

Understanding of Early Adolescence Sexuality in the Digital Era

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Abstract : The digital era is an era or era that experiences conditions of progress in the all-digital field of life. The development of the digital era is advancing rapidly and humans cannot stop it, in which there are both benefits and negative impacts. Individuals of all ages cannot be separated from digital devices, including teenagers, especially early adolescents. Early adolescence, which is between 12 and 15 years old, is often considered a negative period, they have a desire to try new things. One of the topics that teenagers are interested in is sexuality. The digital era allows access to global information that is easier and wider, enabling adolescents to fulfill their curiosity about sexuality by accessing it through various digital platforms and social media. This study aims to provide an overview of the understanding of early adolescent sexuality in the digital era. It is research with quantitative methods, using a questionnaire as a data mining tool.

INTRODUCTION

In human life, adolescence is a period of sexual exploration. The development of adolescent sexual desire creates feelings of adolescent attraction to the opposite sex (Azhaari Aziizah Amir, 2022). Adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood that is marked by the rapid growth and development of physical, mental, emotional, and social (Rini, 2017).

Adolescence, also known as youth or young, is a period of change from childhood to adulthood, namely between the ages of 12 and 21. Adolescence is divided into early adolescence, which is 12–15 years old; middle adolescence, 15–18 years old; and late adolescence, 18–21 years old (Nita Istiqomah, 2016).

Adolescence is one of the most important periods in human life. At this stage, adolescents will experience the maturity of the sexual organs and the attainment of reproductive abilities, accompanied by various changes in somatic

growth and psychological perspectives (Niken Meilani, 2014).

Teenagers are in an interim status as a result of the position given by their parents and partly obtained through their own efforts, which in turn gives them a certain prestige. This status is related to the transition period that occurs after sexual maturity (puberty).

Puberty, or the period of sexual maturity, generally occurs in the age range of 12–16 years for boys and 11–15 years for girls. Early puberty in female adolescents is marked by menstruation, while in male adolescents it is marked by the first dream period in which sperm are unknowingly released. Adolescent sexual activity also increases along with the hormonal changes they experience during puberty (Mia Fatma Ekasari, 2019).

Along with the hormonal changes in adolescents, sexual stimulation also increases, which makes it possible to bring out risky behaviors in adolescents, such as premarital sex. Several factors can contribute to teenagers having premarital sex. Adolescents' lack of

knowledge about reproductive health could be one of them. Low knowledge, accompanied by the strong influence of peers in their teens, leads them to have unhealthy sexual attitudes and behaviors (Hafid Mahesa Romulo, 2020).

Premarital sexual behavior is a form of expression of behavior or feelings of love that is taken out starting at the close stage, from kissing to having intercourse without being married. The impact of premarital sexual behavior in adolescents is that it can cause feelings of guilt, fear, and anxiety. If pregnancy occurs, they can be ostracized in society, and feelings of shame and depression arise. The physiological impact of premarital sexual behavior is that it can lead to unwanted pregnancies resulting in abortions and the contracting of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV, AIDS, and syphilis.

Adolescents who are able to control their sexual urges can behave positively, not easily influenced by external factors. For example, teenagers do not violate the prohibition against unhealthy dating behavior, including kissing and acts of intercourse (Nita Istiqomah, 2016).

Sexual behavior in adolescents is very dependent on the sexual knowledge possessed by children. Sexual behavior is behavior related to reproductive functions or that stimulates sensation in receptors located on or around the reproductive organs or erogenous areas. The results of the study show that low knowledge about sex and parental control can lead adolescents to engage in risky sexual behavior. Lack of sex knowledge is one of the causes of free sex behavior, which is currently quite severe. This behavior can be triggered through broadcasts on the internet and other social media (Dian Ayu Lestari, 2020).

The tendency of adolescents to receive information from their peers and from social media without having a clear, directed information source based on sexual reproductive health can result in curiosity, which forms a series of questions.

Over time, the development of technology towards digital is now growing rapidly and can cause big changes in the world. The digital era brings a big change to human life. In this case,

humans can easily access information in many ways and enjoy the facilities of digital technology freely (Fredik Melkias Boiliu, 2020).

Similarly, teenagers are most likely to access information related to sexuality on social media without parental control. So great is the impact of technological developments at this time that it leads to their misuse to access sites related to sexuality.

In this digital era, it is proven that children prefer playing with gadgets rather than learning and interacting with their surroundings. children. For this reason, the use of children's gadgets needs special attention from parents. There are several cases regarding the negative impact of excessive use of gadgets on children, starting with internet addiction, games, and pornographic content (Fredik Melkias Boiliu, 2020).

This also applies to adolescents, who access adult content without proper sexual knowledge. A good characteristic of adolescents is that they understand the meaning of premarital sexual behavior correctly and with direction. The benefits of sexual knowledge possessed by adolescents are that they can understand the differences in reproductive health in women and men both in the workplace, family, and surrounding environment, which can change according to local culture or customs; understand the role of reproductive health in human and family life; apply understanding about themselves according to their sexual needs; and be able to make responsible decisions with all forms of risk (Nita Istiqomah, 2016).

Examining empirical facts related to the problem of free sex behavior and premarital pregnancy, researchers still need to find a description of the condition of sexual understanding, awareness, and self-protection in relation to risky sexual behavior in early adolescents in this digital era.

METHOD

The research design uses a quantitative approach; this type of research is a descriptive study. Quantitative data was obtained from a

questionnaire filled out by 125 adolescents aged 13–15 years. Selection of participants with the purposive sampling method Purposive sampling is a sampling technique for data sources with certain considerations so that it will make it easier for researchers to explain the object or social situation under study (Sugiyono, 2018).

The data collection technique used in this study was to fill out a sexual knowledge questionnaire. The mechanism for filling out the questionnaire by adolescents is done online using the Google form.

Instrument development in research was developed from theoretical constructs and main indicators and embodied in a research instrument in the form of a questionnaire. This questionnaire had two answer choices, namely true (right) and false (wrong). The research questionnaire consisted of 30 statement items about adolescent sexual knowledge.

The data that has been obtained is then analyzed using descriptive statistics. In this case, the researcher will present the data obtained from the questionnaire filled out by the youth. Then the data will be used to describe the object under study, which is to provide an overview of adolescent sexual knowledge in the digital era.

RESULTS

The results of the study used descriptive statistics about early adolescent sexual knowledge, showing that among 125 adolescents, 24% related to the source of sex knowledge obtained from social media, 22.4% from the internet, and 18.4% from friends, as shown in Figure 1.

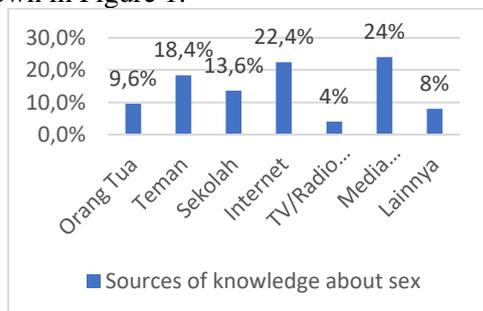


Figure 1: Sources of knowledge about sex

Knowledge of the reproductive organs that men use to produce eggs is 51.2%, as shown in Figure 2.

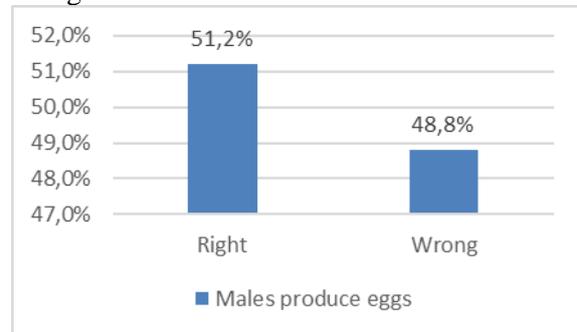


Figure 2: Males produce eggs

Understanding pregnancy will occur even if you only have sex once: 78.4% stated correctly and 21.6% stated incorrectly, as shown in Figure 3.

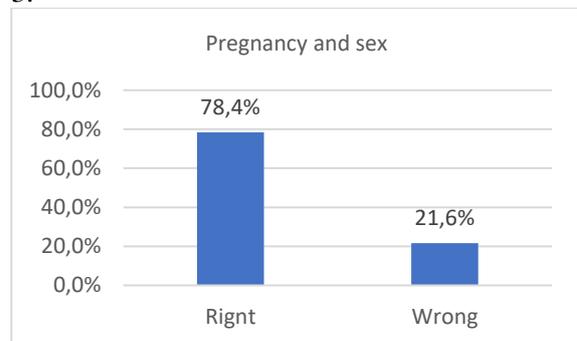


Figure 3: Pregnancy and sex

Understanding sexual behavior, such as refusing to hold hands, kissing, and so on, will hinder association in friendship. 28.8% said it was right, and 71.2% said it was wrong, as shown in Figure 4.

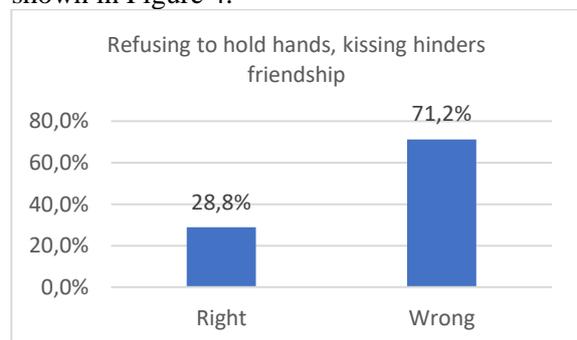


Figure 4: Refusing to hold hands, kissing hinders friendship

The understanding of courtship sexual behavior is to channel the passionate desire to get pleasant feelings with the aim of sexual intercourse. 28% said it was right, and 72% said it was wrong, as shown in Figure 5.

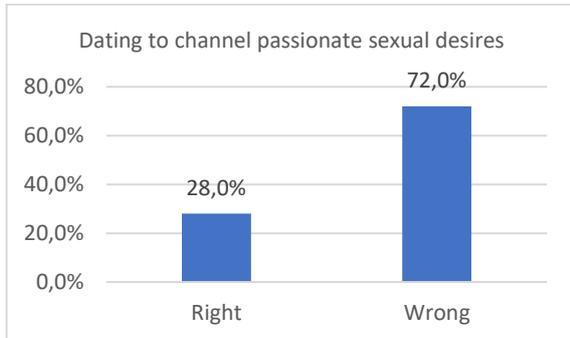


Figure 5: Dating to channel passionate sexual desires

While the understanding of sexual behavior related to the frequency of meetings with partners, which is increasingly frequent, will lead to a desire to engage in sexual activity, 73.6% stated that it was true and 26.4% stated that it was wrong, as shown in Figure 6.

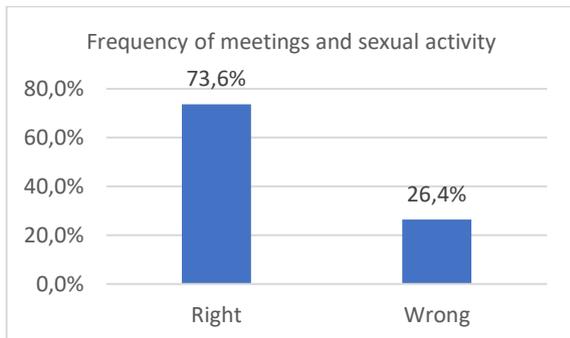


Figure 6: Frequency of meetings and sexual activity

DISCUSSION

Having obtained the results of a descriptive study to examine the description of early adolescent sexual knowledge in the digital era, it turns out that adolescents do not depend on parents, schools, or teachers as a source of information, especially information related to sexual issues. There has been a shift in seeking

information related to sexuality, namely by browsing the internet and digital platforms, including social media. Presenting information about sexuality digitally, of course. When teenagers are surfing the Internet in search of information about sexuality without any supervision, there is a risk that they will misperceive sexual information obtained from digital platforms.

Early adolescents' knowledge of the reproductive organs and their functions is still not fully understood, as shown by 51.2% believing that males produce egg cells. One of the wrong understandings of knowledge related to the reproductive organs is something that tends to lead to risky behavior in adolescents, which is based on their ignorance regarding the function of the reproductive organs.

With an understanding that is still not completely correct regarding sexuality, it has an impact on adolescents' shallow understanding regarding the risks of sexual behavior or premarital sexual relations. This shows that there are still those who understand that pregnancy will not happen easily. In this case, adolescents understood that as many as 78.4% said it was true that pregnancy would occur even if they only had sex once, but there were still 21.6% who said it was wrong.

In the digital era that allows global information to flood cyberspace, it is possible to shift values related to association with the opposite sex. Thus, adolescents also tend to be affected by behavior that is seen or accessed through digital media, so that as many as 28.8% of adolescents believe that refusing to hold hands, kiss, and so on will hinder association in friendship. Moral and religious values that have been internalized in adolescents by parents, teachers, and schools slowly fade away, replaced by risky promiscuity.

Likewise, for dating behavior, teenagers are still vulnerable to risky behavior related to sexual relations. In this case, there are still as many as 28% of teenagers who think that dating is to channel passionate desires to get pleasant feelings for the purpose of sexual intercourse.

The ignorance of adolescents and their shallow thinking regarding sexual risk behavior make them vulnerable to sexual behavior or premarital sexual relations, which begins with the frequency of their meetings with friends of the opposite sex they like. In this case, there are still some teenagers who do not understand that the frequency of meetings with partners that are more frequent will be at risk of causing the desire to engage in sexual activity by 26.4%.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Examining the results of this study, it was concluded that in this digital era, it is risky for teenagers to gain inaccurate knowledge without supervision from parents or educators. Teenagers get information without filters, values, norms, or religion, which they digest superficially, and then believe that the information obtained through digital platforms is the correct one, which is ultimately adopted in daily behavior in relationships and friendships.

Adolescents need correct information from the right sources, so the researchers propose a follow-up to the results of this study, namely intervention or direct action to provide a correct understanding of sexuality and self-protection related to sexuality in adolescents. This includes dealing with and minimizing the emergence of problems of free sex behavior that result in premarital pregnancies.

With the given intervention, it is possible to reduce free sex acts. Providing education and understanding related to sexuality is not taboo. In Islam, sex education is given serious attention and taught to teenagers.

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