

The Meaning of Romantic Relationships Conflict Among Young Adults from Broken Home Backgrounds

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ABSTRACT

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An individual's initial sense of self is shaped by the family environment in which they grow up. When a family is dysfunctional, embroiled in long-term conflict, or goes through a divorce, this significantly affects a child's identity formation. The high divorce rate in East Java, particularly in Surabaya, indicates that destructive communication patterns within families have not been adequately addressed. The purpose of this study is to examine in greater depth how family experiences influence the interpretation and management of conflict in romantic relationships and the development of self-concept among individuals from broken homes. This study employed a qualitative method, conducting in-depth interviews with nine informants aged 19–25 who are currently in or have previously been in romantic relationships and come from broken homes. The results indicate that family background helps shape how individuals interpret conflict through various management patterns, ranging from contending, yielding, and problem-solving to a combination of withdrawing and problem-solving. The process of managing conflict can encourage individuals to reflect on themselves—how they behave, what they need, and how they want to be treated by their partners. Thus, romantic relationships serve as a space for individuals from broken homes to develop a more positive self-image.

INTRODUCTION

Early adulthood is marked by the transition from dependence on parents to independence. At this stage, individuals are compelled to fulfill new social tasks, including entering the workforce, building relationships with the community, and forming romantic relationships with members of the opposite sex. This process creates a strong desire for self-knowledge in order to adapt to the needs and expectations of the surrounding social world. At this stage, relationships with peers and partners become important factors, which can then enhance the success in building a good self-identity, as expressed by Santrock (in Sutanto & Muttaqin, 2022) about identity formation and intimacy in early adulthood.

Romantic relationships are often marked by high emotional intensity and interpersonal complexity. Thus, conflict becomes an unavoidable experience. Conflict in romantic relationships is not merely a clash between two individuals, but rather a dynamic process that reflects past experiences shaped by the environment and early family experiences. For young adults who grew up in broken homes, the patterns tend to be more complex, as unstable family models can influence how individuals perceive, respond to, and interpret conflict in their own relationships.

Broken home is generally defined as a family structure that experiences a breakdown due to divorce, separation, death, or the absence of one parent. The divorce rate in Indonesia shows a concerning increase, especially in East Java, which consistently rose to

3,586 cases over two years (Central Statistics Agency, 2025). This number is quite large and certainly alarming. Surabaya, which is the capital of East Java, contributes thousands of divorce cases every year. This means many individuals grow up without a complete family structure, and this social reality raises important questions about how these individuals will manage and interpret conflicts in their romantic relationships in the future.

The concept of self according to Rogers in (Zulkarnain et al., 2020) is a structured self-image that exists in consciousness, both as a figure or foundation, of the self and the self that are interconnected. Along with positive and negative values associated with qualities and relationships as they are perceived to exist in the past, present, or future. When past family relationships are colored by unstable conditions full of conflict, it can affect the developing self-concept, making it vulnerable. This will certainly affect the way individuals engage with and interpret conflicts in their adult relationships later on. Individuals from broken home backgrounds have internalized relationship patterns that make them more sensitive to conflict or hinder them from finding solutions.

Several previous studies have explored the relationship between family background and the quality of romantic relationships, finding that parental conflict and divorce are associated with lower relationship satisfaction and higher conflict frequency in their children's romantic relationships. However, most current research focuses on quantitative patterns and behavioral outcomes, leaving a gap in our understanding of the subjective interpretations people make of their conflict experiences. There has not yet been in-depth research, especially regarding how young people from dysfunctional families personally understand and interpret conflict. And how those meanings relate to their self-concept.

The issue of conflict in romantic relationships has been studied from various perspectives in previous research. According to Aldinel (2024), there are differences in attachment styles, particularly in the dimensions of avoidance and anxiety, in resolving conflicts in romantic relationships. In line with this, Whitney (2025) shows that emotional intelligence and the ability to compromise are important foundations in building satisfaction in romantic relationships during early adulthood. Meanwhile, Kamila (2025) found that openness, honesty, and emotion regulation techniques have a significant impact on the quality of communication among Generation Z when facing conflicts in romantic relationships. Although these three studies provide significant contributions, none

have specifically examined how a chaotic family background affects the way someone understands conflict in romantic relationships or how these experiences relate to self-concept development, which is the main focus of this research.

This research fills that gap by using a phenomenological approach to understand the experiences of nine young adults in Surabaya. In the context of broken home families, the emphasis is placed on the meaning of conflicts for the individuals experiencing them, rather than on how often these conflicts occur. This research enriches the understanding of conflict experiences in this demographic group by focusing the study through interviews with nine informants. Through the informants' experiences, this research will provide deeper insights into how communication and conflict are viewed as part of the process of relationship development and self-concept formation.

The three studies mentioned above reveal a gap, none has yet conducted an in-depth investigation into how a background of a broken home contributes to how individuals perceive conflict in romantic relationships, or how such experiences relate to the development of self-concept—which is the primary focus of this study. This is a relevant topic to explore, given the rising divorce rate in Surabaya, which indicates that an increasing number of individuals are growing up in broken-home family structures. While previous research has focused on behavioral patterns and the foundations of romantic relationships, it has not yet explained how individuals from broken-home families subjectively interpret conflict in their romantic relationships and how those interpretations relate to the formation of their self-concept.

Given this gap, this study aims to conduct an in-depth examination of the experiences and interpretations of conflict in romantic relationships among young adults from broken-home backgrounds in Surabaya, as well as how these experiences relate to the formation of their self-concept. To achieve this objective, the author employs a phenomenological approach, as this method allows the researcher to understand how individuals interpret their experiences of conflict in romantic relationships, rather than merely making general assessments. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with nine informants. This study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of how communication and conflict are perceived as components of the process of relationship development and self-concept formation through the informants' experiences.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Self-Concept

Self-Concept According to Calhoun and Acocella (in Zulkarnain et al., 2020), the self is a complex entity that encompasses physical, cognitive, and social characteristics, as well as self-concept and self-image, all of which are interdependent. The term "self-concept" describes a person's unique mental image of themselves, which has a significant impact on their thoughts and actions, even though it is not always accurate. According to Fitts (in Zulkarnain et al., 2020), a person's self-concept functions as a reference framework when interacting with their environment, making it easier to understand and anticipate their behavior.

The self-concept is a social construction formed thru the internalization of psychological events and reflection on important people in one's life, so the self-concept does not emerge just like that (Mead, 1972). This perspective was further developed by Rogers (in Zulkarnain et al., 2020), who stated that the self-concept includes a self-image organized in consciousness that encompasses the past, present, and future, as well as the positive and negative values associated with it. Thus, the self-concept is a comprehensive representation of how a person views their physical attributes, personal traits, motives, strengths, and weaknesses.

There are four main factors that influence the strength or weakness of each individual's self-concept (Dewi, 2012). The first is identity, which is the sense of consistency and integrity of oneself that allows a person to accept themselves as a unique individual different from others, recognize themselves, and understand their role. The second is body image, which is the internal and external perception of oneself regarding their own body. Body image is dynamic and can change over time due to cultural values, social conventions, and experiences of social interaction. Third, self-esteem is an individual's assessment of themselves, shaped by the achievement of goals and the feeling of being valued by others. Additionally, the alignment of a person's self-concept with the ideal self-image they wish to achieve tends to stabilize as they age and gain life experience. Lastly, roles are behavioral patterns developed through the process of socialization from an early age. These patterns range

from acceptance, imitation, identification, and internalization to commitment to the norms and values prevailing in society.

Self-concept theory is relevant to this study for analyzing experiences of conflict in romantic relationships. The way individuals interpret and respond to conflict is fundamentally shaped by how they view themselves, their self-esteem, and the roles they have internalized since childhood. For individuals who grew up in broken homes, experiences of family instability can lead to the development of a vulnerable self-concept, influencing how they interpret, respond to, and make sense of problems in romantic relationships. Thus, self-concept serves as an analytical framework for understanding the relationship between past family experiences, an individual's self-perception, and how they interpret conflict in romantic relationships in adulthood.

Romantic Relationships

The gradual process of building interpersonal relationships leads to the formation of romantic relationships. According to Altman and Taylor's social penetration theory (in Lestari & Kusuma, 2019), relationships develop thru the stages of orientation, exploratory affective exchange, affection exchange, and balanced exchange as the relationship shifts from general interaction toward more intimate emotional closeness. In this context, when two people have reached an ideal level of emotional closeness and openness as a couple, a relationship is formed.

In the early adulthood stage of life, building close and meaningful relationships with others becomes one of the most important developmental tasks. Erikson (in Papalia, Old, & Feldman, 2008) explains that at this stage, individuals will face the choice between building genuine emotional closeness or feeling lonely and isolated. The ability of two individuals to be honest with each other, understand each other's needs, and sincerely support each other is what forms closeness in this context, not just physical closeness (Agusdwitanti et al., 2015). When these demands are met, romantic relationships not only become a source of happiness but also have a significant impact on the psychological health of adults.

According to Connolly (in Kalamsari & Ginanjar, 2022), romantic relationships develop thru four stages. First, the onset of attraction (ages 12–14), where teenagers begin to be interested in the opposite sex but there is no concrete interaction yet, only feelings and

fantasies that arise with puberty. Second, affiliative romantic relationships (ages 15–17), characterized by mixed-gender group dates where a romantic atmosphere begins to develop, although they are not yet exclusive. Third, intimate romantic relationships (ages 18–20), where the relationship becomes exclusive and individuals start to build strong emotional bonds with their partners, while also facing conflicts and learning to balance their own needs with those of their partner. Fourth, committed romantic relationships (ages 21–25), where the relationship becomes long-term, involves serious commitment, and starts to resemble a marriage, with conflict patterns that tend to be more stable and consistent.

Conflict Management

According to Stragner, conflict is a situation when two or more people desire a goal that, according to their perception, can only be achieved by one party, making it impossible for both parties to fulfill it simultaneously (Winardi, in Puspita, 2018). This definition emphasizes that conflict essentially arises from differences in perception, desire, or needs among individuals who interact with each other. In everyday life, conflict is often viewed as something negative and to be avoided. In fact, that view is not entirely accurate. Conflict is essentially an inseparable part of every human relationship, including romantic ones, because each individual brings different backgrounds, values, and expectations.

Effective conflict resolution is closely related to the way people interact and communicate when faced with differences. According to Pruitt and Rubin in (Ambarwati et al., 2019), there are five commonly used dispute resolution techniques. First, contending is a tactic where someone tries to convey their demands by convincing the other party to comply with those demands thru pressure, threats, or persuasion. The second, yielding, is when someone is willing to lower their expectations and accept results that may not align with their initial hopes. Not as a sign of defeat, but as an effort to maintain the harmony of the relationship. Third, problem solving is the most beneficial approach because it aims to find a solution that is advantageous to both parties, either thru creative solutions that wisely balance the interests of each party or thru compromise. Fourth, withdrawing means making the decision to distance oneself physically and psychologically from the conflict situation to ease the tension before returning to address the issue. The fifth situation is inaction, where both

parties wait for the other to initiate dialog, leaving the dispute unresolved and open.

Broken Home

Family integrity can truly be seen from two perspectives, the first being structural integrity, which refers to the physical presence of the father, mother, and children in the family. If there are reasons such as divorce, death, or others, where one parent or both parents are absent, then the family is structurally incomplete. But the integrity of a family is not something that is determined solely by who lives under the same roof. The second equally important issue is the integrity of interactions; a truly intact family is one that maintains healthy communication, loving relationships, and an environment conducive to the development and growth of each member. Gerungan (2009) in (Mahnunin & Ridjal, 2021) states that a family can no longer be considered intact if the parents often argue, are unpleasant, and even aggressive toward each other, even tho all family members live together physically. That does not mean that a crowded house is necessarily a safe house, or that a family that appears intact on the outside feels complete on the inside.

Broken home is a combination of two words in English, "broken," which means fracture or destruction, and "home," which refers to a place of residence or household, forming the origin of the phrase "broken home." A broken household is defined as family disintegration by the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language (KBBI). However, in a broader sense, it refers to all types of family dynamics that are not harmonious, where the peace and well-being of family members are disturbed by recurring disputes, emotional absence of parents, and unresolved conflicts that ultimately lead to separation.

According to Kardawati (in Mistiani, 2018), there are several causes of broken home families. First, parental divorce, which is a situation when the affection between husband and wife has diminished. This can affect communication breakdown and the loss of emotional bonds. The second is the culture of silence within the family, characterized by little dialog and communication between family members, causing children to become frustrated and emotionally unhappy. Third, there is the cold war within the family, which is more serious than the culture of silence because it not only prevents communication

but also fosters prolonged hostility and disputes between parents. These three factors have the potential to create an unhealthy home environment and negatively impact the psychological growth of children.

It is important to realize that a child from a broken home does not always have parents who are legally divorced. The impact can be just as severe for a child raised in a physically intact family but filled with conflict, stress, and a lack of emotional warmth. This phenomenon is caused by a number of factors, such as prolonged parental conflict, parental busyness that leads them to neglect their children's emotional needs, and the family's inability to provide a safe and supportive environment for the child's development. Long before they enter into romantic relationships as adults, these circumstances shape a child's experiences and relationship styles.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using phenomenological methods to gain an in-depth understanding of the informants' subjective experiences in interpreting conflict within their romantic relationships. The research subjects consisted of nine individuals aged 19–25, residing in Surabaya, who were currently in or had previously been in romantic relationships and came from broken-home backgrounds; they were selected using snowball sampling. This technique was chosen because the specific criteria for informants—namely, individuals from broken homes who were currently in or had previously been in romantic relationships—were not easily identified directly; therefore, referrals from initial informants to other potential informants with similar characteristics facilitated the process of finding informants.

Furthermore, given the personal and sensitive nature of this research topic, the use of snowball sampling allowed the researcher to build trust with potential informants through referrals from people they already knew. This also encouraged the informants to be more open about sharing their experiences and the deeper meanings associated with the conflicts in their romantic relationships. In line with the goal of phenomenological research to explore subjective understanding in depth, data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews using open-ended questions, either in person or online via Google Meet or Zoom. The data were analyzed using

qualitative descriptive analysis through three stages, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Validity was tested using source triangulation by comparing information across informants.

DISCUSSION

This research involves nine young adult informants in Surabaya aged 19–25 years who come from broken home families and are currently or have previously been in romantic relationships. The family backgrounds of the informants are diverse, ranging from divorced parents, infidelity, emotional unavailability of parents, to domestic violence. The diversity of these experiences shapes each informant's way of interpreting and managing conflicts in their romantic relationships.

Informant 1 is a 22-year-old woman with a dysfunctional family background. Her father repeatedly cheated, but her mother did not want to separate for the sake of the children. Currently in a three-year relationship with a partner who tends to avoid conflicts. Informant 2 is a 22-year-old woman from a broken home whose parents have been divorced since she was a child. However, she has now come to terms with her situation and is currently in a relationship with a secure man, which has a positive influence on her. Informant 3, a 21-year-old woman who experienced sexual harassment by her own partner during a one-year relationship. Meanwhile, she does not have a father figure even though they still live in the same house; until now, the trauma remains, and she is reluctant to start a romantic relationship again. Informant 4, a woman from a broken home background because her father did not provide adequately and cheated. The relationship lasted two years at the age of 21, contrasting with her partner's background, which is a stable family. His partner has also had a positive influence, and now he no longer avoids conflicts.

Informant 5 is a 25-year-old man whose biological parents divorced when he was young. He only experienced the figure of a father for a dozen years from his mother's second marriage, but it also ended due to his mother's infidelity. His romantic relationship lasted three years but ended because the informant felt insecure about himself. Informant 6, who has been separated from his mother since he was in elementary school. The relationship had been going

on for a year and a half but had to end because the partner wanted certainty and the informant asked for time. But the girl couldn't wait, so she asked to break up. Informant 7, who is 23 years old, has been acting as an intermediary for her parents in handling the divorce process. The strict upbringing by his father caused trauma, but he took the positive side of that upbringing. A two-and-a-half-year relationship ended, without any significant conflict. Informant 8 is a 21-year-old man who was left by his father at the age of two; his romantic relationship is still in its first year. No significant conflicts have occurred yet, just instances of forgetting to stay in touch. Informant 9 is a 25-year-old man who grew up in a family with a prolonged cold war due to his father secretly practicing polygamy with three women. The strict upbringing made him grow into a tough person as well, unwilling to back down even though his romantic relationship had been going on for a year and a half.

Conflict Experiences from the Family of Origin

All informants were raised in family environments marked by prolonged conflicts, whether in the form of unresolved emotional tensions, physical violence, or verbal disputes. Three different reaction patterns formed as a result of those experiences. Some informants acted as mediators in the disputes between their parents. The first pattern, informants 1 and 7 were given the responsibility to act as intermediaries in communication between their parents, which is an emotionally difficult task for a young person. This is in line with the theory proposed by Hooper in 2009 (Wulan Sari et al., 2025), which explains the pattern of emotional parentification, a situation where the child becomes a confidant for their parents, a mediator in conflicts, or even a source of psychological support for their parents. As experienced by informants 1 and 7 in the intermediary position, which is actually beyond their capacity as children. They are required to take on emotional responsibilities that should rightfully belong to the parents themselves. As a result, the roles between children and parents become reversed, where children, who should be protected and guided, are instead expected to maintain their parents' emotional stability.

Unlike the two previous informants who were directly involved in their parents' domestic disputes. Informants 1 and 9, for example, prefer to avoid when their parents are having a disagreement. Avoiding by locking themselves in their room, leaving the house,

and other distractions. This way of avoiding conflict has been explained by (Rachmawati & Rahmasari, 2024) when a child feels threatened by a conflict happening in front of them, distancing themselves becomes one of the simplest ways to protect themselves emotionally. The tension that is avoided does not truly disappear; it is merely postponed, and such avoidance patterns have the potential to lead them to their conflict management patterns later in life. The findings on avoidance patterns align with previous research conducted by Aldinel (2024), which shows that avoidance patterns in attachment styles affect how a person handles conflict. However, this research has not yet addressed that these attachment styles are formed from conflict experiences in the family of origin.

If in the previous two patterns the child is aware of conflicts in the house and responds by becoming a mediator or avoiding them, the third pattern is quite the opposite. Some informants were even unaware that their parents were having a disagreement because it was deliberately hidden from them. This is in line with the theory proposed by Grych and Fincham (in Sholichah, 2016), which essentially states that the impact of parental conflict on children is not determined by the conflict itself, but by the extent to which the child understands and interprets what is happening. When parents cover up conflicts, children do not have the material to understand the actual situation happening in their home. This can also have an impact later on; the conflict is not immediately felt, but it may emerge later, even becoming apparent when they are in their own romantic relationships. From these three patterns, it is evident that the way children respond to family conflicts cannot be generalized. Some are directly involved, some choose to distance themselves, and some don't even know anything about their parents' arguments. These differences in experience seem to shape how they will later understand and handle conflicts in their romantic relationships in the future.

The Meaning of Conflict in Romantic Relationships

Each informant interprets conflict in romantic relationships in different ways. And this interpretation is greatly influenced by their experiences in their family of origin. Some informants initially tended to avoid conflict, as shown by informant 4, who during the first year of dating always chose to remain silent

when problems arose. He himself realized that this habit did not just appear out of nowhere, but rather something he carried from the way his family had been handling conflicts all this time. Only over time did he realize that silence does not solve anything; instead, it accumulates problems that eventually feel heavier to bear alone.

Informant 2 has a different way of dealing with similar situations. Instead of imitating the conflict management patterns at home, he actually tried to reassess those patterns and then found a new one that felt more suitable for his own relationship. From this, it can be seen that early family experiences do indeed shape a person's initial tendencies when facing conflicts. But tendencies are not absolute; they can change at any moment along with life experiences. As stated by Harter (2015), the past does not entirely determine how someone behaves today, because everyone still has the opportunity to learn and change.

If we look at the differences in responses between informant 4 and informant 2, this reinforces Harter's (2015) idea that self-concept and individual behavior patterns never truly stop forming, but rather continue to develop according to the individual's ability to reflect on their own experiences. In informant 4, it is evident how patterns from the family of origin can be carried almost unconsciously into their romantic relationship. Meanwhile, in informant 2, it is seen that reflection can serve as a pathway from old family patterns and open up space for individuals to find new ways to respond to conflicts. This change in informant 2's pattern is also in line with Kamila's (2025) findings regarding the importance of emotional regulation openness in the quality of communication during conflicts. Then this research shows that this ability does not emerge just like that, but is formed from the reflection of an unhealthy family origin pattern. Both have the same goal but with different directions. The past does leave a mark on how someone faces conflict, but that mark can fade as long as there is space and awareness to learn from what has been experienced.

Conflict Management

According to Pruitt and Rubin in (Ambarwati et al., 2019), there are four ways to handle conflict. Each pattern does not emerge suddenly, but rather is formed from the original family experience. The first pattern is contending or competing, as shown by informant 9 who grew up in a family environment characterized by a cold war. A strict upbringing from a young age made

him an individual who is difficult to correct when he is wrong. Because during childhood, he always felt like he had to give in and remain silent because he didn't understand the chaotic state of the house. So in her romantic relationships, she always wants to be understood and stand her ground. This behavior reflects how experiences of powerlessness within the family can transform into a resistance that he channels into romantic relationships.

Yielding or conceding is the second pattern, demonstrated by informants 1 and 3, who tend to yield to maintain the harmony of the relationship. Both chose to remain silent not because they wanted to maintain the tranquility of the relationship, but because they were tired of their partner's tendency to avoid conflicts. Informant 1, who is already accustomed to the conflicts between his mother and father, who almost fight every day. Unconsciously, he applies the same pattern in relationships, tends to remain silent and give in when conflicts arise. Informant 3, who has experienced sexual harassment, also tends to remain silent because when she speaks up, her partner tends to blame her. Just like what her father did, the only way to stay safe is to remain silent as a form of self-protection.

The third pattern is problem solving, which is demonstrated by informants 4 and 6, both of whom consciously and actively want to discuss the issues that arise with their partners as an effort to find solutions that benefit both parties. What is interesting is that this ability comes from a family background full of conflict. The presence of a partner who has a sense of security in themselves because they grew up in a complete and harmonious family background. Informant 4 consciously admitted that initially, they often avoided and found it difficult to express their feelings, but since their partner's presence, they have gradually started to open up. A healthy romantic relationship can become a learning space for each individual to continue growing positively.

The ability of informants 4 and 6 to discuss openly is also in line with Whitney's (2025) findings on the importance of emotional intelligence and compromise for romantic relationship satisfaction. However, this study adds that the presence of a partner who comes from a complete and harmonious family plays an important role in helping individuals from broken home backgrounds by building a sense of security and those abilities.

The last pattern, a combination of problem-solving and withdrawing, is shown by informants 2, 5, and 7 who do not directly confront the conflict. The three of them chose to withdraw momentarily to calm themselves before eventually returning to discuss the issues with their partner openly and constructively. This pattern illustrates a fairly mature self-awareness when individuals are able to recognize their own emotional capacity and choose not to argue in a heated situation. So as not to react impulsively when in an unstable condition. The various conflict management patterns demonstrated by all the informants show that individuals from the same family background have different responses. Each individual processes and responds to conflict in their own way, some unconsciously influenced by their parents' methods. Some also adopt new patterns because they know what it feels like to be treated as they saw in their original family patterns. This depends on how much they reflect on past experiences and the extent of support from the relationships they engage in.

Self-Concept

The formation of the informants' self-concept was analyzed thru the perspectives of the basic self, the other self, and the ideal self, referring to Rogers' self-concept theory (in Zulkarnain et al., 2020) and Staines' three aspects (in Ratna & Astuti, 2014). Some informants provided descriptions of themselves related to the basic self-concept components, such as being easily submissive, reluctant to speak up, and prone to holding back. Conversely, other informants showed improvement after undergoing a period of introspection and experiences in romantic relationships. In the component of "other self," it was found that the informants' perceptions of themselves were greatly influenced by the opinions and actions of close relatives, including partners, friends, and siblings. In fact, many of them find a sense of worth in healthier new relationships, rather than in their immediate family. In this study, the formation of the informants' self-concept is analyzed thru three aspects proposed by Staines in Burns (in Ratna & Astuti, 2014), namely the basic self, the other self, and the ideal self, which are interconnected and form a complete picture of how individuals perceive themselves. Before delving into the aspects of self-concept, it is important to understand how the family of origin serves as the initial foundation of the self-

concept that each informant brings into their relationships.

Self-Concept Formed by Family

Long before entering into romantic relationships, the self-concept of the informants had already begun to form within their respective families. The way parents nurture, communicate, and handle daily conflicts indirectly becomes the first lesson for children on how to view themselves and others. But most of the informants grew up in an environment lacking warmth and emotional openness. Informant 3, for example, admitted that he never felt affection from his father. A distance formed between the child and parent relationship, so informant 3 felt something was lacking because there was a distance in their closeness with their father. Meanwhile, informant 9 experienced something different; he was raised with strict discipline, including physical violence, which gradually shaped him into a person who finds it difficult to accept mistakes and tends to be harsh. A similar pattern is also experienced by informant 4, who is not used to having a father figure. In fact, he finds it burdensome when his partner shows care and initiative, such as picking him up and dropping him off from college, and so on. For informant 4, the sudden warmth he received felt strange, not because it was unwelcome but because he had never experienced it before.

Unlike the previous three informants, informant 6 was raised in a family with repeated betrayals from his father. Consciously choosing not to repeat that pattern in their own relationship. By continuously remembering the impact felt by her mother as a moral reminder. Meanwhile, informants 1 and 7, despite growing up in families full of conflict and tension, still felt the presence of parental figures who provided a sense of security. Thus, their self-concept was not entirely formed negatively even tho they came from broken homes.

Various self-concepts formed by these informants show that parenting patterns do not always have a negative impact. These findings reinforce Rogers' view (in Zulkarnain et al., 2020) that self-concept is dynamic and continuously shaped thru life experiences. The self-concept carried by the informants is an accumulation of the frequency with which they feel heard or silenced, as well as the warmth and affection they receive or do not receive at home. Then it becomes the basis of their belief about

the worthiness of receiving love from others. This also explains why similar family backgrounds do not always result in the same self-concept. Because each individual has a different way of interpreting and processing the experiences that shape them. An overview of the self-concept formed by the family will be further detailed thru three aspects of self-concept according to Rogers' theory, basic self-concept, other self-concept, and ideal self-concept.

Basic Self-Concept

The basic self-concept refers to the way individuals interpret their position, role, and inherent capacities. The findings from the informants show a wide range of variations, from a tendency to view oneself negatively to a more positive self-perception. Informant 1 describes himself as someone who is "too nice," not daring to end an unhealthy relationship because he feels sorry for his partner who is currently working on their thesis. Informant 3, since childhood, was often told to be quiet, leading to the belief that his voice was not important to be heard, while informant 5 considers himself an introvert and is used to suppressing problems due to a family pattern of minimal openness. Informant 9 admitted to growing up to be hard on themselves and their partner as a result of their family's strict upbringing. Unlike the other four, informant 8 is still in the process of finding his identity, describing himself as an ambivert and often confused about understanding himself, which is suspected to be related to the minimal presence of a father figure and exposure to content suggesting that men should not talk about their feelings.

On the other hand, some informants showed a more positive self-concept after going thru a process of reflection and experience in relationships. Informant 2 admitted that they are now better because they can limit themselves from unnecessary thoughts and are not easily influenced by others' opinions, while informant 4, who used to have difficulty expressing feelings, is now more open and feels relieved every time they successfully convey their feelings. From these two descriptions, it is evident that the informants' basic self-concepts did not start from the same point. Some grew up with self-doubt, while others managed to build a stronger self-image, and these changes were formed thru a long process, whether thru personal reflection, environmental influences, or the dynamics of romantic relationships they experienced.

Other Self Concept

This aspect highlights how the judgments and treatment of those around them shape the way individuals view themselves, as the words and actions of others unconsciously leave a mark on a person's self-concept. Informant 1 feels valuable and worthy of being fought for because they saw their mother endure a difficult marriage for the sake of her children, a sense of worth that grew from the actions of those closest to them, not from their own self-assessment. Informants 2 and 4 both found significant influence from their partners, informant 2 learned not to be easily swayed by others' opinions thru their partner's more rational way of thinking, while informant 4 discovered the small appreciation and attention they had longed for from their father figure were actually present in their partner, leading them to start feeling worthy of love. Informant 3 also found their turning point thru a non-judgmental social circle, which gradually made them brave enough to break the habit of closing themselves off.

Unlike the others, informant 9 actually found a sense of meaning in their closeness with their younger siblings, realizing that they were able to provide affection that they did not receive from their own parents. From these four experiences, it is evident that the judgments and treatment of others, whether from parents, partners, friends, or siblings, all play a role in shaping self-concept, and interestingly, that sense of worth is more often found outside the immediate family. This shows that although family experiences leave a deep impact, a person's self-concept is not forever confined there, because new healthy relationships can become a space for healing the parts of oneself that have been empty all this time.

The Ideal Self

The ideal self is a depiction of the figure that an individual wishes to become, not a reflection of who they are at present but rather the direction they aim to achieve, and this hope manifests in different ways for each informant. Informant 2 imagines themselves as a person who lives life more lightly and is able to maintain healthy boundaries in relationships, while informant 3 hopes to have self-respect and the courage to express their feelings without waiting for others' permission, a process that, although not yet complete, has already shown progress compared to previous years. Informant 4 hopes to become a more open person and feel deserving of being treated well,

considering the lack of appreciation from their father figure often makes them feel burdensome when receiving kindness from their partner. Meanwhile, informants 6 and 9 both want to be meaningful figures for others. Informant 6 wants to start a new chapter after going thru a dark period from childhood to adolescence, while informant 9 wants to be a "home" for those he considers family, as a form of warmth he never felt in his own home. Although they share the same background as individuals from broken homes, the self-concepts formed by each informant are not uniform. Some develop fragile and doubt-filled self-concepts, while others grow stronger and more confident in their self-worth, highlighting that similar family backgrounds do not automatically result in the same personal growth.

The three aspects of self-concept above show that the informants' self-concept is formed from a combination of family background, treatment by close people, and experiences in romantic relationships that are mutually reinforcing. Interestingly, although many informants grew up in difficult conditions, most of them showed movement toward a more positive direction over time and with experience, and their ideal self was not always about achieving great things, but rather about simple things like the courage to speak up, ease in relationships, or being a safe haven for their loved ones. Overall, growing up in a conflict-ridden environment does leave a real impact, but most informants do not stop at that point; instead, they continue to process and gradually build a healthier self-image, a testament that self-concept is not something permanent, but rather something that evolves over time.

CONCLUSION

From the research conducted on nine informants, it can be concluded that each informant's interpretation of conflict depends on their family background. A disharmonious, dysfunctional family environment has a major influence, with some interpreting conflict as something to be avoided. But others think they want to break the chain of unhealthy relationships from their family thru the romantic relationships they engage in. Conflict management patterns vary, ranging from a tendency to avoid, becoming an intermediary, remaining silent as a form of self-protection, to wanting to build healthier communication styles with their partner. This shows that individuals with a

broken home background do not always carry the same influence. Rather, they are processed differently by each individual according to their reflections and life experiences.

The conflict management carried out by each informant has been proven to be closely related to the development of the informants' self-concept. Informants who are able to resolve conflicts constructively tend to develop a more positive self-concept. Meanwhile, individuals who are still trapped in unhealthy patterns tend to show a more vulnerable self-concept. However, this finding reveals that most informants show development toward a more positive self-concept over time and thru the process of life experiences gained. From this, it can be understood that self-concept is dynamic, capable of developing and changing over time thru the experiences undertaken, including in the journey of romantic relationships as proposed by Rogers (in Zulkarnain et al., 2020). Romantic relationships are not merely spaces for conflict, but also spaces for learning and reconstructing a more positive self-identity for some individuals.

This research certainly has limitations, including that the data obtained entirely comes from the informants' perspectives without involving the perspectives of parents or partners, which could potentially introduce bias, and the research scope is only focused on young adults in the Surabaya area with a limited number of informants, making the results not widely generalizable. Therefore, it is recommended that future research expand the scope of the area and the number of informants, include the perspectives of partners, and explore other aspects that have not been covered in this study, such as the influence of parenting styles more specifically or the comparison of conflict management between individuals from broken homes and harmonious families.

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