Understanding the culture of Sugar Dating Among University Students in Malaysia
(Memahami Budaya Sugar Dating Dalam Kalangan Pelajar Universiti di Malaysia)

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ABSTRACT

Sugar dating poses significant risks due to potential exploitation and power imbalances in relationships with older, wealthier partners. This research investigates the increasing practice of sugar dating among university students in Malaysia. With rising living costs and tuition fees, many students struggle to make ends meet, making sugar dating a tempting option. By interviewing students and hearing their stories, the research seeks to gain a deeper understanding of their motivations and experiences. Using a qualitative approach, the study will conduct in-depth interviews to gather detailed personal accounts from students involved in sugar dating. This method captures the complex and nuanced reasons behind their choices that numbers alone cannot explain. Additionally, a comprehensive literature review will provide broader context and insights into sugar dating trends. By shedding light on these issues, the research aims to help authorities in reviewing and developing policies or services that can support affected students and effectively manage the prevalence of sugar dating practices.

Keyword – Sugar Dating, University Students in Malaysia, Financial, Qualitative approach

ABSTRAK

"Sugar dating" menimbulkan risiko yang besar disebabkan oleh potensi eksploitasi dan ketidakseimbangan kuasa dalam hubungan dengan seseorang yang lebih tua dan kaya. Penyelidikan ini menyiasat peningkatan amalan budaya "Sugar Dating" dalam kalangan pelajar universiti di Malaysia. Dengan peningkatan kos sara hidup dan yuran pengajian, ramai pelajar bergelut untuk memenuhi keperluan hidup, menjadikan "Sugar Dating" sebagai pilihan. Dengan menemu bual pelajar dan mendengar cerita mereka, penyelidikan ini bertujuan untuk mendapatkan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang motivasi dan pengalaman mereka. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, kajian akan menjalankan temu bual mendalam untuk mengumpulkan pemahaman yang terperinci daripada pelajar yang terlibat dalam sugar dating. Kaedah ini menangkap factor yang kompleks dan nuansa di sebalik pilihan mereka yang tidak dapat dijelaskan oleh nombor sahaja. Selain itu, tinjauan literatur yang komprehensif akan memberikan konteks dan pandangan lebih luas yang mempengaruhi trend ini. Dengan menjelaskan isu-isu ini, penyelidikan bertujuan membantu pihak berkuasa dalam menyemak dan membangunkan dasar atau perkhidmatan yang boleh menyokong pelajar yang terjejas dan membendung amalan sugar dating dengan berkesan.

Kata Kunci – Sugar Dating, Pelajar Universiti di Malaysia, Kewangan, Pendekatan Kualitatif

INTRODUCTION

"Once I only had RM4 in my possession. With that amount, I bought five pieces of roti canai to survive. I stored them and only ate one piece at a time. I held on until my sister wired me RM100, which was barely enough to get me by for a month" (Nik Muhammad Mustaqim, 2019). For many students, university life is a constant struggle to balance their academic goals with financial survival. As bills pile up and wallets get lighter, sugar dating starts to seem like a practical solution. It's not just about finding companionship, it's also about finding financial help for necessities like groceries, rent, and textbooks.

The relationships formed through sugar dating are complex. Students often face challenges related to reciprocity, respect, and boundaries. According to Sooi (2022), Sugarbook, Asia's largest sugar dating website, reports that Malaysia is one of its biggest markets. As of February 2021, Sugarbook had over 400,000 active users in Malaysia, including 220,000 sugar babies, 180,000 sugar daddies, and 6,000 sugar moms. Additionally, SeekingArrangement, the world's largest sugar dating website, recorded 42,500 sugar daddies in Malaysia alone, placing the country third in Asia for the number of sugar daddies, behind Indonesia and India. Sugarbook also noted a 40% increase in college student users in a single month, with most sugar babies attending top private and state universities in the Klang Valley.

The phenomenon of sugar dating has gained increasing visibility in Malaysia, raising significant concerns from both legal and societal perspectives. While often discussed in moral and public health contexts, sugar dating also intersects with the legal framework, particularly under Section 372 of the Penal Code, which criminalizes the exploitation or solicitation of individuals for the purpose of prostitution. This provision serves as a strict legal deterrent against those who engage in or facilitate such arrangements. Despite this, the prevalence of sugar dating continues to grow, fueled by economic factors, digital platforms, and shifting societal attitudes. The controversy surrounding this issue stems from Malaysia's strong moral and ethical foundations, reinforced by Islam as the official religion of the Federation (Constitution, 2006). In a country that upholds strict standards of morality, the rise of sugar dating presents critical legal, ethical, and public health challenges that require deeper examination.

Beyond its legal implications, sugar dating among university students also raises concerns about its broader societal impact, particularly on personal values, ethics, and the socio-economic landscape of higher education. The appeal of financial support and exclusive experiences has led some students to engage in these arrangements as a means of alleviating economic pressures. While financial security may be a driving factor, the normalization of such relationships can blur ethical boundaries and expose individuals to risks, including exploitation and legal consequences. Through an exploration of the factors influencing this culture, this research aims to identify possible solutions.

OBJECTIVE

i. To explore and understand the cultural dynamics and underlying factors contributing to the increasing prevalence of sugar dating among university students in Malaysia.
ii. To analyse and interpret strategies that can be implemented to address and mitigate the normalization of sugar dating within Malaysian university culture.

DEFINITION AND TERMINOLOGY

i. Sugar dating: The process of creating a "mutually beneficial relationship" between a younger, financially insecure woman known as a "sugar baby" and an older, wealthy man known as a "sugar daddy" is known as "sugar dating". Sugar dating is a form of transactional sexual connection since these kinds of agreements sometimes entail the exchange of products and/or money for sexual services. (Nayar K, 2017)
ii. Sugar baby: A sugar baby is a person, usually a young person, who gets into a transactional relationship (sometimes called a "sugar daddy" or "sugar mommy") with an older, wealthy person in return for gifts, mentoring, cash assistance, or other material rewards. This connection might entail intimacy, friendship, or other arrangements that both parties have decided upon. Sugar daddies or mommies may want affection, company, or other types of companionship in exchange for their financial support, which sugar babies frequently need to pay for living bills, tuition, or other luxuries (Upadhyay, 2021).
iii. University student: Are persons who take courses at a university or a higher education institute. (Sart et al., 2023)

RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

By investigating the key factors that drove university students in Malaysia towards sugar dating, this research aimed to uncover personal motivations and key factors behind this trend. Understanding these factors was crucial for developing targeted interventions. The study highlighted the financial struggles students faced, such as rising tuition fees and living costs, which pushed them towards sugar dating as a means of financial support. This insight guided universities and policymakers in developing better financial aid programs and support services to alleviate these pressures. Based on the research findings, strategies to combat sugar dating were formulated.

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative study employing a phenomenological research design was conducted for this research. This approach was selected as it was well-suited for exploring participants' lived experiences, involvement, and perspectives on the phenomenon of sugar dating in Malaysia. According to Good (2023), "Phenomenology is a type of research that seeks to explain the nature of things through the way people experience them." Since sugar dating has been a persistent social issue throughout history, this study adopted a phenomenological framework to gain deeper insights into the phenomenon.

To gather data, a purposive sampling method was utilized to recruit participants for interviews. As defined by Nikolopoulou (2022), purposive sampling is "a group of non-probability sampling techniques in which units are selected because they have characteristics that we need in our sample." The selection criteria required participants to be Malaysian university students who had engaged in sugar dating relationships. This method provided direct access to firsthand accounts, allowing the study to examine the motivations behind sugar dating involvement and explore potential solutions.

In addition to this, this study made no delimitations regarding the gender of the sugar baby as long as they met the criteria of the participants. However, this issue is quite sensitive, and it is also quite difficult to find sugar babies to participate in. Hence, the study only managed to recruit five sugar babies.

The profile of the respondents was tabulated in Table 1 as follows:

TABLE 1

No.	Gender	Age	Status	Identity	Location	PSEUDONYM
1.	Female	23			Northern Region	(F, 23, Mrs. N)
2.	Female	24			Klang Valley	(F, 24, Mrs. K)
3.	Female	21	Active Student	Sugarbaby	Klang Valley	(F, 21, Mrs. KL)
4.	Female	23			Southern Region	(F, 23, Mrs. S)
5.	Male	22			Klang Valley	(M, 22, Mr. V)

In-depth, this study conducted structured interviews with the selected participants. The interview session lasted between 10 to 20 minutes through online meetings. Through conducting interviews, participants could express their opinions and provide truthful responses in their own words. It directed the participants in answering each question during the structured interview process. The interview included three major questions as stated below:

i. What are your thoughts on sugar dating?
ii. What factors influenced your decision to

iii. What do you think are effective ways to address and reduce the prevalence of sugar dating among university students?

The invitation to participate as a respondent in this study was spread through various social media platforms including Sugarbook, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and others. Participants either proactively reached out to the researchers or were directly approached through messaging. A list of screening questions was asked to each possible participant to make sure they were eligible before an interview was set up.

Given the sensitivity of this subject, which has been pointed out numerous times, the study took the ethical implications of the research into account and obtained participants' agreement before conducting interviews. Additionally, the study excluded the participants' names and other personal information. The study will not disclose the details unless they provide their consent to make sure they feel secure and at ease enough to take part in this specific study.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

The study analyses the data using the chunking method. Based on the data collected, the study grouped the data into small pieces with the same similarities. It is divided into two sections. In the first section, the study will analyze the understanding of the issues of sugar dating, followed by the methods that can be enforced in the second section.

Before we dive deeper into this topic, it is essential to first understand what sugar dating is all about. Generally, sugar dating refers to a form of arrangement in which a richer individual, known as a "sugar daddy" or "sugar mommy," offers financial assistance, gifts, or other material rewards to a partner, sometimes known as a "sugar baby" (Eric W. Dolan, 2014). In exchange, the sugar baby provides company, intimacy, or both. These partnerships include parts of transactional sex with traditional love bonds, with varying dynamics and goals. Bear in mind that, oftentimes, sugar dating is based on a clear grasp of the terms and rewards involved. Sugar dating differs from traditional romantic relationships in that they are more transactional in nature, rather than emotional connection and mutual goals. The sugar baby usually gets financial help, luxury goods, or experiences, whereas the sugar daddy or mommy wants connection, attention, or other types of intimacy. Now, it is time to understand the meaning of sugar dating from the sugar babies' point of view.

"From my understanding, well, the… man sponsors the woman in terms of finance and other needs in return for sexual favors" (F, 23, Mrs. N)

"ok, umm, daripada pendapat saya, sugardaddy ni adalah orang kaya yang uhh akan provide kesenangan untuk umm dia punya partner. And, partner dia kena bagi ahh, something la, which is maybe daripada servis, sex service, ummm, ataupun umm, layanan macam ahh, manja2 macam tu. lepas tu umm, orang kaya ni akan bagi la kesenangan dekat dia. Harta ka, apa semua la, macam tu laa." (F, 23, Mrs. S)

"Kalau macam saya, dia akan tolong atau bagi saya apa-apa yang saya nak tapi in return saya kena buat apa yang dia suruh, contoh macam urut, nakal-nakal sikit, erm faham-faham la, tapi tak la selalu, kalau ada nak je" (M, 22, Mr. V)

From these responses, it is evident that the definition of sugar dating aligns with what the public understands, which is basically a financial arrangement in which a richer person (commonly referred to as a "sugar daddy" or "sugar mommy") offers financial assistance and other material advantages to a partner (the "sugar baby"). In exchange, the sugar baby provides affection, intimacy, and other services that they want. The dynamics can fluctuate, but the primary idea is a trade of resources for relationship or sex services. It is crucial to recognise that these interactions function within the framework of power dynamics and cultural standards. Clear communication and permission are essential when handling such situations.

The definition given is aligned with many of the journals and articles that the study came across while doing this research. For example, the article from Maren T. Scull (2020) with the title "It's Its Own Thing": A Typology of Interpersonal Sugar Relationship Scripts. In the article, it is clearly stated that sugar dating is somehow "mutually beneficial relationships" (MRBs). This means that, in exchange for the affection and intimacy that they can offer, the other party will have to provide financial stability as well as career growth for them.

However, if we take a closer look at this type of relationship, we can see that it is closely related to prostitution, which many have overseen. To support this claim, let's look at the article by Azalia Ambia Jacobs and Airin Miranda (2020). In their article, they stated that sugar dating is under the same umbrella as prostitution because it involves the exchange of money for sex services provided, which is the same as

traditional prostitution.

Based on the findings, the study has identified two main factors that are contributing to the rising rate of sugar babies among Malaysian university students, which are Financial Problem and Emotional Desires. From the interview session, all the respondents have given the same responses, which are financial assistance. The responses were recorded and translated into scripts as follows:

The respondent stated *"kalau bagi I, faktor yang menyumbang ni umm, kekurangan duit la .sebab student kan, tau la macam-macam nak beli"* (F, 24, Mrs. K)

Based on the response, it can be said that the respondent agrees that the main factor that led her to be a sugar baby is the insufficient amount of money. Due to financial strain and the necessity to pay for living and educational costs, a student may become a sugar baby if they have a lack of money. Some students are compelled by financial difficulties to look for alternate sources of money, which leads them to participate in such arrangements.

Moreover, the male respondent stated that *"biasala, nak follow trend, banyak modal nak pakai"* (M, 22, Mr. V)

This demonstrates how students frequently overindulge in life, and being a sugar baby is just one way they accomplish their needs. This is because a student's financial demands can be met by being a sugar baby because it offers a reliable source of money for a lavish and trendy lifestyle. For example, receiving new gadgets, designer handbags, five-star dinners, branded clothes and other goods that could not be paid by a student realistically in every month.

Next, the respondent also stated that *"so jadi saya jadi macam kekurangan duit dari segi nak makan, lepas tu nak beli barang-barangan macam makeup semua"* (F, 23, Mrs. S).

Based on this, it can be shown that the respondent decided to be a sugar baby because not only to fulfill her needs, but she has those luxury desires that are beyond her basic needs. This is because being a student means she does not have a permanent job or being employed, so she does not have a standard monthly income.

In addition, the respondent also said that *"Saya ni daripada keluarga yang agak susah la sebenarnya. So, ahh bagi saya faktor kewangan la"* (F, 21, Mrs. KL). From these quotes, the study can identify that financial difficulties lead students to become sugar babies, as it is a practical way to deal with the rising cost of living and tuition fees. A lot of students struggle to make ends meet while paying off large student loans and the meagre income from part-time jobs.

Unfortunately, there are contradictions in perspectives about being a sugar baby based on the participant itself. This is because the respondent also said that *"Tapi niat tak pernah menghalalkan cara"* (F, 21, Mrs. KL).

Based on this, the study can emphasize that one respondent did not think it is ethical to become a sugar baby just because one is born into a low-income family. There are still other ethical ways to survive in university instead of becoming a sugar baby, which has the potential for exploitation. For example, working part-time at a cafe, doing part-time e-hailing services, and other ethical jobs. Being poor does not justify becoming a sugar baby, nor does it make the practice acceptable and ethical in today's society.

Other than that, some respondents also provided fresh insights on emotional support. The responses were recorded and translated into scripts as follows:

"It is not only uh financial relationship it is also emotional relationship, uhh feel a need of companionship" (F, 23, Mrs. N)

"Kan jauh dari keluarga, rasa lonely la.. so macam perlukanlah kasih sayang disini, perasan mau dibelai, mau dimanja, macam kat rumah" (F, 23, Mrs. S).

"Awal-awal tu just for money, but surprisingly perasan tu dah slowly timbul" (M, 22, Mr. V)

"Sometimes dia pun akan bagi I support kalau tengah stress study, badmood macam tu, dia akan pujukla..urm.. kadang pujuk dengan duit, bawa I keluar or comfort word mcm tu" (F, 24, Mrs. K)

As we can see, sugar dating can foster complicated emotional dynamics because it frequently combines affection and financial dependence. Emotional relationships in sugar dating are often temporary and highly influenced by explicit agreements between the two parties (Gunnarsson, 2023). These emotional relationships can be classified as the needs for companionship, sexual interaction & opportunity to experience different lifestyles. Being a sugar baby therefore necessitates a certain set of feelings because of the intimacy between the parties. The emotional needs of the benefactory as the giver and the recipient were the beginning of all this intimacy. If there are equal emotional needs amongst the two parties involved, this will never occur. It follows that it is possible for a lack of emotional support to contribute to the development of sugar dating. Thus, it is true that having a lack of

emotional support could be one of the factors that lead to sugar dating. All in all, based on the findings, this first section aligns with the first research objective which is to explore and understand the cultural dynamics and underlying factors contributing to the increasing prevalence of sugar dating among university students in Malaysia

Moving on to the next section, this analysis focuses on the methods that can be enforced to combat the issue. To address the issue of sugar dating among university students, the study identifies a multi-faceted approach which involves university assistance and ethical considerations.

Some respondents highlight that universities are in a unique position to address the issue of sugar dating discreetly and effectively. By handling these matters internally, universities can prevent potential damage to their reputation while providing immediate support to affected students.

"The immediate authority that should uh deal with this is the university authority first, so that it is on that matter, uh it doesn't become uhh something with this out of the public because then it could damage the reputation of their university." (F, 23, Mrs. N)

"University patut ambil tindakan la" (M, 22, Mr. V)

The respondents then suggest that universities can establish dedicated loan facilities to support students in need. This approach would provide a crucial safety net for students facing financial difficulties, allowing them to focus on their studies without the added stress of financial instability. The respondent suggests that:

"Giving those kinds of financial assistance should also perhaps give some loans facilities in case the students really need it so that the student don't have to turn to other sources like sugar daddy." (F, 23, Mrs. N)

"University patut tolongla jaga kebajikan pelajar macamtu, bagi pinjaman, bantuan, zakat ka.." (F, 23, Mrs. S).

Currently, students have access to the PTPTN Education Financing Scheme, an initiative by the Ministry of Higher Education that provides loans to students pursuing their studies. However, this scheme is not directly administered by universities, which can result in cumbersome hierarchies and lengthy procedures. For better accessibility, universities should manage their own financial assistance programs, allowing students to navigate the process more easily and efficiently.

Other than that, the findings also show that universities also can establish food banks or meal programs to assist students facing food insecurity.

"For example those from the B40 family I think the university has given some assistance ya. For example food assistance but I'm not really sure to what extent. And the data should be available to the university authorities regarding the financial situation of a students ya" (F, 23, Mrs. N)

"I rasa perlu perkasa lagi foodbank dan pelbagaikan jenis makanan, jangan letak maggi je.." (F, 24, Mrs. K)

This respondent's suggestions align with current initiatives, as the Malaysian government under Kementerian Dalam Negeri has introduced the "Food Bank Siswa" program. This initiative is an extension of the Malaysia National Food Bank Program aimed at supporting B40 students in several public universities. However, for this effort to be truly effective, it must be implemented holistically across all universities, including private institutions. Additionally, universities should systematically collect and analyze data on students' financial situations to identify those in need and provide targeted assistance.

Moreover, universities also can implement advisory programs to provide students with information on the potential risks and consequences of sugar dating, including its impact on their future relationships and emotional well-being.

"Should be urmm advice on the long-term implication of this kind of relationship, how it can damage uh for their future so uhh because it is not only uh financial relationship it is also emotional relationship." (F, 23, Mrs. N)

This respondent's suggestion is supported by a published journal from the University of Northern Iowa titled "The Purposes, Benefits, and Implementation of an Effective Advisor/Advisee Program." The journal highlights that an effective advisory program ensures that the advisor knows the student in their advisory group well enough to handle almost any problem they may encounter. It also emphasizes that important issues in the community can be a focus during activities in the advisor/advisee program (Perry, 1996).

Additionally, incorporating comprehensive advisory programs aligns with recommendations for student welfare in higher education. These programs are designed to address a wide range of issues, including those that are sensitive and impactful, such as sugar dating. By offering targeted advice and support,

universities can help students navigate complex personal and financial situations, ultimately promoting a healthier and more supportive academic environment.

This finding also suggests that universities should identify students involved in sugar dating and provide counselling. This approach is crucial for addressing the emotional and psychological dimensions of such relationships.

"To identify do whatsoever of this kind of relationship then there should advice counseling uhh and the panel obviously that's other uhh venue that is open or cause-affection in university" (F, 23, Mrs. N)

The mention of a panel in quote dialogue indicates the need for a structured support system, where trained professionals can offer advice and counselling. These panels can serve as safe spaces for students to discuss their issues. One study from the University of Leicester found a high prevalence of mental health issues, such as depression and PTSD, among female sex workers, including those involved in sugar dating. A 2021 report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine also emphasized the need for a campus-wide culture change to better support students' mental health. It recommends that universities develop comprehensive mental health strategies, including proactive counselling services that are easily accessible to students. This aligns with the suggestion that universities should provide counselling to students involved in such relationships to address these emotional and psychological challenges.

The findings also highlight the need for a supportive rather than punitive approach. Universities should recognize that financial hardship is a significant factor driving students to sugar dating. Therefore, providing financial aid, loan facilities, and food assistance can address the root causes.

"kena berlembut la untuk tolong bantu ni, ahh sebab mereka pun ada sebab kenapa terjeremus dalam benda ni" (F, 21, Mrs. KL).

A "linear approach" suggested by the respondent is a need for a comprehensive and continuous support system. This includes ongoing counselling, monitoring, and assistance to address the underlying issues driving students to engage in sugar dating.

Next, ethical considerations regarding the issue of sugar dating among university students involve a combination of awareness and education.

Programs aimed at educating students about the ethical dimensions of sugar dating are essential. These programs can include workshops, seminars, and online resources tailored to the student population. The goal is to ensure students understand the potential exploitation involved in sugar dating. The findings emphasized the importance of making students aware of exploitation.

"Suppossedly umm, patut sedar yang umm, tengah dieksploitasi ahh, dan patut ada kesedaran tentang ahh maruah diri sendiri." (W, 23, Mrs. N)

This respondent's statement aligns with the "Student Blog Series: Sweetening the Deal: The Glamorization of Sugar Dating on Social Media," published by Villanova University School of Law, which points out that the reality behind sugar dating is far less glamorous than the narratives promoted on social media. In truth, sugar dating increases the risk of exploitation for vulnerable individuals. Thus, education should underscore the risks associated with sugar dating and emphasize the importance of maintaining personal integrity. By understanding these risks, students may be deterred from engaging in such relationships. The respondent states:

"Ni boleh jejas masa depan dia. Contohnya, kalau dia nak kahwin ke, nak mulakan keluarga ke, benda ni boleh jadi episod gelap dalam hidup dia yang mungkin dia tak boleh nak move on." (M, 22, Mr. V)

Research also indicates that such relationships can erode boundaries and impair individuals' capacity to cultivate healthy relationships in the future (Hegemonic Masculinity in Sugar Dating Relationships, 2020). This awareness can dissuade students from participating in sugar dating by sensitizing them to potential future regrets and emotional trauma. Discussions on the associated stigma and emotional repercussions of sugar dating are imperative. Awareness campaigns should comprehensively address how involvement in such relationships can influence students' personal and professional lives. Real-life case studies and testimonials can significantly enhance these discussions, fostering a deeper understanding among students of the profound implications of their choices.

However, this approach contradicts the perspective shared by sugar babies themselves, who highlight the inefficacy of awareness campaigns due to the ongoing trend and their willingness to compromise dignity for financial gain from sugar daddies.

"bagi saya u, agak kurang berkesan sebab isu sugar daddy ni still berkembang. Maksudnya, ramai ja student yang sanggup ahh, gadaikan maruah diaorang untuk sugar daddy ni semua. So, bagi saya, agak kurang berkesan." (F, 24, Mrs. K)

Thus, there is a growing recognition of the importance of advocating for traditional, committed relationships. The sentiment expressed in the interview:

"Dia patut propose dan, you know, kahwin dia secara sah, sebab dekat je, kadang-kadang boleh je cross border." (M, 22, Mr. V)

This respondent's statement reflects a longing for relationships grounded in commitment and emotional closeness, rather than transactional exchanges. Research consistently highlights the benefits of committed relationships built on mutual trust and emotional intimacy. Studies indicate that individuals in such relationships report higher levels of satisfaction and overall well-being (Diener et al., 2000). This underscores the profound impact that genuine emotional connections can have on one's happiness and life fulfilment.

However, sugar dating, characterized by financial arrangements in exchange for companionship, may lack the depth and emotional fulfilment found in traditional relationships. Individuals engaged in sugar dating often face challenges such as trust issues and societal stigma, which can impact their emotional well-being and future relationship prospects (Zhao et al., 2017).

Promoting traditional relationship values involves emphasizing commitment, communication, and mutual respect. Educational programs play a crucial role in teaching young adults how to cultivate strong, enduring relationships. Embracing commitment and emotional closeness in traditional relationships fosters supportive and fulfilling bonds. By promoting these values, society empowers young adults to make choices that pave the way for long-term happiness and well-being.

Based on the insights provided by participants, it is evident that combating the issue of sugar dating among university students in Malaysia can be effectively approached through two key methods, which are University Assistance and ethical considerations. In short, these methods not only align with the second research objective of analyzing effective strategies to combat sugar dating among university students in Malaysia but also underscore the role of educational institutions in shaping attitudes and behaviors towards relationships. By combining University Assistance with ethical considerations, universities can contribute to combating the issue of sugar dating.

CONCLUSION

This study has emphasized the issue of sugar dating among Malaysian university students while also identifying some limitations that must be addressed. The study faced problems such as a small sample size, ethical concerns, and a failure to include benefactors' opinions. To gain a more thorough knowledge of this issue, future study should try to involve more individuals, adhere to strict ethical norms, and include many points of view.

In conclusion, this study is purely qualitative to explore the issue of sugar dating as well as the possible solutions to curb this emerging issue in society. The respondents' engagement in the study is another important factor in its effectiveness. To sum up, the definition of a sugar relationship can be summarized as a financial arrangement where a wealthier individual, commonly known as a "sugar daddy" or "sugar mommy," provides financial support and other material benefits to their partner, known as the "sugar baby" in return for companionship, attention, or even romantic or physical favours. Potential solutions to address this issue involve considering ethical considerations and receiving support from universities. This support can come in the form of financial and food assistance, advisory programs, and access to counselling services. Implementing these measures could address the financial pressures that drive students towards sugar dating, offering them healthier alternatives for support.

APPRECIATION

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