Having A Pretend Boyfriend: A Self-Disclosure Analysis of Couples in the Date Renting Phenomenon

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Abstract

Dating is the approach of two people who know each other before entering into a relationship. However, dating can now be done with a hired person. Hired dating is a new phenomenon that is done to overcome loneliness, dating experience, or fulfill social demands. The formulation of the problem is how the form of self-disclosure done by hired lovers. The purpose of the research is to analyze the self-disclosure and behavioral changes of talents and clients. The research concept is self-disclosure and social penetration theory. The paradigm is post-positivism with a descriptive qualitative approach. The unit of analysis in the research is individuals who work as hired lovers and clients. Data were collected using observation, interview, and documentation study techniques. The data analysis techniques were data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study show that clients self-disclose because of demands and needs while talents do not self-disclose perfectly because they are required to hide their data. Another finding states that time, which is an important element in self-disclosure, only applies to relationships that grow naturally, not transactional. The self-disclosure process of hired lovers is done quickly even though it is forced.
Keywords: Hired lovers, the dating rental phenomenon

INTRODUCTION

Dating is a stage of romantic activity between two individuals who meet in a predetermined place KBBI. Whether you are a teenager or an adult, dating is a common thing to do to get to know and spend time with your partner or the opposite sex. Recreation, eating together, watching films, or other activities are usually done while on a date. Dating can be done with the consent of both parties. Generally, couples who go on dates are couples who are in a romantic relationship or are still in the PDKT approach stage. Dating is done as a period of introduction or the initial stage to understand each other, get to know more, and consider the character of potential partners (Nenggelis, 2019). However, now dating is not only done by two people who are close and have known each other before, dating can also be done with people who are disliked, unknown, and even just hired to go on a date.

In the news published (Kumparan 2022), psychological opinion states that the human need for the company of others is the reason for the large number of users of rented lover services. In addition, loneliness is also one of the main factors behind someone using this service. Not everyone has the skills to build social relationships and connect with others so that loneliness results in loneliness. Delisle in (Yusuf, 2015) defines loneliness as someone who feels distant and alienated from social life. Loneliness is one of the fears that many people have as it impacts quality of life and mental well-being (Astutik, 2019). When lonely, a person will feel unloved, have no one to lean on or look up to, and feel isolated because they have no one to call or to keep them company. A person can be said to feel lonely when they need friends, not when they do not have them (Yusuf, 2015).

Adolescence to adulthood is the stage where a person feels the need to establish a harmonious or intimate relationship, either a legal relationship to become husband and wife or a couple. This is outlined through the eight human psychosocial stages. Furthermore, at this stage it is explained that if a person is unable to fulfil the need to explore long-term relationships, it will result in a sense of isolation, loneliness, and depression (Riliv, 2022). Unfortunately, not everyone is able to find a companion or mate in order to fulfil the psychological need for a romantic relationship.

However, feelings of loneliness and psychological need are strong factors in a person deciding to use a hired lover or date as a way out of the need to have a soulmate. Although temporary, a hired lover is considered to be someone who can fulfil the need for a companion, a friend to chat with, or just to accompany recreation (Kumparan, 2022). Not only psychological reasons, social demands are also a driving factor for someone to use a hired lover or date.

Social demands, loneliness, and the need to have a companion are the reasons why hiring a lover is now a widespread phenomenon in Indonesian society. Speaking of social demands, many Indonesians consider marriage to be an important thing to do (Srimaryono and Nurdibyanandaru, 2013). This is because marriage is seen as a religious, juridical, and social support event for individuals. Coupled with the assumption that after marriage a person will be happier than before marriage. In fact, getting married is not an easy thing and can be a measure of one's happiness. The unmarried status carried by many young people becomes a burden when entering the holidays.

The diverse backgrounds that underlie the demand for hired girlfriend services make this service a new business that is becoming commonplace in Indonesian society. The hired lover service is unwittingly able to fulfil the invisible needs of singles who need a temporary companion to stay out of trouble (Wang, 2022). In China alone, rented lovers are sought after to accompany them to major events such as Chinese New Year. The purpose is not only to relieve loneliness during the holidays, but also to avoid demands from families to have a companion immediately. Chinese tradition holds that filial piety is not only about being a good and proud child, but also about showing intentions to continue the bloodline. This culture is unconsciously perceived as a burden for young single people, making hired lovers a shortcut to solving personal problems.

Date rental is considered to be a profitable business for service companies or individual service providers. In China, the economic conditions of young people with the age range of early 20 to mid-30 years have improved their economic conditions after doing lover rental services as a side job (Wang, 2022). This business can unwittingly help improve the community's economy and become an alternative to increase income and overcome loneliness. The services offered by these service providers vary, ranging from online dates, offline dates, confiding friends, partner loyalty tests, and others. Based on the results of the researcher's virtual observation on 14 March 2023 to several rental lover service providers such as Kanore.id, Pacar Untukmu, Rental Pacar Koibito, and so on, the prices offered by each service provider vary.

To enjoy the services of a rented lover whether it is an online date or offline date, there are some rules that must be adhered to. Most service providers apply a special rule that clients must be single or not bound in any relationship with other people. To enjoy online date services, the rules set by each service provider are not much different, namely clients

are prohibited from discussing adult topics, prohibited from requesting services outside of the order, and not allowed to use harsh words. Offline dates have rules that prohibit sexual activities, the location of the date must be in a public place, limit physical contact unless it is part of the service, and include personal data such as identity cards when placing an order.

Seeing the number of Indonesians who use rental dating services shows that this new phenomenon is starting to spread even though it is still considered taboo. This can have many causes, one of the main ones being loneliness. Dating and family rental services are common in Japan (Jannah, et al., 2020). Loneliness is a major factor in the majority of clients choosing to rent a lover or family as a way out. The loss of the role of family or loved ones to never feel an emotional bond with a partner triggers the human need to have a companion even if only temporarily (Martia, et al., 2018). While rental dating can be a temporary outlet, the closeness between talent and client is short-lived. For this reason, this research was made by the author to find out or analyse the self-disclosure made by the talent to the client, find out or analyse the self-disclosure made by the client to the talent and find out how the behaviour changes of the talent and the client after making self-disclosure.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Paradigm

Paradigm is the most basic thing about the main problem of a particular science (Thontowi, 2012). In full, the paradigm can be defined as several concepts related to each other which then form a framework that can help understand, interpret, and explain the facts on the problems faced in a study. Qualitative research that uses the view of post-positivism can be described as research that is holistic or a comprehensive perspective, inductive, namely understanding something by making specific observations, intuitive or based on intuition, and exploratory, namely exploring new things in order to deepen knowledge (Bandur, 2019, p.34).

Research Approach

This research uses a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is a method used to understand an individual or a group to explore and understand a meaning related to social or humanitarian issues (Creswell, 2014, p. 213). The main point of qualitative research is to explore and understand data in an in-depth way. In contrast to quantitative, qualitative tends to interpret the meaning of data obtained through respondents to the social problem or phenomenon under study (Bandur, 2019, p. 16). Research using a qualitative approach focuses researchers on studying the views of individuals who are the object of research. If in the quantitative approach, researchers must apply the results of research to a broad group, then in the qualitative approach researchers should get detailed or detailed information about a group in a particular context. The qualitative approach requires the researcher to create a distance between himself and the thing under study so that the research results can be objective.

Research Type

In this study, researchers used descriptive research to produce data in the form of written sentences and the behaviour of people observed. Descriptive data is taken because it refers more to data in the form of words or images rather than numbers (Bandur, 2019, p. 26). Descriptive qualitative research was chosen by the researcher because the researcher wanted to provide research results by describing all the data findings. In research on the analysis of self-disclosure of lovers in the rental dating phenomenon, researchers use descriptive

qualitative research which will emphasise the presentation of meaning.

Analysis Unit

The analysis unit is a unit, case, or part of the social life being studied. In qualitative research where the research topic is a case or social phenomenon that includes individuals, the individual is the unit of analysis (Yin, 2014, p.87). The unit of analysis is the subject to be studied. In this study, which is the analysis of a couple in the dating friend rental phenomenon, the talent of the hired lover or the individual who works as a hired lover and the client who uses this service is the unit of analysis. Having the aim of examining the dating friend rental phenomenon, the individuals involved in the phenomenon are deemed appropriate to be the subject of the researcher's analysis. The researcher chooses the individual as the unit of analysis because it is felt that the dating friend rental phenomenon will be more easily understood and researched through individuals who intersect with the phenomenon. In practice, the individuals include clients who have used the services of rented lovers and talents who work as rented lovers.

Data Collection Techniques

Data are things attached to a particular object that function to provide information that can be obtained through data collection methods or techniques (Herdiansyah, 2019, p. 107). Data obtained through certain methods will produce information to complete the information needed in the research. In qualitative research, data is in the form of sentences or narratives. When collecting data using research instruments in qualitative methods, the data will then be analysed and processed using qualitative data analysis techniques in order to produce findings that can be an answer to the matter under study. Data collection techniques commonly used in qualitative research are interviews, observations, documentation studies, and Focus Group Discussion (FGD).

Research Instruments

Research instruments are complementary tools needed and used to collect research data. In qualitative research, research instruments serve to identify values and backgrounds and avoid biases in research (Creswell, 2014, p. 233-234). The research instrument used for this study is the researcher himself. The researcher is at the centre of the entire research process from planning the research topic, collecting research data, analysing research data, interpreting or interpreting the findings for research, to reporting the results of his research. In this study, the researcher became a research instrument or human instrument because the entire research process from determining the topic to reporting the research results centred on the researcher himself.

Tabel 1. Research Instruments

No.	Theory/Concept	Dimentions	Descriptions
1	Theory of Social Penetration	*Breadth*	Breadth of topics covered during the communication process
		Depth	The level of depth of self-disclosure that individuals make in the developmental stage of the relationship.

2	The concept of self-disclosure	*Amount*	The frequency of self-disclosure and the duration required for self-disclosure.
		Valence Self Disclosure	The positive or negative things that happen when self-disclosure occurs.
		Honesty	Honesty in self-disclosure
		Accuracy/Intention	The depth and breadth of information disclosed by the individual.
		Intimacy	Disclosure of intimate, or private matters by individuals.

Data Analysis Techniques

When the data the researcher is looking for has been collected, the next process is to analyse the data. There are several steps that researchers must take to analyse qualitative data (Harahap, 2020, p.69-71). Miles and Huberman in Harahap (2020, p. 69) describe several steps to analyse qualitative data, including:

A) Data Reduction

After the data is collected, the next stage is to reduce the data by selecting data, compiling themes, dividing into categories, dividing according to the focus of the data, deleting, compiling, and summarising the data collected (Harahap, 2020, p. 69). In the data reduction stage, researchers grouped the data findings which were divided into two types, namely data on the dimensions of social penetration theory and the concept of self-disclosure. Furthermore, the data that has been grouped into two types is further divided based on the type of data starting from observation data in the form of observation reports, transcripts of interviews with sources, and documentation in the form of photos.

B) Data Display

This stage is done by presenting data in the form of sentences or narratives. Researchers can use the help of charts, data descriptions, and relationships between categories to facilitate the preparation of findings (Harahap, 2020. p. 71). At this stage the researcher classifies the data based on the subject matter of the interview. Data regarding self-disclosure were collected together based on categories such as interview transcripts, observation reports, and documentation. This method is carried out in order to obtain research results regarding the self-disclosure of lovers in the dating friend rental phenomenon. Furthermore, the data that has been reduced into two types, namely regarding social penetration and data related to self-disclosure, is presented in the research based on needs.

C) Drawing Conclusions

The data that has been reduced cannot be said to be permanent because there can be additional data and other findings (Harahap, 2020, p. 71). This stage is carried out last to complete the data that complements the findings and conclusions. Researchers returned to the field to find concrete data to reinforce existing data. The additional data found by researchers is in fact murky data that is tertiary in nature.
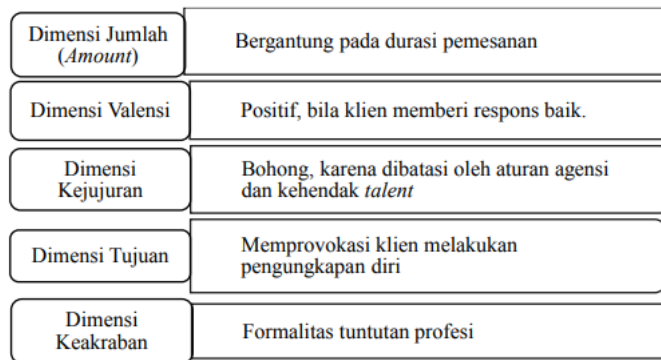
RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the table, it can be seen that all dimensions of self-disclosure are able to be done by clients to talents but are not able to be done entirely by talents to clients. Talent is not able to make perfect self-disclosure due to several factors such as agency demands, maintaining true identity, and distrust of clients.

Tabel 2. The application of self-disclosure to the rental dating phenomenon.

Dimentions	Talent to Client	Client to Talent
Amount	√	√
Valence	√	√
Honesty	x	√
Objective	√	√
Familiarity	x	√

a)   Fake Stories: A Form of Talent Self-Disclosure to Clients

Dimensi Jumlah (*Amount*)	Bergantung pada durasi pemesanan
Dimensi Valensi	Positif, bila klien memberi respons baik.
Dimensi Kejujuran	Bohong, karena dibatasi oleh aturan agensi dan kehendak *talent*
Dimensi Tujuan	Memprovokasi klien melakukan pengungkapan diri
Dimensi Keakraban	Formalitas tuntutan profesi

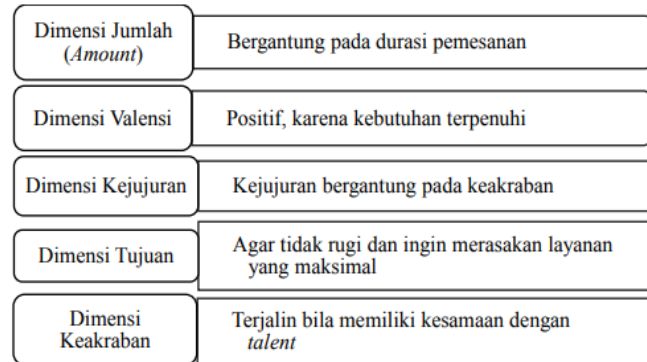**Figure 1.** Diagram of dimensions of self-disclosure by talent to client

In the process of relationship development, there are five barriers and challenges related to self-disclosure as shown in the diagram. The honesty dimension is the main reason why it is difficult for relationships to develop into intimate relationships.

In the amount dimension, it is explained that relationships will only develop when the individuals involved interact for a long time and repeatedly. In this case, talent is unable to perform the factors that make the relationship reach the intimate stage due to limited time. Especially in offline dating where self-disclosure only occurs as long as the talent and client interact face-to-face. When the rental period ends, the interaction is over. The start of the rental period is signalled by the initial interaction of the talent and the client. In virtual dating the rental duration starts from the first message from the talent while in offline dating the rental duration starts after the talent confirms the client's ID card shortly after meeting at the dating location.

False familiarity and the limited rental period make the talent and client unable to continue the development of the relationship to stage three, the affective exchange stage. This is because the affective exchange stage is characterised by relaxed interaction, intimate communication, and deep and extended discussion. Two of these aspects, namely intimate communication and in-depth and widespread discussions, were not able to be fulfilled by the talent, although casual interactions could be carried out. This is influenced by the talent's imperfect self-disclosure to the client.

b) **The Need for Friends and Reluctance to Experience Loss are the Reasons for Clients to Self-Disclose to Talent**

Based on the data found by the researcher, clients tend to be reluctant to open up due to the background of not knowing each other or strangers with the hired talent. Although the client needs the services of a hired lover to relieve loneliness or fulfil some special requests of the client, the client will open up if the talent takes the first step. Not only that, there are several factors that influence the client's self-disclosure to the talent which has an impact on the development of the relationship. The following diagram explains:

Dimensi Jumlah (*Amount*)	Bergantung pada durasi pemesanan
Dimensi Valensi	Positif, karena kebutuhan terpenuhi
Dimensi Kejujuran	Kejujuran bergantung pada keakraban
Dimensi Tujuan	Agar tidak rugi dan ingin merasakan layanan yang maksimal
Dimensi Keakraban	Terjalin bila memiliki kesamaan dengan *talent*

Figures 2. Diagram of the dimensions of client self-disclosure of talent.

Honesty is needed to support the process of developing the relationship to an intimate stage. However, the honesty of the client to the talent during self-disclosure depends on the rules of the agency and the familiarity built between the client and the talent. On offline dates, clients cannot cover up facts because one of the conditions for making a booking is to show personal data in the form of an identity card. So when offline dating takes place, clients choose to continue self-disclosure honestly but still limit the disclosure of personal information such as profession, domicile of education, and romantic status. However, on virtual dates clients can control the honesty in self-disclosure completely. This is because depending on the duration of the booking of the Amount dimension of the positive valence dimension, because the needs are met, the honesty dimension of honesty depends on familiarity so as not to lose and want to experience maximum service, the goal dimension is intertwined if it has something in common with the talent dimension of familiarity of booking virtual dating services, clients are not required to show an identity card to the agency.

Based on the data found by researchers, clients generally feel familiar with the hired talent. This is supported by the client's honesty in making self-disclosure, the purpose of making self-disclosure, and the positive value obtained after making self-disclosure. The client's self-disclosure makes it easier for the client to find common ground with the talent. This similarity becomes the common thread that unites the client and the talent that is able to give chemistry, and chemistry gives a sense of familiarity and intimacy. Starting from a need, self-disclosure ultimately feels satisfying and makes the client feel close to the talent. In fact, it is not uncommon for clients to make repeat orders because they are happy with the talent. Getting positive value after self-disclosure, feeling familiar, and providing information without covering up the facts done by the client to the talent does not actually help the development of the relationship.

CONCLUSION

After the researcher studied and analysed the findings in the study entitled 'Analysis of Self Disclosure of Couples in the Dating Friend Rental Phenomenon', it can be concluded that the self-disclosure made by talents and clients towards each other is not done naturally.

In the book (Morissan, 2010, p. 184-188) it is stated that self-disclosure is the key to the development of human relationships. If self-disclosure is not done by the individuals in the relationship, it is impossible for the relationship to reach the intimate stage. However, this statement can only be applied to organic relationships. Transactional relationships in the rental dating phenomenon have different rules. Self-disclosure is not able to be done perfectly because the individuals involved, namely the hired lover talent, make false self-disclosure while the service user client makes self-disclosure by force so as not to lose the material that has been spent.

The client made self-disclosure due to the demands of submitting personal data to the agency when booking services which caused the client to be unable to hide his identity. The original information about the client is known to the agency and the talent, even though it is not personal information. It is less likely for the client to conceal the fact of self. In addition, the sense of not wanting to lose the material that has been spent makes the client choose to reveal themselves in order to experience satisfying services. It is different with talents who are encouraged to cover personal data based on the rules of the agency. Talents make self-disclosures based on the personal data listed on the agency only, which is false personal data. The difference in the percentage of honesty performed during the self-disclosure process becomes a wall of separation between the talent and the client during the dating period. However, both can self-disclose without concealing the fact that both parties have something in common. Similarities can be found through hobbies, interests, outlook on life, or experiences. This information will provide an opportunity for the client and the talent to build an in-depth and extended discussion that allows them to get to know each other better.

A suggestion for future research is to change the angle by analysing the management of a hired lover agency. The services of rented lovers are not yet friendly to the public so the agency's management in marketing its services needs to be known. Continuing with the field of communication science, research on talent marketing carried out by agencies to agency development needs to be known more deeply. The phenomenon of rental dating cannot be separated from the agency's intervention in developing it. This research is still not perfect so the next researcher is expected to fulfil all the shortcomings of this research.

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