

## Self-Acceptance of *Saye's (Tajen Judge) Children in Bali*

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**Abstract.** Self-acceptance plays a crucial role in mental health and emotional well-being. In Balinese society, children living with a parent who works as a *saye* and is involved in gambling struggle to accept themselves. Therefore, it is urgent to understand or study the experiences of *saye's* children and their self-acceptance. This study used a phenomenological qualitative approach, and the data were analyzed using the thematic analysis method. The data were gathered through semi-structured and narrative interviews. There were three participants aged 18-25 years living with a parent who works as a *saye (tajen judge)*. The results of this study showed that: 1) The children of the *saye* have unpleasant experiences related to stigma, stereotypes, verbal bullying, and their fathers anger when losing a gamble; 2) The children go through stages of self-acceptance, such as denial and rationalization, becoming involved in the gambling activity, finding meaning, and achieving self-acceptance; and 3) Factors that contribute to the childrens self-acceptance include the socio-cultural environment, positive support, and democratic parenting. To increase the self-acceptance of *saye 's* children, families should provide a safe environment for children, and society should not stigmatize *saye's* families. The results of this research cannot simply be applied to other regions because Gianyar Regency carries out *tajen* activities more frequently compared to other locations. Future research needs to explore other areas in Bali.

**Keywords:** phenomenology; self-acceptance; *saye*; *tajen*

*Tajen* (cockfighting) is a traditional game that has been passed down from generation to generation among Balinese people (Geertz, 1992). It was originally a *tabuh rah* activity in a religious ceremony. The gambling practice in *tajen* began when *tabuh rah* (an activity of sprinkling animal blood in a religious ceremony) underwent a shift in its meaning. The betting of money became involved, and with it, peoples desire to win the game (Atmadja et al., 2015). According to Kniten et al. (2005), *tajen* can be categorized as gambling if it is being carried out for more than three *saet* (rounds), has no ceremonial equipment, involves betting (desire to win), and has no official permission from the authorities.

Since the 1990s, gambling in *tajen* has become a polemic in Balinese society because it is considered contrary to their religious teachings (Eddy, 2005). In fact, one of the holy books of Hinduism, The Manawa Dharmasastra, explains that the practice of gambling in *tajen* can have a major

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impact on peoples lives, such as the emergence of crimes like theft due to losing a gamble (Atmadja et al., 2015). Gambling in *tajen* also causes harm and threatens the welfare of some people (Giri et al., 2017). Disputes regarding *tajen* activities in Bali have existed since 1958, which was marked by raids from the authorities (Geertz, 1992). This dispute became increasingly evident after the recent *tajen* raid on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019 in Denpasar (Tabelak, 2019).

The moral dilemma towards the positive and negative sides of *tajen* involves various aspects, such as tradition and socio-economic aspects. Some parties involved in *tajen* argued that *tajen* is not just a gambling activity, but a place to get income (primary or additional income). There are two groups of people who get involved in *tajen* to earn money (Atmadja et al., 2015): the first group is people who are involved in the *tajen* arena, such as *saye* (*tajen* judge), *pakembar* (responsible for releasing the roosters into the pit), *gisi* (responsible for holding the roosters feet while being attached with *taji*, a small dagger attached to the roosters feet), and lastly is *taji* craftsman (responsible for attaching *taji* to the roosters feet). The second group is the people who are seeking income outside the *tajen* arena, such as food vendors, clothes sellers, and others. This explanation shows that there are many parties involved in *tajen* activity in Bali, but this study will only focus on the *saye* (*tajen* judge).

Based on observations conducted by researchers when visiting several *tajen* arenas in Gianyar, researchers found that the event is held almost every day, and *saye* have a higher position within *tajen* activity compared to other parties involved. This finding is relevant to the previous Geertz's study (Geertz, 1992) which showed that the *saye's* decision has never gotten any disagreement from *bebotoh* (*tajen* gamblers). *Saye* are respected by *tajen* gamblers, and their decisions in *tajen* are absolute. An interview was conducted by the first author with two persons who work as *saye* on April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019. The interview showed that *saye* have the right to decide the winner based on the rules of *tajen*. *Saye* are also responsible for the *tajen* gamblers betting money.

The betting system of *tajen* in Bali is adjusted with the position of the bet. For example, the middle bet, which is a type of bet where the gambler is also the owner of the pitted chicken (D, personal communication, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020). The *saye* is responsible for this bet. Commonly, for this bet, the betting money is relatively higher and it is taxed at 10% for each round of cockfighting. This tax is used by the organizer to increase the villages income or the organizer itself; so in this case, the *saye* is considered to have a huge contribution in increasing the welfare of the villagers. This makes the *saye*, in some areas, regarded as a highly respected figure.

*Saye*, who are responsible for the organizing of *tajen*, receive a salary every day. The amount of salary they receive greatly varies. One of the informants from preliminary study shared that they would receive a salary of around five hundred thousand to one million rupiah for a days work (U, personal communication, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019). Although they have a routine income, the informant said that he still bets in order to earn more money. When referring to Article 303 Paragraph 3 of the Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP), any individual who participates in betting can be categorized as a gambler, because the article states that gambling is any kind of game in which every player has the desire to win, and the winning condition is based on the fate of the gambler.

The involvement of *saye* in gambling causes some impact on their children, spouse, and their

family members. According to previous research by Ciarrocchi and Hohman in 1989, as cited by Dowling (2014), the family of a gambler has a less conducive environment, high levels of anger and conflict, lack of communication, and lack of commitment. The informal interview with three of the research participants' also proved relevant to the previous research findings (A, K, J, informal interview, May 30<sup>th</sup> and June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019). All three participants shared that they feel a lack of attention from and communication with their fathers. One of the participants also shared that they experienced verbal abuse from her father (J, informal interview, June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019). Another participant also shared an unpleasant experience she had in school, where bullying caused her to feel embarrassed to acknowledge her fathers profession (K, informal interview, June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019). The participants confessions showed that Balinese people not only interpret *tajen* as a religious ceremony, but have also internalized a negative evaluation or stigma from society regarding *tajen* activity. This societal opinion and judgment leads to several children of *saye* rejecting their fathers profession and feeling embarrassed of it.

According to Dowling (2014), gambling has impacts on the childrens emotional, physical, and behavioral conditions. Emotional impacts include depression, hopelessness, confusion, and anxiety. Physical impacts can include symptoms such as asthma, chronic headaches, and allergic reactions. Behavioral impacts include running away, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, and low level of academic ability. This explanation is supported by previous research conducted by Martyres et al. (2015) that showed children who grew up in a family with gambling problems experienced feelings of being left out, rejected, angry, depressed, and desperate. These negative feelings come from their inability to accept their status as a child of a parent who has a profession that opposes societal norms (Baida, 2014).

These previous researches showed that children living with parents who are gamblers experience intense emotional problems due to their struggling to accept their status as a gamblers child. Therefore, we assume that *saye's* children also experience similar issues, which makes self-acceptance of *saye's* children an important topic to be studied. In this study, what we mean as the process of a childs self-acceptance is the process of accepting ones shortcomings, strengths, and unpleasant experiences or occasions related to their fathers work in *tajen* gambling.

Self-acceptance plays a crucial role in mental health (Carson & Langer, 2006). Individuals who have not yet accepted themselves unconditionally will experience several emotional difficulties, such as uncontrollable anger and depression. Self-acceptance is an individuals ability to embrace their shortcomings, potentials, and embrace their past (Xu et al., 2014). According to Carson and Langer (2006), there are two aspects of self-acceptance: authenticity and appropriate self-evaluation. Authenticity refers to an individual's ability and willingness to let others see themselves as they are without worrying about other peoples negative judgement, and for that individual to be fully involved in their current experiences. An authentic individual is an individual who focuses on personal development and no longer dwells in pretence. Meanwhile, appropriate self-evaluation refers to an individuals ability to evaluate themselves and to perceive things objectively. Based on the definition from experts in literature reviewed, the meaning of self-accepting individuals in this study refers to individuals who are authentic, embrace their strengths and shortcomings, as well as able to evaluate

themselves objectively regardless of other peoples negative evaluation including judgments about their parents profession as *saye*.

Based on the issue and literature reviewed, *saye's* children have complex dynamics in life, from expressing their attitude towards their fathers profession, facing social pressure such as stigmas and discrimination, to dealing with their fathers violent behaviour. These dynamics fester negative emotions in *saye's* children which cause shame and denial of their fathers profession. On the other hand, *saye's* children aged 18-25 years are in the process of self-acceptance and developing positive views toward their friends and families (Feist et al., 2021). When a *saye's* child has not yet to accepted themselves, it can affect their self-satisfaction and how they adjust themselves in society (social adjustment) (Schwartz et al., 2013).

Previous research (Baida, 2014; Martyres et al., 2015) and preliminary study by authors also showed that children living with a parent who is a gambler struggle to accept themselves. Meanwhile, according to a study by Carson and Langer (2006) self-acceptance plays a crucial role in mental health and emotional difficulties. Literature reviewed showed that self-acceptance associated with *tajen* in Bali has never been explored. Therefore, it is urgent to understand or study *saye's* children's experiences and their self-acceptance. The following are reasons why this topic is important and urgent to be studied: first, *tajen* is not only a religious ceremony but also a gambling activity; second, informal interviews with *saye's* children showed that they have internalized stigma from their environment and have received negative treatment from people around them, which causes them feelings of shame and psychological problems; third, there has never been any discussion related to *tajen* in the private domain of the families who involved in *tajen* activity; and fourth, several previous studies only explained the *tajen* phenomenon from a cultural perspective (Atmadja et al., 2015; Geertz, 1992; Udayana & Pariadnya, 2017). This study will focus on understanding the process of self-acceptance of *saye's* children in more detail. It aims to understand and describe the personal experience of *saye's* children, how it relates to their self-acceptance as a child of a *saye*, including their perspective on their fathers profession.

## Method

### *Study Approach and Design*

This study is a qualitative study with a descriptive phenomenological approach. The descriptive phenomenological approach is used to capture the participants experience (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). As such, the method is in line with the aim of this study.

### *Participants Recruitment*

The method used to recruit participants was the snowball technique with criterion sampling. Participants were acquired by asking people who were involved in *tajen*. In November 2019, two participants that met the requirements and were willing to participate were recruited. One of these participants recommended two other people who were also children of *saye*. After contacting them,

one person rejected being involved in this study due to a permission issue with their parent. Therefore, only three participants participated in this study in the end.

### *Participants*

The inclusion criteria of participants are: (1) Individuals who are living with parents who work as a *saye* (*tajen* judge) in Bali; and (2) aged 18-25 years. The age range 18-25 years was chosen as a criteria because it is an exploration period and a transition from adolescence to early adulthood period (John, 2023). In addition, according to Eriksons psychosocial developmental theory, in this period individuals are still seeking their identity by expanding their social circle and finding positive values of family, friends, and relatives (Feist et al., 2021). Individuals are also in the process of accepting themselves based on the self-image or identity they had previously discovered (Feist et al., 2021). Positive values and self-acceptance allow individuals aged 18-25 years to explore their interests without shame or doubt, and they can develop positive feelings such as satisfaction, finding their worth, and finding their purpose in life (Schwartz et al., 2013).

The participants involved in this study were three people, consisting of two males and one female, age range between 19 - 25 years old. Their educational backgrounds were high school, diploma, and bachelor. The demographic data of the participants can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
*Demographic Data of the Participants*

No	Description	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3
1	Initials	P1	P2	P3
2	Age	19 years-old	25 years-old	19 years-old
3	Gender	Female	Male	Male
4	Educational background	High-school	Bachelor	Diploma
5	Residence	Home, with parents	Home, with parents	Home, with parents
6	Occupation	Unemployed	Entrepreneur	Employee of a private company
7	Religion	Hindu	Hindu	Hindu
8	Marital status	Unmarried	Unmarried	Unmarried
9	Birth order	Youngest of four siblings	Second of three siblings	Youngest of two siblings
10	Knowing their fathers' occupation as a <i>saye</i>	During Elementary School	During Junior High School	During elementary school

Data collection. The instruments used to gather data in this study were semi-structured and narrative interviews. Both of these methods were used to capture comprehensive information about each participants experience whose father worked as *saye*, as well as give participants the opportunity to narrate their personal experience in detail. The process of gathering data started by giving each

participant an informed consent form, then proceeded to the interview and member checking process. The first interviews were conducted from November 28<sup>th</sup> to December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2019 through face-to-face meetings. Follow-up interviews and narrative interviews were carried out from April 16<sup>th</sup> to June 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 through phone calls. Member checking was carried out through phone and face-to-face meetings from June 29<sup>th</sup> to September 19<sup>th</sup> 2020. The guidelines for semi-structured and narrative interviews can be seen in table 2 and table 3. These guidelines constructed based on the preliminary study conducted by the researchers, Hurlocks explanation (Hurlock, 1974) about factors affecting self-acceptance, and the explanation of the I gambling phenomenon in a book written by Atmadja et al. (2015).

**Table 2**  
*Semi-Structured Interview Guideline*

	Objectives	Questions
Description of <i>tajen</i> in Bali	Understanding participants' perception of <i>tajen</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Could you tell us about the <i>tajen</i> in Bali?</li> <li>2. Have you ever followed your father to the <i>tajen</i> arena? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you had, could you tell us about the condition and situation of the <i>tajen</i> that you saw?</li> <li>• If you had not, could you tell us how did you learn about <i>tajen</i>?</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
Personal perception and acceptance toward father's profession as <i>saye</i>	Understanding the profession of participants' fathers as <i>saye</i>	Could you tell us about your father' profession as <i>saye</i> ?

**Table 2 (Continued)***Semi-Structured Interview Guideline*

	Objectives	Questions
	Understanding how societal opinion/perception influences participants' perception, acceptance, and judgments on their fathers' profession as <i>saye</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do you think about your father's profession?</li> <li>2. How did you feel when you learned that your father works as <i>saye</i>?</li> <li>3. Do you support and accept what your father does for a living? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you do, since when did you start to have that attitude?</li> <li>• If you do not, since when did you start to have that attitude?</li> <li>• Then, when you're filling out any kind of form, what will you write on your parent's profession section? (especially your father's profession)</li> <li>• If you're not writing '<i>saye's</i>', why is that?</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
	Understanding the role of parents, especially fathers in parenting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Could you tell us about your experience being raised or taking care by your parents?</li> <li>2. According to you, which parental figure has contributed the most to your life so far? Why is that?</li> </ol>
Perception of self	Understanding participants' perception on themselves, related to their fathers' profession as <i>saye</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How do you describe yourself as an individual?</li> <li>2. Does your father's profession as <i>saye</i> affected how you see yourself? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If so, how do you see yourself at this moment (as a <i>saye's</i> child)?</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

**Table 2 (Continued)**

*Semi-Structured Interview Guideline*

	Objectives	Questions
	Understanding how societal opinion/perception influences participants' evaluation and acceptance of themselves	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do you often compare yourself with others? (related to your identity as a <i>saye's</i> child and your father's profession). Could you explain?</li> <li>2. If you were given an opportunity to change your life, what kind of person do you wish to become? (related to your identity as a <i>saye's</i> child.</li> </ol>
Impact of father's profession as <i>saye</i>	Understanding the society's acceptance towards participant as <i>saye's</i> child	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does your father's profession become an obstacle in establishing relationships or interacting with others, such as friends (for example)? Could you explain? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you ever received negative opinion/perception/evaluation or stigma from people around you? If you have, how did you deal with those stigmas?</li> <li>• Could you tell us about your experience as a <i>saye's</i> child living in society?</li> <li>• If there any people around you were against <i>tajen</i>, what was their reason? What was your response?</li> <li>• If there any people around you supported <i>tajen</i> what was their reason? What was your response?</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Could you tell us about your most unpleasant experience being the child of <i>saye</i>? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In general, do you think you have more pleasant experiences or unpleasant ones? How so? Could you explain?</li> </ul> </li> </ol>



**Table 3**  
*Narrative Interview*

Objectives	Questions
Understanding the stages of self-acceptance in <i>saye's</i> children	Before knowing their fathers' profession as <i>saye</i> :
	1. If you write a chapter of your life, how do you describe your life or yourself before knowing your father's profession as <i>saye</i> ? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What would the title be?</li> <li>• Why did you choose that title?</li> <li>• Tell me the story of this chapter.</li> </ul>
	After knowing their fathers' profession as <i>saye</i> :
	1. If you write a chapter of your life, how do you describe your life or yourself after knowing that your father works as <i>saye</i> ? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What would the title be?</li> <li>• Why choose that title?</li> <li>• Tell me the story of this chapter</li> </ul>
	Current life:
	1. If you write a chapter of your life, how do you describe your life or yourself at this moment? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What would the title be?</li> <li>• Why choose that title?</li> <li>• Tell me the story of this chapter</li> </ul>

Data Analysis. The data was analysed using the thematic analysis method. The thematic analysis method was carried out based on the stages of thematic analysis according to Braun and Clarke (2022), such as: (1) collecting the entirety of data and creating a verbal data transcript; (2) creating initial codes from the interview data; (3) searching for theme; (4) conducting a theme review process; (5) defining and giving names to the emerging themes; and (6) creating reports or results.

## Result

The results of this study will be presented from the background of the three participants, the narrative of their lives which will be divided into the beginning-middle-and end, their stages of self-acceptance, and factors that support and inhibit their self-acceptance as a *saye's* child.

Participants Background. Participant 1 (P1) is a 19 year-old female college student who lives with her parents. P1 grew up in a family that is quite close to *tajen* activity. P1 's father is working as a *saye*, while her mother is a vendor in *tajen* venue, and one of P1 's siblings was also involved in *tajen* gambling activity. P1 shared that before becoming a *saye*, P1's father was just a regular gambler, without

a steady income and always looked down upon by his relatives. P1's family once lived in poverty, that was until P1's father was given the opportunity to become a *saye*. Since then, their family's financial situation began to improve, but at the same time, P1 began to experience bullying for being a *saye's* child. This made P1 question her father's profession as *saye* and began to cover it up by saying that her dad worked as a civil servant or a teacher, which she considered more acceptable by society.

*"Other people's view of my parents' job is, like, it's always bad in their eyes. I mean, it's very common for people to be like how much is it working in *tajen*, like, how much is the salary? Something like that, with a condescending note". (Participant 1-P1, 262-265)*

*"...had it during elementary, also had it during middle school. Why took a job in gambling? The teachers would always tell that gambling is forbidden, something like that... I wanted to have a father who works as a teacher, civil servant, I want to know how it feels to be a teacher's daughter". (Participant 1-P1, 71-74)*

Participant 2 (P2) is an employed 25-year-old male. P2 lives with his parents and one younger sister. P2's father works as a *saye* and his mother is a housewife. Before working as a *saye*, P2's father worked as a carver or statue sculptor and had a hobby of raising chickens. P2 saw this hobby as bad because it was not beneficial in any way. Eventually, P2 felt that his family's life and financial condition was better after his father began working as a *saye*. But even so, P2 felt embarrassed and irritated by his father's profession as *saye*. As a student, P2 was often bullied by his friend. P2 feels that *saye* is not a permanent job, unlike any other job he can think of.

*"I kept getting bullied by my friends, *tajen, tajen, tajen!* like that. Because of, what is it called? The point is, I felt embarrassed!" (Participant 2-P2, 194-196).*

*"I wasn't getting shunned, but they kept mocking me. How do I say it, during that time, I was irritated". (Participant 2-P2, 328-329).*

Participant 3 (P3) is an employed 19-year-old male. P3 lives with his parents and an older sister. P3's father works as *saye*, and his mother works as a grocery seller at a traditional market. Before becoming a *saye*, P3's father worked as a temporary employee at one of Gianyar's district offices. As a temporary employee, P3's father was unable to afford the family's financial needs and eventually chose to help P3's mother sell groceries and take a side hustle as a *saye*. P3's experience is different compared to the other participants. P3 never received any negative judgment or bullying from people around him. This is because most of the people around P3 are *tajen* gamblers. Instead, P3 had actually received poor treatment from his own father.

*"He working as a *saye*? I don't think I ever gotten any. Uh, but there's this time when he played *tajen*, when I was little maybe he lost in *tajen* or something, but he unleashed his bottled-up emotions in *tajen* at home". (Participant 3-P3, 184-187)*

*Life Narrative as a Sayes Child*

Participants describe their lives in three parts: the beginning, the middle, and the end. The narration of their stories becomes one of the stages of analysis to find the process that participants had to go through before accepting their identity as a *sayes* child. In the first part, or before knowing that their fathers profession as *saye*, P1 titled this phase as "Lacking Togetherness", P2 gave the title "Shameful", and P3 gave the title "Ignorant". All three titles of these life phases were summarized by the researcher as unhappy childhood. This is because of the similarity shared by their childhood, which is unpleasant and lack of attention from their parents. All three participants had to witness conflicts that happened within their families. Before P1 knew about her fathers profession as a *saye*, P1 showed an indifferent attitude toward her father. She regarded her father as a gambler with no self-control, no income, and spent most of his days gambling. P1 felt a lack of attention and did not feel so close to her father. She was embarrassed because of her familys financial situation and the fact that her father didnt have an apparent job. P2 only knew his father as a carver with low income.

*"...we only meet dad at night. But sometimes, hell go out again at night, like to gamble, playing cards, something like that. (Participant 1, 674-675)*

*"...I do feel embarrassed. Especially in front of the teachers, other people, when I look at my friends parents, most of them have an apparent job. I felt like my dad was the only one with no apparent job. (Participant 2-P2,648-652)*

Unlike the other two participants, P3 only experienced communication issues. P3 rarely communicated with his father. This lack of communication made P3 ignorant about the issues within the community traditions and *tajen* gambling. All three participants showed that they experienced issues within their family related to financial situation and communication.

*"...we do lack communication, most of my dads friends didnt even know me, and about the rooster I didnt really know. Umm I think thats all. Well, I do feel people didnt recognize me enough, I didnt even have the slightest interest on the rooster, I think thats all. (Participant 3-P3, 444-447)*

In the second part, P1 titled her lifes phase as "A Better Change", P2 e titled it "Pride", and P3 gave it the title "Broaden Friendship and Knowledge". All three titles of those lifes phases were summarized by the researchers as "The Beginning of New Hopes". This was due to the participants starting to find positive sides of their fathers profession as *saye*. P1 showed a more attentive and caring attitude towards her father after learning that working as a *saye* carried risks, one of which was being slashed by the *taji* of the fighting roosters. The same attitude was also shown by P2, who became more considerate and understanding of his fathers hobby. P2 also felt proud of his father for being able to show creativity in the gambling arena and being able to give a decent life for the family.

*"...he can even support his nephew, that was when I began to feel proud. Oh, so what was considered bad can be something that my family is actually good at. Just like that, and I began to feel proud of my father for working as *saye* (Participant 2-P2, 659-664)*

P3 shared that his fathers profession as *saye* gave him an opportunity to broaden his social connection. P3 was often introduced to his fathers acquaintances. In addition, P3 also gained more insight related to roosters. P3 often helped his father to look after and raise his fathers chickens. The stories shared by all participants showed that they had found new experiences and hopes behind their fathers profession in gambling. In the third part, P1 gave titled lifes phase "The Lucky Child", while P2 and P3 both titled theirs "Living Independently". Their current life as a *saye's* child has directed them towards something more positive. P1 shared that she was a lucky daughter. P1 was born into a family that supports, trusts, and looks out for each other. P1 grew in a family with a responsible parental figure, despite being actively involved in the gambling world. Meanwhile, P2 and P3 have worked and owned their own business. P2 has a culinary business and P3 has a business of selling roosters. The participants experiences were summarized by the researchers as The Meaningful Life. This is because currently, all three participants have found their own values, which ultimately caused them to become valuable people.

#### *Self-Acceptance Stages of Saye's Child*

Based on the interview results, it can be concluded that participants had gone through several stages before accepting themselves as a *saye's* child, such as: 1) denial and rationalization; 2) becoming directly involved in *tajen* activity; 3) finding meaning; and 4) self-acceptance. In detail, those stages will be presented in the following description. After experiencing both pleasant and unpleasant experiences as a *saye's* child, the three participants had gone through several stages toward self-acceptance. There were, however, slight differences in the stages that the three participants went through. P1 and P2 began their self-acceptance process by denying and rationalizing their fathers profession. They denied this by masking their fathers true profession.

*"...I answered entrepreneur hahaha..."* (Participant 1-P1, 102)

*"That was then, when I was in high school. Every time my friends asked what my father does for a living, I immediately felt embarrassed to admit. Well, if its still friends, I dont feel that embarrassed. But if teachers, older people asked what my father does, I just told them that he is a carver, I always covered it up".* (Participant 2-P2, 301-307)

P1 and P2 also rationalized, which manifested in their habit of comparing material possessions. They considered *tajen* as not just a gambling activity, but a way to earn more money, even more capable of supporting the familys needs compared to other types of jobs.

*"...I once visited my friends house. Oh, so the house is just so-so, how come my father, who works in gambling, can have a better house than those who work as a civil servant..."* (Participant 1-P1, 90-92)

*"Saye is not just gamble, this profession is able to, at least for the family, meeting with everyones needs".* (Participant 2, 2-P2, 169-171)

Contrary to P1 and P2, P3 never felt embarrassed of his fathers profession. P3 believes that everyone has their own portion of work and fortune, so P3 never felt the need to be against his fathers

profession. Because of that, P3 began his process of self-acceptance by being directly involved in gambling. P2 also went through this stage, he admitted that he had an experience of being involved in *tajen* gambling. This involvement was influenced by his peers and a task from P2's father to look after his rooster. P2's involvement in *tajen* included nurturing his fathers rooster and visiting the gambling arena. P2 had also betted and released his rooster into the pit, while P3's involvement was just looking after and nurturing his fathers roosters. With their respective experiences, P2 found interest in *tajen* gambling, while P3 found interest in starting a business selling roosters.

*"...my father goes to tajen, and my father owns rooster, thats when I was asked to take care, to raise it..."*  
(Participant 2-P2, 95-97)

*"Only one, since my dad started working as saye, I developed an interest in raising roosters, just raising, Im not really involved into tajen. Thats the only influence, maybe if my father never worked as saye, there would never be roosters for me to take care of, and I would never learn about raising roosters for tajen".*  
(Participant 3-P3, 263-266)

The next stage is finding meaning behind experiences or events. P1 and P2 found that working as *saye* is not always detrimental if done properly. They argue that people who earn money in *tajen* gambling need to have a good self-control and financial management skills. Meanwhile, P3 found that his fathers profession as *saye* has given him new experiences and insights, especially related to raising roosters. P3 also found a new interest and opportunity in starting a business of selling roosters. In addition, P3 also found that *tajen* also provided benefits to the village, for example making *tajen* a fundraising event.

*"...sometimes I had a bit of a thought that gambling doesnt always detrimental at least hes (the father) smart at managing money, never goes all-in. He can set aside some money..."* (Participant 1-P1, 93, 391)

*"...losing means going home with a debt, I mean thats what money circulation is about, well, I think saye really depends on the person".* (Participant 2-P2, 479-480)

*"...Only for gambling in the village, because my dad is appointed as the leader of the fundraising. I mean, I would feel embarrassed if I didnt contribute to the fundraising. Its okay to take a break once in a while. I just feel bad, especially when theyre raising funds to build a new temple. Some of the betting money will be used to fund the building and used for other things. Regardless Im getting money or not, what matters is having an active contribution".* (Participant 3-P3, 310-318)

The last stage experienced by the three participants was self-acceptance, which can be seen from the participants willingness to compromise with their conditions, being open and willing to acknowledge their fathers profession, as well as not being influenced by other peoples negative judgments.

*"How do I say it, just change my way of thinking, thats all. Not overthinking the negative side of his job, like, just accept the reality. I cant keep covering it up, sooner or later they will find out anyway. Like, we make peace with it, umm... what else. Well, I feel like proud of my father. I mean, he has worked there and become this successful! Well, I do feel slightly proud of my dad. My family never run short on anything since he worked there". (Participant 1-P1, 539-546)*

*"No, I dont worry about anything. In the end, I make friends with anyone who wants to be my friend. If I lied, I told them my dad was a civil servant, theres a rooster at home. If eventually they choose to keep their distance, then so be it..." (Participant 1-P1, 562-564)*

In this stage, the participants have accepted their fathers' occupations as *saye*. This is indicated by their positive opinion of their father and not blaming their father for the unpleasant experiences the participants had to go through.

*"...never, why blame my dad? I just dont pay attention to it, never lashed out in anger, like why do you work there?! Im annoyed, but not really. Im actually annoyed by those people who mocked me, but I never annoyed by my dad". (Participant 1-P1, 625-628)*

*"I have these thoughts, why should I feel embarrassed? I need to have confidence, this is what my parents do for a living, this is me, why should I feel embarrassed? Including when I faced someone of the opposite sex. For the opposite sex, when it comes to finding a girlfriend, for now, well, whoever wants to accept me for who I am, I will happily accept them, I want to be fair and direct. For example, Im meeting with someone, Ill always tell them my background, including my familys background, so they wont regret later on, like that". (Participant 2-P2, 750-759)*

#### *Factors Contributing to Self-Acceptance of *Saye's* Children*

There are internal and external factors that contributed to the participants self-acceptance as a *sayes* child. The internal factors are self-understanding and realistic expectations. Based on the interview results, the participants have acknowledged several limitations that they have, and embraced both their shortcomings and potentials. P1 and P3 realized that their fathers profession as *saye* was not something that could be controlled, so they tended to give their fathers freedom. P2 also realized that his identity would continue to be associated with his fathers profession. This realization made P2 begin to make peace with and embrace his identity. Other internal factors are realistic expectations. Both P2 and P3 hoped to be able to develop their entrepreneurial skills. They want to be financially independent and contribute to raising their familys welfare. The self-acceptance process of *sayes* children is also influenced by external factors: socio-cultural environment, positive support from society, and democratic parenting. P1 and P2 shared that their fathers profession as a *saye* is one of the professions that preserves Balinese tradition. In addition, they also explained that *tajen* is often used as a fundraising event to build schools or temples. The fundraising is carried out by collecting entrance ticket money, taxes on betting money, and taxes the vendors around the *tajen* venue. Therefore, P2 and P3 argued that their fathers profession as a *saye* is a form of service towards the tradition in society.

This role of *saye* in social events is what eventually makes *saye* and their families valued and respected by society.

In addition to being a fundraising event, *tajen* is also used as a means of entertainment and a place to earn money. According to the participants description, there are a lot of parties involved in *tajen*. Each *tajen* event allows gamblers to make new relations with people from various regions. As a result, in just one event, the parties involved may receive economic, social, and cultural advantages. The participant self-acceptance was also influenced by others positive support. As previously explained, a *saye's* role in fundraising has drawn peoples respect and acknowledgment towards them and their family. The participants also shared that they often received aid from people around, or their fathers colleagues. The participants felt comfort and content in the treatment they received. Self-acceptance of a *saye's* child towards their father is also influenced by the way their parent raised them. Their parents tended to give them freedom and supported their decisions. P2 also admitted that he often discussed any kinds of problems with his father openly.

#### *Factors Inhibiting Self-Acceptance of a saye's Child*

There are two factors that inhibit the process of self-acceptance of a *saye's* children, namely: 1) stigma against *tajen* gambling activity from society and 2) unpleasant experiences when the participants fathers lose a gamble. The participants have accepted their identity as a *saye's* child, but regardless of their current state of self-acceptance, they admitted that those two factors had been inhibitors in the process they went through.

The stigma against *tajen* gambling from society caused participants problems in their social life. P1 and P2 were stigmatised by the people around them, which led them feeling embarrassed as well as frustrated. P2 also shared that he became less confident, especially when interacting with girls. P1 and P2 also often compared their lives and themselves to other people. The stigma they received are judgements that their family is irresponsible, compulsive, poor, and ill-fortuned. P1 and P2 also felt that they were often being looked down upon by others simply based on their fathers profession as a *saye*. In addition, P1 and P2 had also received verbal bullying in their school because of their fathers profession.

Another inhibiting factor is the unpleasant experience from the participants father when he loses a gamble. Aside from the stigmas they received, participants were also faced with unpleasant situations when their father lost a gamble. The participants shared that their father tended to get easily irritated and became increasingly silent. The participants father also lashed his anger out at his family at home. P2's father wouldnt hesitate to even force his own wife to give him more money for gambling. P2's father would also do things such as borrowing money from other people when he was unable to carry out his money circulation.

## Discussion

### *Unpleasant Experiences: Stigma, Stereotypes, and Difficulties When The Father Loses A Gamble*

Based on the results that have been described, it appears that although the participants lived in the environment and culture of Bali, they still experienced unpleasant experiences as a *saye's* child, such as being the target of stigma and discrimination. This shows that the *tajen* practice in Bali has its pros and cons among people. In addition, *tajen* gambling is also considered deviant behavior by people who aren't involved in the activity (Atmadja et al., 2015). Those who dislike *tajen* tend to have negative views towards *saye*, and this stigma has a negative impact on a *saye's* family members. Consistent with the research conducted by Hing and Russell (2017), discrimination and negative stereotypes from society are not just detrimental to gamblers, but also their families and those close to them. Those who live with a gambler do not only face problems financially, but also in their social relationships, psychological state, and losing social support (Tulloch et al., 2023).

In this study, there were two participants who were stigmatised by people around them. This is one of the negative consequences that they had to endure as a *saye's* child. This is also in accordance with the findings of previous research, which shows that people with gambling problems are often stereotyped as irresponsible, irrational, and compulsive people (Hing & Russell, 2017), as well as having issues in communication (Hussain & Muhammad, 2017). This study also showed that the parents of the first two participants were labelled as being irresponsible towards their family, having no income, and also having no future. The first two participants also were targets of verbal bullying in their school, such as being given nicknames alluding to their fathers profession.

Unpleasant experiences such as being the target of stigma, negative stereotypes, and verbal bullying caused emotional impact on P1 and P2. They felt embarrassed and became less confident in establishing new relationships with others. This is in accordance with the research conducted by Corrigan and Watson in 2002, as quoted by Hing et al. (2016) that individuals who received stigmas tend to feel inferior, have low self-efficacy, low social value, and low social adjustment when they grow up (Mufrihah, 2016).

Another unpleasant experience was that they had to face difficult situations when their father lost in gambling. They often became a target of their fathers anger. This is in accordance with Geertz (1992) statement that the gamblers mood is similar to heaven and hell. Heaven is their mood when winning a gamble, while hell is the mood when they lose. Participants shared that when losing a gamble, their father would be easily offended, often yell, and inflicted physical harm on family members. One of the participants also shared that their father had forced his wife to find extra money for gambling. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Dowling (2014) that families with gambling issues have higher levels of anger and conflicts, which may lead to domestic abuse such as inflicting harm on their children and other family members. The research conducted by Subramaniam et al. (2017) pointed out that gamblers who lost a bet and ran out of money would do anything in their power to obtain money, such as selling their house, pieces of jewellery, taking money from other family members or asking for a loan. These research findings are supported by



the statement of one participant of this study (P2) that his father would ask for a loan in order to get money for gambling. P2's statement also confirms the statement of Udayana and Pariadnya (2017) that gambling does not just cause domestic abuse, but also causes financial issues for the gamblers family.

The anger of the participants fathers caused fear and helplessness in all three participants. One of the participants (P3) would choose to leave the house to meet up with his peers. He did so in order to calm himself down and forget about his fathers behavior. According to Rubin et al. (2015), some friendships can provide affection, help, validation, and care. Therefore, it might be possible that P3's actions were driven by his desire to gain comfort and affection from his friends, rather than his parents, especially because his father tends to display unpleasant behavior when losing a gamble. P3 also admitted that he spent most of his time with his friends rather than with his parents, especially his father.

#### *Self-Acceptance Process of Saye's Children*

The participants process of self-acceptance generally started from the stage of denial and rationalization, the stage of being involved in gambling, the stage of finding wisdom, and ending by the stage of self-acceptance. The participants began their process of self-acceptance by denying and rationalizing. According to Germer and Salzberg (2009), individuals tend to find ways in order to rid themselves of discomfort or escape from unpleasant experiences. Two participants felt discomfort by stigma and negative stereotyping from society, which led them to deny their identity as a *saye's* child by covering up their fathers real profession. They also did this in order to avoid being stigmatised anew when they entered a new environment (Newby & DeCamp, 2015). P1 and P2 also rationalized their fathers profession by comparing material possessions with other families whose financial situation was not as well-off. They did this in an effort to prove that being a *saye* was not a detrimental profession, but rather provided economic benefits to their family. This rationalization is also a mechanism carried out by their family. Therefore, this mechanism is an internalization process of cognitive coping strategy from family. As stated by Lestari (2012), one of the basic functions of family is socialization, which brings through the continuation of values, faiths, attitudes, insights, and skills from the previous generation to the next. Thus, its not impossible that the meaning of those values has been socialised within the *saye's* family.

The second stage is being involved in gambling activity. Participants overcame their discomfort as a *saye's* child by getting closer to their fathers gambling activities. This stage has similarities to a form of stress coping mechanism proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), namely, problem-focus coping. This stress coping takes the form of a direct effort to eliminate stressful conditions that are felt to be pressuring, detrimental, and uncomfortable. P2 and P3's stories of coming to *tajen* arena show that they wanted to get closer to the source of the problem. In addition, as a *saye's* child, P2 and P3 have an experience that is personal in nature. Both participants were often asked to look after and raise their fathers rooster. Based on Atmadja et al. (2015), it was mentioned that a father who is actively involved in *tajen* gambling would ask his wife or child to help raise and look after his rooster. This request has made the child indirectly involved in their fathers gambling activity. The involvement

of both participants (P2 and P3) in their fathers gambling activity has made them realize the pressure and risks of working as *saye*, triggering their empathy and tolerance towards their father, and also developing a positive regard for their fathers profession.

The next stage is finding meaning behind unpleasant experiences and events. This stage is similar to the stages of friendship as proposed by Germer and Salzberg (2009). When individuals have adapted and made peace with their unpleasant experiences, the individuals would be able to find positive values behind those unpleasant experiences that they went through. All participants in this stage had found meaning as a *saye's* child, such as: finding insight that a profession in the gambling field is not always detrimental if done properly.

The last stage is self-acceptance, which was shown by the participants courage in showing their true identity, becoming an authentic individual, not blaming others, acknowledging their fathers profession as *saye*, and trying to develop any available opportunities. This finding supports the concept of authenticity of Carson and Langer (2006) which explains that authenticity is manifested by letting other people know ones true identity and being fully involved in the moment, as well as paying attention to other new things, and being focused on their self-development. In addition, Carson and Langer (2006) also proposed one other aspect of self-acceptance, namely appropriate self-evaluation. This aspect regards a problem as something that needs to exist in life, by not blaming others or ones condition, as well as perceiving something objectively. This explanation is in accordance with the statement of one participant (P1) that she no longer blames her fathers profession as *saye* and is trying to see that profession more objectively.

Some experts define self-acceptance as a positive attitude toward oneself as a whole (Rodriguez et al., 2015) and tolerance for others (Xu et al., 2014). This definition is confirmed by the attitude shown by all participants who have a positive view of their fathers. They say that their fathers are responsible, have good self-control, and are wise. In addition, the participants also stopped opposing their fathers career choice, instead giving them the freedom to work as *saye*.

## Conclusion

This study showed that the participants narratives are progressive in nature describing life as a sequence of experiences that contains opportunities to move forward. Despite their fathers profession being a target of societal stigma, the participants were able to turn those stigmas into an opportunity to keep growing, which was shown in their self-accepting attitude and ability to see new opportunities, such as starting a business.

### *Recommendation*

Referring to the research findings, there needs to be positive support from society and the family to nurture self-acceptance among *saye's* children. Examples of positive support from society include providing assistance to *saye's* family and showing respect by refraining from expressing negative sentiments or stereotyping them. Examples of support from the family include providing a comfortable

home environment and refraining from causing physical, emotional, or economic harm to the children. In addition to external support, *saye's* children must also have realistic expectations regarding the circumstances they were born into.

As a quick note, the results of this research cannot simply be applied to other regions because, based on the researchers previous observations, Gianyar Regency carries out *tajen* activities more frequently compared to other locations. The difference in frequency may be due to varying perspectives, so researchers suggest further study to conduct observations before applying the results of this research to areas other than Gianyar. Referring to the researchs outcomes, there needs to be positive support from society and the family in order to nurture self-acceptance among *saye's* children. Examples of positive support from society include: providing assistance to *saye's* family and respecting them by not showing negative sentiment towards them or stereotyping them. Some examples of support from the family include: providing a comfortable home situation by not committing physical, emotional, or economic harm against the children. Apart from the external support, *saye's* children must also have realistic expectations regarding the life they were born into. As a quick note, the result of this research cannot simply be applied to other regions because based on the researchers previous observations, the Gianyar Regency carries out *tajen* activities more frequently compared to other locations. The difference in its frequency may have been caused by different perspectives, so researchers suggest further study to conduct observation before applying the result of this research to areas other than Gianyar.

## Declarations

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### *Author's Contributions*

ST and DAVA designed the research and compiled the manuscript. DAVA performs data analysis. ST, DAVA, and RHN have read and approved the final draft.

### *Conflict of Interest*

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in the research, writing, and/or publication of this article.

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