Romance and the Psychosocial Adjustment of Indonesian Adolescents

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INTRODUCTION

Romantic experiences are believed to be one of the hallmarks of adolescent development.
- High peer status is highly preferred in adolescents’ choice of dating partners (Houser, Mayeux, & Cross, 2015).
- Adolescent romantic experiences are associated with deviant behavior and substance use (Haynie et al., 2005; Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2004).
- Muslim adolescents, especially girls, are discouraged from romantic interactions (Smith-Hefner, 2005).

Statement of Problem
(a) Is knowledge about adolescent romance generalizable to other cultures?
- Indonesia is characterized by a collectivist culture with high levels of religiousness and shared common religious affiliation of the members (French et al., 2013). It is particularly useful to look at the influence of Islam on adolescent romance.
(b) In this study, we look at the longitudinal associations between romantic involvement and popularity, problem behavior, and religiosity?

HYPOTHESES

This study aims to examine relations between romantic involvement with religiosity, popularity, and problem behaviors in Indonesia over three years.

Research Hypotheses
(a) Over the course of the three years of assessment, adolescents will increasingly move from interest in romance, interactions in mixed gender groups, to increased dating and the development of partner relationships.
(b) Adolescents with higher levels of religiosity will be less likely than those lower in religiosity to become involved in romance over the three-year period of this study.
(c) Romantic involvement is expected to be positively associated with popularity and problem behavior at tenth grade and over the three-year period of the study.
(d) These relations may differ for boys and girls.

METHOD

A total of 870 adolescents (465 girls) participated in at least one year of data collection (471 in 10th grade, 591 in 11th grade, and 757 in 12th grade). The following measures were collected:

(a) Popularity (Peer Reports)
(b) Religiosity (Self Reports)
(c) Romantic involvement (Self Reports)
(d) Problem behaviors (Self Reports)

- Tobacco use
- Alcohol use
- Deviant behaviors

RESULTS

Means, and Standard Deviations, and Proportion of Youth Who Reported Involvement in Four Types of Romantic Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>10th Grade</th>
<th>11th Grade</th>
<th>12th Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic Interest</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic Socialization</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>94.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dating Activities</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious Relationship</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Note: * p < 0.05  ** p < 0.01  *** p < 0.001

CONCLUSION

The results showed that cross-sectionally both peer-rated popularity and self-reported problem behavior were positively associated with romantic involvement at 10th grade for girls but not for boys. Religiosity was marginally negatively associated with romantic involvement at 10th grade.

No significant pathways for between religiosity and romantic involvement across time.

Significant pathway from 10th grade popularity to 11th grade romantic involvement emerged, but similar effect did not emerge between 11th grade popularity and 12th grade romantic involvement.

Significant and positive pathways from 10th and 11th grade romantic involvement to 11th and 12th grade problem behavior emerged. The pathways from 10th and 11th grade problem behavior to 11th and 12th grade romantic involvement were also significant and positive. The model suggested bi-directional effects between romantic involvement and problem behavior.

REFERENCES


