

## Emotional Regulation and Toxic Relationships in Late Teens Who Date

**Rizka Fauzia Herdiani, Dede Rahmat Hidayat**

Faculty of Psychology, Bhayangkara University, Indonesia

[202010515082@mhs.ubharajaya.ac.id](mailto:202010515082@mhs.ubharajaya.ac.id)

### Article Information

Submitted: 02 November  
2023

Accepted: 05 November  
2023

Online Publish: 20  
November 2023

### Abstract

**Introduction:** In dating individuals will be faced with problems in relationships where not a few individuals solve them with acts of violence. Dating violence is an indication that refers to a toxic relationship. **Objective:** to test whether emotional regulation is related to the level of toxic relationships in dating relationships in late adolescents dating in Bekasi City. **Method:** This study uses a quantitative approach with a correlational method. The instruments used to collect the data were the emotion regulation scale and the toxic relationship scale. The data were analyzed by non-parametric test techniques using spearman non-parametric correlation test. **Result and Discussion:** A result of  $-0.483^{**}$  and a significance result of  $<0.001$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). **Conclusions:** This study shows the correlation of the two significant variables and produces a negative correlation direction. The higher a person's emotional regulation, the lower the level of toxic relationships, and vice versa.

**Keywords:** Emotion Regulation; Toxic Relationship; Late adolescence; Dating;

## **Introduction**

Dating is a relationship established by two people to get to know each other based on love and love, where they support each other and provide a sense of security and mutual attention (Wongso, 2014; Yani et al., 2021). Dating is often thought of as a cozy relationship with all things exciting, romantic, and fun (Setiawan & Millard, 2022). However, in dating individuals will be faced with conditions that expect them to adjust to their partners (Khairani, 2018). As well as being faced with problems in relationships that not a few individuals solve with acts of violence (Scott & Straus, 2007). The behavior of an abusive, aggressive, and restrictive partner is a type of dating violence (Rini, 2022).

Based on information from the Annual Records (CATAHU) of the National Commission on Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan) 2023, it is stated that dating violence cases during 2022 were ranked first in the type of domestic violence, especially dating violence which reached 3,528 cases, dating violence which reached 3,205 cases, and domestic violence which reached 725 cases (Dewi, 2023). Dating violence can be an indication that refers to an unwanted relationship or what is often referred to as *toxic relationship* (Nihaya et al., 2022).

*Toxic relationship* is a disturbing relationship for oneself and others because it makes individuals feel uncomfortable and aggrieved with several characteristics such as insecurity, jealousy, selfishness, dishonesty, manipulative attitudes, and giving negative comments (Effendy, 2019; Fuller, 2020). McGruder (2018) reveals that there are several forms *toxic relationship*, among them physical violence (*physical abuse*), such as hitting with your hand or with an object. Psychic violence (*mental abuse*), such as cursing, reproaching, threatening, humiliating, vilifying and others that make victims feel a loss of self-confidence, to experience psychic suffering. Sexual violence (*sexual abuse*), such as touching, kissing, sexually harassing the victim, attempting to touch the victim even though it is forbidden by the victim, and having sexual intercourse by forcing and threatening to molest the victim if the victim does not follow her requests. Economic violence, such as extorting or deliberately using victims where individuals will force their partners to work and then take the fruits of their labor.

*Toxic relationship* Can occur in friendships, family, work, and romantic relationships such as dating (Praptiningsih & Son, 2021). The existence of interpersonal interest causes the emergence of interest in dating in adolescence (Pemayun & Wideasavitri, 2015). Adolescence begins at ages 10 to 13 and ends at ages 18 to 22 (Santrock, 2003). This period is characterized by many changes, both physically and emotionally. Adolescence is considered a time of emotional turmoil and imbalance (Gunarsa & Gunarsa, 2008). Given the unstable level of emotions in adolescence, it is important for individuals to have the ability to regulate emotions (Janah, 2015). Because inappropriate emotional responses can cause problems in relationships, the strategy for dealing with such emotional situations is emotional regulation (Iskandar et al., 2021).

Emotion regulation is an adaptive way to respond to emotions, regardless of how intense or reactive they are. This includes receiving emotional responses, controlling behavior when faced with emotional distress, and using emotions functionally as a source of information in certain situations (Gratz & Roemer, 2004). Silaen & Dewi (2015)

defines emotion regulation as an individual's ability to recognize and understand perceived emotions, manage and balance those emotions, and change emotions as needed. This allows a person to motivate himself in the face of difficult situations and get out of difficult conditions. Individuals with emotion regulation abilities can maintain or enhance the emotions they feel, both positive and negative emotions (Iskandar, Minarni & Zubair, 2021).

On research conducted by Janah (2015) explained that adolescence is marked by a high level of emotional stability, so adolescents need to have the ability to regulate their emotions. This includes several factors that need to be embedded in adolescents, such as acceptance of problems that occur, finding positive solutions without involving aggressiveness, correcting yourself, thinking positively, and having confidence to overcome the problems faced. One of the problems often experienced by teenagers is discord in dating relationships, and in situations like this it is important for them to be able to regulate their emotions.

The results of previous studies that discussed the correlation between emotional regulation and dating violence conducted by Megawati et al., (2019) It found that emotion regulation contributed 13% to dating violence, while the remaining 87% was influenced by other factors. The study concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between emotional regulation and dating violence, meaning that when emotional regulation increases, so does violent dating behavior, and vice versa. Meanwhile, according to research Young & Huwae (2022) showed different results to previous findings. In their research, a negative relationship was found between emotion regulation and dating violence, which means that when a person's emotional regulation is low or decreases, there is an increase in the likelihood of dating violence, and vice versa.

Based on the results of the two studies that have been described, there is a correlation between emotional regulation and dating violence. Where dating violence is an indicator of a toxic relationship. And there were also contradictory results regarding the direction of the relationship between emotional regulation and dating violence. In addition, previous research on toxic relationships *has been linked to various other variables such as self-esteem, love components, attachment style, self-esteem, and interpersonal communication, but no one has addressed the link or relationship between emotional regulation and toxic relationships*. Therefore, researchers hypothesize that there is a relationship between emotional regulation and the level of toxic relationships in late adolescents who are dating.

## **Method**

Participants in this study were teenagers who had or were in a dating relationship. Sampling is carried out by *purposive sampling* technique, where samples are taken based on certain criteria that have been previously set. The criteria used are having or are in a dating relationship, aged 17 to 22 years, and domiciled in Bekasi.

In this study, researchers collected 143 respondents. The data collection process in this study was carried out by distributing questionnaires using *Google Form* media

virtually to adolescents who have been and are in a dating relationship from May 31, 2023 to June 6, 2023.

In this study, the variables *toxic relationship* measured by scale *toxic relationship* created based on aspects developed by Fuller (2020) and has been adapted and tested by Yani (2020) with a reliability value of  $\alpha = 0.902$ . While the emotion regulation variable is measured using an emotion regulation scale made based on the aspects proposed by Gratz & Roemer (2004) and has been adapted and tested by Home (2022) with a reliability value of  $\alpha = 0.908$ .

In this study, several data analysis techniques were used to provide an overview and test the relationship between variables. First, descriptive analysis is carried out to determine the characteristics of respondents' answers so that the demographic profile of respondents in this study can be known. Furthermore, an assumption test is carried out as a prerequisite where there are assumptions that must be met before choosing a correlation analysis technique. The assumption test carried out in this study is a normality test and a linearity test. Furthermore, to test the hypothesis, a *non-parametric* correlation analysis technique is used, namely *spearman* correlation. All data analysis techniques were carried out using *IBM SPSS Statistics 27* software.

## Result and Discussion

### Result

In this study, the demographic profile of respondents was obtained which is explained in Table 1 in percentage amount, which contains the characteristics of research respondents including gender, age, and status.

**Table 1**  
Demographic Profile of Respondents

	Profile	Sum	Presented
Jenis Kelamin	Man	36	25,2%
	Woman	107	74,8%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100%</b>
Age	17 Years	2	1,4%
	18 Years	4	2,8%
	19 Years	4	2,8%
	20 Years	42	29,4%
	21 Years	65	45,5%
	22 Years	26	18,2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100%</b>
Status	Ever Dating	74	51,7%
	Dating	69	48,3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on the demographic profile in Table 1, it can be seen that the respondents of this study were dominated by women (74.8%), and respondents were more than late adolescents with the age of 21 years (45.5%). In addition, it can be seen that more respondents have been in a relationship (51.7%) than those who are currently dating (48.3%).

**Table 2**  
Descriptive Data

Variable	Mean	SD
<b>Emotion Regulation</b>	95,78	16,9
<i>Toxic Relationship</i>	62,83	24,08

Based on the results of descriptive analysis of research variables in Table 2, descriptive data were obtained for emotion regulation variables with a mean value of 95.78 and a standard deviation of 16.9. While the *toxic relationship* variable got an average value (mean) of 62.83 and a standard deviation value of 24.08.

**Table 3**  
Assumption Test Results

Variable	Normality Test	Uji Linearitas
	<i>Kolmogorov-Smirnov</i>	<i>Deviation Linearity</i>
<b>Emotion Regulation</b>	0,200	0,290
<i>Toxic Relationship</i>	<0,001	0,290
<b>Information</b>	Unfulfilled	Fulfilled

Based on the results of the assumption test above, normality test results were obtained with a significance value of 0.200 for the emotional regulasli scale and <0.001 for the *toxic relationship* scale on the *Kolmogorov-Smirnov* table which means that in the emotion regulation variable the data produced is normally distributed, while in the *toxic relationship* variable indicates data that is not normally distributed. Then in the linearity test, a significance value of  $0.290 > 0.05$  was obtained in the *deviation linearity* table, which means that the relationship between the two variables in this study is linear. Furthermore, because the basic assumption test requirements are not met, the next step is to categorize research respondents and correlation tests using a *non-parametric* correlation test, namely the *Rank-spearman* correlation test.

**Table 4**  
Spearman Correlation Test Results

Variable		Emotion Regulation	<i>Toxic Relationship</i>
<b>Emotion Regulation</b>	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	- 0,483**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	< 0,001
	N	143	143
<i>Toxic Relationship</i>	Correlation Coefficient	- 0,483**	1,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	< 0,001	-
	N	143	143

\*\*Significant correlation at 0.01 (2-tailed) level

Based on Table 4, the results of correlation tests conducted on emotion regulation variables and *toxic relationship* Using Spearman's non-parametric correlation test, a correlation coefficient value of -0.483\*\* and a significance value of <0.001 ( $p < 0.01$ ) were obtained, which means that the relationship between the two variables is significant and the direction of correlation in the relationship is negative. A negative relationship means

that the higher the individual's emotional regulation ability, the lower the level *toxic relationship*, conversely, if the lower the ability of emotion regulation, the higher the level *toxic relationship*. Based on the categorization of relationship strength by Sugiyono (2015) Large correlation coefficient between emotion regulation variables and *toxic relationship* belongs to the category "medium".

## **Discussion**

From these results, it can be concluded that the researcher fulfills the hypothesis or  $H_a$  is acceptable, that is, there is a relationship between emotional regulation and the level of *toxic relationship* in late adolescence dating. Meanwhile, and  $H_0$  was rejected that there was no relationship between emotion regulation and levels *toxic relationship* in late adolescence dating. This supports research conducted by Young & Huwae (2022) which states that one of the trigger factors for dating violence is low emotional regulation ability, and in his research also showed that the results were negative.

From this study it was concluded that individuals have a level of *toxic relationship*. If it is low, then late adolescent individuals need to have high emotional regulation. Thus, it can be known the impact of low or lack of emotional regulation ability in adolescents leads to aggressiveness behavior (Janah, 2015).

Mawardah & Adiyanti (2014) explained that in the formation of a person's social competence in carrying out his life, there is an ability to regulate emotions that play a role so that individuals as social beings can establish good relationships with others. Research conducted by Winnaiseh (2017) Also supports the results of this study related to the age of respondents who are in late adolescence, where at the age of 18 adolescents tend to have low regulation so that many cases of violence occur. This period of emotional and distress will decrease as adolescence ends which is marked by mature emotional development so that late adolescents begin to be able to control their emotions appropriately and form better behaviors and experiences.

## **Toxic relationships are used as a means of emotional venting**

Based on the theory put forward by Nihaya et al., (2022) states that dating violence is indicative of an unhealthy relationship (*toxic relationship*). Then further this research states that many make *toxic relationship* As a place to vent emotions that are not channeled properly, where there is psychic trauma that makes a person driven to take action against others.

Where in dating relationships there are often problems such as jealousy of one party, differences in personality, differences in views on something, differences in character, and the wishes of a partner that are not approved by one party. All of these problems can make the relationship at the point of contention. *Toxic relationships* are closely related to emotional experiences that experience it, where someone who experiences abuse will have an impact on his personal life and also on his mental health.



**Categorization of respondents on emotional regulation variables and toxic relationships**

**Table 5**

Categorization of respondents on emotion regulation variables

<b>Categorization</b>	<b>Value Limit</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Presented</b>
Low	< 65	5	3,5%
Keep	65 – 103	96	67,1%
Tall	> 103	42	29,4%
<b>Total</b>		<b>143</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 6**

Categorization of Respondents on *Toxic Relationship Variables*

<b>Categorization</b>	<b>Value Limit</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Presented</b>
Low	< 87	108	75,5%
Keep	87 - 93	20	14%
Tall	> 93	15	10,5%
<b>Total</b>		<b>143</b>	<b>100%</b>

In this study, categorization data was also obtained in Table 5, where the results of the emotion regulation variable categorization test, respondents who had low emotion regulation ability amounted to 5 people (3.5%), while those who had moderate emotion regulation ability amounted to 96 people (67.1%) and respondents who had high emotion regulation ability amounted to 42 people (29.4%). From the results of these calculations, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents in this study are in the medium category.

This means that respondents have a fairly good ability to regulate emotions when they are in a dating relationship, so they can control their emotions and can resolve conflicts while avoiding aggressive behavior so as not to hurt their partner. These results are in line with research Janah (2015), which states that individuals who have good emotional regulation skills will be able to resolve interpersonal conflicts without engaging in aggressive behavior.

Meanwhile, in Table 6, the results of the toxic relationship variable categorization test *found that respondents with a low toxic relationship level amounted to 108 people (75.5%), while respondents with a moderate toxic relationship level amounted to 20 people (14%) and respondents with a toxic relationship level height amounted to 15 people (10.5%).* It can be concluded that respondents in this study are more in the low category, which means that respondents do not commit violence to their partners, both verbal and physical violence, and are not manipulative towards their partners.

Therefore, respondents in this study tend to have healthy relationships that are not characterized by behaviors that harm their partners. In accordance with the theory McGruder (2018) which states that the relationship is known as *toxic relationship* is a relationship in which there are conditions such as physical and verbal abuse, as well as manipulative attitudes that make their partners uncomfortable and tormented.

The emotional regulation of respondents who fall into this moderate category is likely to be influenced because respondents have a way to stay calm when provoked by emotions, seek wisdom from every event that occurs, accept the situation or condition that is being faced even though it is not in accordance with expectations, and can understand the emotions that are being felt when upset. It is supported by Megawati et al., (2019) which explains that good emotional regulation requires fundamental skills such as awareness and emotional acceptance so as to be able to control one's emotions and be able to achieve the desired goals in a positive way or in other words not with aggressive behavior.

Low level *toxic relationship* In the study, it was most likely influenced because respondents did not experience physical violence such as hitting, scratching, slapping, and others. Respondents are also not restricted in using social media or to gather with friends, do not experience verbal abuse such as berating or saying rude, and are not threatened to follow the wishes of their partners. It is supported by Nabila et al., (2022) which explains that in *toxic relationship* There is someone who makes their partner feel limited so that their partner feels pressured and threatened.

### **Emotional regulation as a shield to avoid toxic relationships**

From the results of the categorization above, the emotional regulation variable obtained moderate results or can be said to be good and the *toxic relationship* variable obtained low results. Where respondents in this study can still control their emotions so as not to commit violence and not be manipulative in solving a problem in a dating relationship. This also means that respondents in this study do not experience and carry out emotional behaviors that are vented to their partners that can hurt their partners physically or psychologically, so as to create a healthy relationship or in other words not a *toxic relationship*. Individuals who have emotional regulation that is quite even high then the level of *toxic relationships* is low, *because they can regulate and handle their emotions well to maintain their behavior in response to conflicts that occur in the relationship so as not to hurt their partners. In addition, individuals who have high emotional regulation also have good adaptability so that individuals can adjust to their environment which makes individuals able to give the right response both emotional and behavioral responses.*

### **Conclusion**

This study shows the correlation of the two significant variables and produces a negative correlation direction. The higher a person's emotional regulation, the lower the level of toxic relationships, and vice versa. This study also shows that individuals who have sufficient or even high emotional regulation have low levels of toxic relationships, because they can regulate and cope with their emotions well in order to maintain their behavior in response to every event that occurs in the relationship so as not to hurt their partners.



### Reference

- Dewi, A. P. (2023). Komnas: Kekerasan pacaran dominasi kekerasan personal tahun 2022.
- Effendy, N. (2019). Pendekatan Psikologi Positif Pada Toxic Relationship.
- Fuller, K. (2020). Frequently Asked Questions About Toxic Relationships.
- Gratz, K. L., & Roemer, L. (2004). Multidimensional Assessment of Emotion Regulation and Dysregulation: Development, Factor Structure, and Initial Validation of The Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale. *Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment*, 26(1), 41–54.
- Gunarsa, S. D., & Gunarsa, Y. S. D. (2008). *Psikologi Perkembangan Anak Dan Remaja* (13th ed.). Jakarta: PT BPK Gunung Mulia.
- Iskandar, S. N., & Zubair, A. G. H. (2021). Regulasi Emosi dan Emotional Abuse pada Dating Violence. *Jurnal Psikologi Karakter*, 1(2), 117–122.
- Janah, M. R. (2015). Regulasi Emosi dalam Menyelesaikan Permasalahan pada Remaja. *Talenta Psikologi*, IV(1), 6–15.
- Khairani, H. D. (2018). *Hubungan Antara Self Esteem Dengan Kekerasan Dalam Pacaran Pada Remaja SMA Satria Dharma Perbaungan*. Univesitas Medan Area.
- Mawardah, M., & Adiyanti, M. (2014). Regulasi Emosi dan Kelompok Teman Sebaya Pelaku Cyberbullying. *Jurnal Psikologi*, 41(1), 60.
- McGruder, J. A. (2018). *Cutting Your Losses from a Bad or Toxic Relationship*. Blomington: Xlibris.
- Megawati, P., Anwar, Z., & Masturah, A. N. (2019). Hubungan regulasi emosi dengan perilaku kekerasan dalam berpacaran pada mahasiswa. *Cognicia*, 7(2), 214–227.
- Nabila, V., Riza, W. L., & Rahman, P. R. U. (2022). Pengaruh Gaya Kelekatan Terhadap Toxic Realationship Pada Mahasiswa Teknik Elektro Universitas Singaperbangsa Karawang. *Empowerment Jurnal Mahasiswa Psikologi Universitas Buana Perjuangan Karawang*, 1(3), 15–22.
- Nihaya, U., Winata, A. V. P., & Yulianti, T. (2022). Bulletin of Counseling and Psychotherapy 48 Penerimaan Diri Korban Toxic Relationship Dalam Menumbuhkan Kesehatan Mental. *GHAIDAN Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling Islam & Kemasyarakatan*, 5(2), 48–55.
- Papalia, D. E., Olds, S. W., & Feldman, R. D. (2008). *Human Development : Perkembangan Manusia* (10th ed.). Jakarta: Salemba Humanika.
- Pemayun, C. I. I., & Widiyasavitri, P. N. (2015). Perbedaan Emotional Abuse pada Remaja Akhir yang Berpacaran Berdasarkan Pola Komunikasi dalam Keluarga. *Jurnal Psikologi Udayana*, 2(2), 300–310.
- Praptiningsih, N. A., & Putra, G. K. (2021). Toxic Relationship Dalam Komunikasi Interpersonal Di Kalangan Remaja. *Communication*, 12(2), 138–149.
- Rini. (2022). Bentuk dan Dampak Kekerasan Dalam Berpacaran : Perspektif Perbedaan Jenis Kelamin. *Jurnal IKRAITH-HUMANIORA*, 6(74), 84–95.
- Santrock, J. W. (2003). *Adolescence Perkembangan Remaja* (6th ed.). Jakarta: Erlangga.

- Scott, K., & Straus, M. (2007). Denial, Minimization, Partner Blaming, and Intimate Aggression in Dating Partners. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 22(7), 851–871. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260507301227>
- Setiawan, N. A., & Milati, A. Z. (2022). Hubungan Antara Harapan Dengan Quarter Life Crisis Pada Mahasiswa Yang Mengalami Toxic Relationship. *ANFUSINA: Journal of Psychology*, 5(1), 13–24.
- Silaen, A. C., & Dewi, K. S. (2015). Hubungan Antara Regulasi Emosi Dengan Asertivitas (Studi Korelasi pada Siswa di SMA Negeri 9 Semarang). *Jurnal EMPATI*, 4(2), 175–181.
- Sugiyono. (2015). *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan (Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R&D)*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Utama, F. I. A. (2022). *Hubungan Antara Regulasi Emosi Dengan Perilaku Cyberbullying Pada Remaja*. Universitas Jambi.
- Winnaiseh, L. (2017). Hubungan Regulasi Emosi Dengan Emotional Abuse Pada Remaja Akhir Yang Berpacaran. University of Muhammadiyah Malang.
- Wongso, F. (2014). Peran Pacar bagi Emerging Adulthood Laki-laki (Studi Deskriptif). *Calyptra: Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Universitas Surabaya*, 3(1), 1–14.
- Yani, D. I. (2020). *Analisis Perbedaan Komponen Cinta Berdasarkan Tingkat Toxic Relationship*. Universitas Bosowa Makasar.
- Yani, D. I., Radde, H. A., & HZ, A. G. (2021). Analisis Perbedaan Komponen Cinta Berdasarkan Tingkat Toxic Relationship. *Jurnal Psikologi Karakter*, 1(1), 37–43.
- Young, C. M., & Huwae, A. (2022). Emotion Regulation and Dating Violence on Students That Go Through Toxic Relationship. *Psychocentrum Review*, 4(3), 257–267.

**Copyright holder:**

Rizka Fauzia Herdiani, Dede Rahmat Hidayat (2023)

**First publication right:**

KESANS: International Journal Health and Science

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

