make individuals develop psychological symptoms like depression, anxiety, antsy, irritability, sleeping difficulty, and lack of concentration (Fransisca, 2021). The American Psychological Association (APA) divides stress into three categories. First, acute stress (Bloomfield, McCutcheon, Kempton, Freeman, & Howes, 2019), which is mostly caused by negative thinking from demands in life; whether it is from the past, present, or the near future (Greco et al., 2021). Acute stress usually happens in a short period and does not need further treatment.

Second, episodic acute stress, which has more prolonged symptoms than acute stress. The duration of episodic acute stress is usually around three months or less. The effects of episodic acute stress are anxiety, impatience, exhaustion, migraine, and a compromised immune system. Third, chronic stress, which requires long-term treatment. Chronic stress is detrimental to physical and mental health, even associated with several metabolic diseases (Chesnut et al., 2021). This type of stress may result from highly stressful life events, such as unemployment, long-term poverty, failed romantic relationships, and unhappy marriages (Freshwater, 2018). Chronic stress may trigger demoralization and fatigue, a symptom linked to depression (Niederhauser et al., 2022). The onset of chronic stress may range from three to four months or more (Sanguino-Gómez et al., 2022).

A study by Pramitha (2019). revealed that adolescents develop negative psychological symptoms following failed romantic relationships, such as distress, anxiety, unstable emotion, antsiness, and resentment. However, Muslim adolescents said they became more devoted to religious teaching after the fallout (Pramitha, 2019). A previous study in adults also revealed that broken romantic relationships also lower happiness and increase stress (González-Ramírez, Landero-Hernández, Quezada-Berumen, & Ibarra-González, 2017).

To conclude, romantic love can trigger various emotional reactions in humans. Adolescents, who are in the phase of emotional instability, will likely experience intense emotional reactions following a relationship failure. They will also see the discrepancy between the reality (failed relationship) and their ideal (e.g., bringing the romantic relationship to matrimony). It triggers psychological symptoms, such as anxiety and the fear of getting left behind by the loved one.

Psychologist Erich Fromm wrote in “The Art of Loving” that love needs commitment, patience, willingness to give, faith, sincerity, unconditional acceptance, and apprehension. When love only relies on feeling, it will only last for a short term, as feelings quickly come and go, meaning that love is a solid commitment to compromising life for each other (Fromm, 2006). Islamic teachings cover the importance of a solid commitment in marriage (Ahmad, Leleang, Maloko, Musyahid, & Amin, 2022). According to the teaching, establishing marriage based on Islamic laws enables prosperity in the relationship (Hasim, Diab, & Ridha, 2022). Islamic teachings encompass the responsibility of the wife and husband, financial support (*nafkah*), divorce proceeding (*talaq*), and resolution to divorce request by the wife (*khuluk'*) (Ashari & Fatimatuzzahro, 2022), which premarital romantic relationships do not provide safeguards for.

## **METHODS**

This study employed a qualitative approach, using a descriptive phenomenological method to describe the informants' experiences (Sundler, Lindberg, Nilsson, & Palmér, 2019). The authors collected data via interviews and observation. The interview aimed to discover informants' views on dating and religion and the implications on their mental health. The observation was used to complement the interview data. There are two groups of informants. First, five informants aged 19 to 22, were in committed relationships and reported a medium

level of devotion to Islamic teachings. The second, five informants aged 19 to 22, were single and reported strong adherence to religious teachings. In order to obtain accurate data, the researcher re-confirmed the informants' responses and observation data at the end of data collection (Sundler et al., 2019).

Table 1.  
Characteristics Of Research Informants

No	Initial	Age	Gender	Relationship status	Stress Level
1	ISA	21	Male	Dating	High
2	IS	19	Male	Dating	Medium
3	LL	21	Female	Dating	High
4	DW	21	Female	Dating	Medium
5	AZ	21	Female	Dating	High
6	KAA	22	Male	Single	Absence
7	UA	19	Female	Single	Absence
8	LN	21	Female	Single	Low
9	MH	22	Male	Single	Low
10	NH	21	Male	Single	Low

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Researchers gained insights into how dating affects adolescents' mental health from the data. To conclude, adolescents who do not commit to romantic relationships and firmly adhere to religious teachings tend to report lower stress levels.

### *The Way Dating Triggers Stress In Adolescents*

This research addressed the way dating may evoke mental strains in adolescents. Adolescents dealing with psychological pressures caused by conflicts in their romantic relationships will have higher stress levels and lower well-being, affecting their daily life and task performance. Conflict in a relationship may come in the form of breaking up or romantic betrayal.

First, stress in adolescents may be caused by relationship problems. ISA, AZ, and LL reported having chronic stress, while IS and DW suffered from episodic acute stress due to conflicts with their romantic partners.

*“I got dumped by someone I loved the most, at the time. The worst thing was my ex-girlfriend betrayed me, she cheated behind my back and I caught her with another guy and looked at her message history on her social media account. At the time, I did not know what to do. I was a mess, I did not know where to go with life, I felt unmotivated to do anything, my body was weak and I did not have any energy to do my daily activity. I lost 15 kilograms, felt pain in my chest, and I got a headache. I lost my appetite, I just ate potatoes on my bed, I just spend my whole day at the time oversleeping. I could completely move on in twelve months, nine months to move on, and three months to recover from the aftermath. I still feel the trauma from that experience even if I’m with another girl, I fear that my girlfriend right now will betray me like before.” (ISA, Personal Communication, October 28, 2021).*

*“I broke up with someone I love. I got sick. I’m also typically someone who writes my to-do list in each day, and when I had problem with my boyfriend I missed my daily schedule, cried, lost appetite, became unproductive, certainly this incident carried over to my subconsciousness. I cried in my sleep. I am still reeling from the experience, I think, I feel worry about building a new relationship. I keep asking myself if the same thing will happen. It lasted for about four months.” (LL, Personal Communication, October 28, 2021).*

*“I was feeling gloomy, unmotivated, weeping, and stressed out, because my boyfriend used to force me for the sake of our relationship. Thus, I felt big pressure in the relationship, until I decided to end it, although I knew it would affect my mental health, like I got stressed, trauma, pain, and broken heart. And I needed five months to recover from the pain.” (AZ, Personal Communication, October 28, 2021)*

IS and DW experienced episodic acute stress when encountering problems in their romantic relationships.

*"When I broke up with my girlfriend, I lost the desire to do anything, felt loneliness, sadness, broken heart, trauma, and stressed out. I was scared to begin a new relationship, and I stayed in this condition before moving on for around one month. To recover, I did self-healing activities, such as going on holiday." (IS, Personal Communication, October 28, 2021).*

*"When I got a problem with my boyfriend, I felt unmotivated to do my tasks, my daily activities. I cried several times. My mind was occupied by it throughout the day, but I recovered in a month." (DW, Personal Communication, October 28, 2021).*

Based on the data, adolescents who date at a young age develop some negative psychological symptoms. ISA, LL, and AZ long-term symptoms, meaning that their stress level can be categorized as chronic stress (Sanguino-Gómez et al., 2022).

ISA needed eleven months to recover from the experience fully, receiving treatment from a psychologist for the last three months. He developed psychological and biological symptoms. He felt distressed and unmotivated. He also lost his appetite and shed 15 kilograms of his weight. He admitted to experiencing trauma following his failed relationship, saying he still avoided events that could trigger his memory about the past. AZ, experienced the symptoms in a shorter period than ISA, about five months. She experienced distress in her relationship because she lost her freedom. She said she was depressed and sad for a long time. Meanwhile, LL experienced hopelessness and demotivation. She admitted crying, even in her sleep, when recalling her dating experience. The situation lasted for about four months.

DW and IS developed episodic acute stress following their failed romantic relationships. Episodic acute stress is marked by hopelessness, a desire to escape from stressful situations, and demotivation in

less than three months duration (Freshwater, 2018). DW and IS also admitted to losing their appetite for a while. They decided to find ways to cope with their problems. DW found a new person to date. Meanwhile, IS said he went on vacations.

Individuals may also develop stress when in a relationship, as it interferes with their daily life. They may spend a long time communicating or meeting their romantic partners, leading to a disorganized schedule. Unfinished tasks and other life obligations will eventually lead to stress in these individuals.

*"I certainly spend twelve hours in a day to chat or communicate with my girlfriend."* (IS, Personal Communication, October 28, 2021).

*"I usually spend up to seven hours to communicate through social media with my boyfriend. It has become a habit me so I have difficulty to stop. Honestly, it disrupts my learning process, and my task."* (DW, Personal Communication, October 28, 2021).

DW and IS reported spending more than six hours daily communicating with their romantic partners. When someone is in love, dopamine production is elevated, leading to hyper-attention and addiction (Turton & Lingford-Hughes, 2016). A person in love will see an intense need to see or interact with their loved one. That is why the person will spend hours communicating with their loved one, even if it disrupts their daily activities, resulting in anxiety and stress for failing to complete tasks.

Conflicts in dating can trigger stress in adolescents. However, breaking up with partners can lead to more stress. Dating may also reduce adolescents' productivity. Meanwhile, in Islamic teachings, romantic relationships (in the form of marriage) are supposed to enhance mental health and welfare. Islam manages the role of the wife and husband, such finance (*nafkah*), divorce proceedings (*talak*), and divorce complaints by the wife (*khuluk*), which is not regulated in dating.



## ***Islam's View On Dating Supports Mental Health***

This study examined why adolescents decided not to date and how their single life affected their mental health.

*"Love is natural in every human. I know that romantic relationships before marriage is forbidden in Islam, like khalwat. I avoid dating because I believe in Islamic teachings. I still do not have plans to marry. And dating is a waste of time. I still want to focus on my own life, my future and my aspirations. I love my life right now. I just savor what God has granted to me." (KAA, Personal Communication, October 28, 2021).*

*"Dating is haram in Islam as cited in verse of the Qur'an, 'don't you approach adultery.' It is also a waste of time, I think, and my energy. I don't have feelings to anyone right now. And the other reason is my parents do not allow me to do that, so right now is still want to focus on my ambition. I feel comfortable with my life right now. I also don't have any symptoms. But certainly, I'm worried about my duties, such as thesis. That makes me feel a bit pressured, but it is an only for short time." (UA, Personal Communication, October 28, 2021).*

*"Dating before marriage, even in common in adolescents, is haram. We don't have clear purposes, unlike if we want to marry someone. But falling in love is allowed as long as we control it. I had a feeling for someone, but I never expressed it. I enjoy my life, and now I still want to focus on my ambition and other things. I don't experience mental problems, I just think about my thesis, my future certainly makes me feel a bit stressed, and I'm worried that I can't do it." (MH, Personal Communication, October 28, 2021).*

*"Love is fleeting and dating is forbidden in Islam. I don't have any interest in dating, because it wastes my time, makes me lose my independence. Somebody will interfere with my life, I dislike that. I enjoy my life, but certainly, I feel depressed about my thesis, when somebody asks me about that, I fear that I can't finish it on time." (LH, Personal Communication, October 28, 2021).*

*“Dating is forbidden in my religion. Of course, when I feel lonely, I want to do it. But I remember that there is a religious teaching I have to obey, and this time also not proper for me. I am busy with my activities, my thesis. I love my life, although certainly, I feel stress because of my thesis. It makes me scared and insecure, sometimes bothering my mind.”* (NH, Personal Communication, October 28, 2021).

KAA, UA, LN, NH, and MH, who were single and reported compliance with Islamic teachings, said they had relatively low stress levels. LN, NH, and MH also said their stress was mostly caused by daily tasks.

KAA revealed why he avoided dating: he wanted to focus on his own life and the future. He said he did not plan on marrying early and considered dating as a distraction to his activities and priorities. KAA also discussed how Islam restricts romantic relationships before marriage.

Meanwhile, UA said she did not date because her parents forbade her from dating. LN revealed that dating could restrain her freedom. She said it would prevent her from building a new relationship for fear of making her partner jealous, interfering with her daily activities. On the other hand, NH said he was initially eager to date, but after considering his Islamic values and how dating did not support his goals, he decided against it.

KAA said he did not experience negative psychological symptoms like depression and insecurity. Meanwhile, LN, NH, and MH were categorized as experiencing acute stress based on the scale of the stress (Bloomfield et al., 2019), which is mostly caused by life demands like approaching deadlines (Freshwater, 2018). Acute stress can improve over time without psychological treatment.

NH said that he often had negative thoughts about his tasks, which triggered psychological symptoms like stress and insecurity in a short duration. However, he confessed that these symptoms did

not interfere with his daily activities. Meanwhile, MH revealed his psychological symptoms were triggered by anxiety toward the future, related to assignments and thesis. LN also had a lower level of stress due to daily tasks.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

### *Conclusions*

Dating is considered normal by many Muslim adolescents. Adolescents engage in romantic relationships because they need a support system and motivation. The present research addresses how dating can trigger psychological disorders in adolescents, such as distress. APA categorizes stress into three levels: a) acute stress, the lowest level and only occurs in the short term; b) episodic acute stress, which is the medium level and marked by prolonged symptoms; and c) chronic stress, the highest level of stress and may require further treatment. Stress may be triggered by certain events in life, such as unemployment, poverty, broken relationships, and unhappy marriage.

The researchers conducted observations and interviews to obtain data. Ten people aged 19 to 22 participated in the study; five were dating at the time of research, while the others were single. Adolescents with high stress levels due to romantic relationship problems may encounter difficulties performing daily tasks.

On the contrary, single informants reported lower stress levels than those committed in relationships. Some decided not to date because it could affect their daily activities and life goals, while others referred to Islamic teachings, which forbid dating. This result implies that Islamic teachings support adolescents' mental health in the context of dating.

### *Suggestions*

Islamic teachings offer benefits for those who follow them, such as assurance of well-being. As elaborated in this research, adolescents who comply with Islamic teachings and avoid dating display lower stress levels than those committed to romantic relationships before marriage. This study still had some limitations that future research could improve.

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