

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

## Adolescent Perception of Premarital Sex Behaviour

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Premarital sex behavior among teenagers tends to increase. This study aimed to describe adolescent perception of premarital sex behavior. **Methods:** This research used a quantitative design with a descriptive approach. The variable in this study is the perception of premarital sex behavior. The population were 72 adolescents aged 10-24 years and unmarried. This study used a total sampling technique and a questionnaire instrument about perception of premarital sex behavior that have been tested for validity and reliability. This study conducted a descriptive statistical analysis. **Results:** The results showed that nearly 60% of participants had negative perception of premarital sex behavior. This happens because of the influence of knowledge and level of education, the influence of the environment, and the economic conditions of the family. **Conclusion:** These various perceptions raise the urgency of nurses to be able to play an active role in providing reproductive health education and the education of the impact of premarital sex behavior for adolescents in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Adolescent, Perception, Sex behavior

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## INTRODUCTION

Adolescents experience changes in physical, emotional, and psychological conditions towards adulthood (1,2). These changes occur in individuals during the teenage period, namely individuals in the 10-19 years age group and even up to 24 year age groups (3). Various factors can influence the process of change, including inadequate information, technology, environmental and community support, which can cause problems for adolescents or delinquency in adolescents (4,5). One type of juvenile delinquency that is rife today is premarital sex behavior (5).

Premarital sex behavior certainly has negative consequences, such as unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and social and emotional consequences (1). Based on the results of the Indonesian Health Demographic Survey (2017), about the sexual experiences of unmarried women and men aged 15-24 who have had sexual intercourse, it shows that the percentage of unmarried women aged 15-19 who had

had sexual intercourse were 6,750 people (0.9%), the percentage of unmarried women aged 20-24 who had had sexual intercourse were 3,221 people (2.6%), the percentage of unmarried men aged 15-19 who had had sexual intercourse were 7,713 people (3.6%), and the percentage of single men aged 20-24 years who had had sexual intercourse were 4,899 people (14.0%) (6).

Several studies have shown that the factors that cause premarital sex behavior are internal and external problems, such as failed love relationships, broken home families, inadequate economy, and poor parenting (7). Different from previous studies, this research more focused on local culture that influenced premarital sex behavior among adolescents. Research shows that, today, Indonesian youth culture is freer to explore sexual desires in partners (8). The influence of the perception of religious factors on the negative stigma of premarital sexual behavior is also contrary to the influence of western culture, peer environment, and modernization received by adolescents (8,9). This phenomenon illustrates the urgency of the need to pay attention to premarital sex behavior.

Various factors that influence premarital sex behavior include individual factors (religiosity), family factors (parents' closeness to children), and environmental

factors (exposure to pornography and peer media) (10,11). Problems related to the high rate of premarital sexual behavior begin with knowing the perceptions of adolescents regarding premarital sexual behavior. The novelty of the research laid in the research subjects who lived in an environment that did not question early marriage because of premarital sex. The purpose of this study was to describe adolescent perceptions related to premarital sex behavior.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The research design used in this study was a quantitative descriptive study. The variable in this study is the perception of premarital sex behavior. Respondents involved in this study were 72 teenagers aged 10-24 years, unmarried, still having parents, and living with parents. The sampling method used total sampling technique. The research instrument used in this study was a closed questionnaire about perception of premarital sex behavior that have been tested for validity and reliability. This questionnaire was compiled by researchers who viewed it from various theories and then tested its validity.

The researcher developed a questionnaire based on several instruments from previous research, namely the research of Alfiyah et al., (2018) and Mangando (2014) (12,13). The results of the data analysis validity test through software were carried out on 30 respondents with 40 questions. The result had a value of  $r$  count > table, each statement had a value of more than 0.3610 so that all statements were declared valid. The instrument reliability test showed that all statements had a cronbach  $\alpha$  value of more than 0.60, namely 0.965, so it can be concluded that each item of the statement was reliable.

This instrument consisted of 40 statements, consisting of indicators of the definition of premarital sex, forms of premarital sex, factors that influence premarital sex behavior, and the impact of premarital sex behavior. The results of data analysis were presented in the form of a frequency distribution table and percentage. The data presented were the frequency distribution table characteristic, the frequency distribution of adolescent perceptions of each indicator presented in the form of tables and diagrams, and the acquisition of the value of the adolescent perceptions of premarital sex behavior.

**ETHICAL CLEARANCE**

The study was approved by Research Ethics Committee, Faculty of Sport and Health Education Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia No. 0801/UN40.A6/DA/2019.

**RESULTS**

An overview of the research data on the variable characteristics of the respondents can be seen in Table I.

**Table I: The frequency distribution of respondents characteristics**

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Men	37	51,4
Women	35	48,6
Total	72	100
<b>Age</b>		
10-14	2	2,8
15-19	50	69,4
20-24	20	27,8
Total	72	100
<b>Level of education</b>		
Did not graduate of elementary school	3	4,2
Elementary school	36	50
Junior high school	15	20,8
Senior high school	18	25
Total	72	100

Table I explains that the characteristics of respondents based on sex that dominate or the most are male sex as many as 37 people (51.4%), and female sex as many as 35 people (48.6%). Characteristics based on age, the majority are aged 15-19 years as many as 50 people (69.4%), age 20-24 years as many as 20 people (27.8%), and ages 10-14 as many as 2 people (2.8%) . Meanwhile, for the most recent educational characteristics, there were 36 elementary school students (50%), 18 senior high school students (25%), 15 junior high school students (20.8%), and 3 people who did not graduate from elementary school (4.2%).

**Table II: Frequency distribution of parent characteristics**

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Mother Education</b>		
Did not graduate from elementary school	34	47,2
Elementary school	10	13,9
Junior high school	12	16,7
Senior high school	10	13,9
Bachelor	6	8,3
Total	72	100
<b>Father education</b>		
Did not graduate from elementary school	24	33,3
Elementary school	18	25
Junior high school	12	16,7
Senior high school	16	22,2
Bachelor	2	2,8
Total	72	100

Table II shows that the characteristics of respondents based on the characteristics of the mother's last education, the majority of whom did not finish elementary school as many as 34 people (47.2%), junior high school as many as 12 people (16.7%), high school and elementary school as many as 10 people (13.9%) , and Bachelor/Diploma as many as 6 people (8.3%). Furthermore, the most recent educational characteristics of fathers are 24 people (33.3%), elementary school as many as 18 people (25%), high school as many as 16 people (22.2%), junior high school as many as 12 people (16.7%). %, and Bachelor/Diploma as many as 2 people (2.8%).

**Table III: Frequency distribution of adolescent perceptions of premarital sex behavior**

Variable	Positive		Negative		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Understanding of premarital sex	28	38,9	44	61,1	72	100
Form of premarital sex	28	38,9	44	61,1	72	100
Factors that influence premarital sex	28	38,9	44	61,1	72	100
The impact of premarital sex	28	38,9	44	61,1	72	100

Table III shows that the average value of each teenager for indicators of understanding premarital sex, forms of premarital sex, factors that influence premarital sex behavior, and the impact of premarital sex behavior. The majority of respondents in this study had negative perceptions of premarital sexual behavior as many as 44 people (61.1%) and positive perceptions of premarital sex behavior as many as 28 people (38.9%).

## DISCUSSION

The results showed that the majority of respondents were male, 37 people (51.4%). The majority of respondents were male because, on average, young women were already married and did not live with their parents anymore because they joined their husbands. It is relevant with the research of Zuraidah (2016) and Risya (2011) which obtained data that a woman's first marriage occurs more often at a young age, under 18-20 years(14,15).

The results showed that the average of the respondent age was in the 10-24 year age range. Most of the respondents in this study, 50 people (45.8%), were aged 15-19 years. Adolescents in this age range fall into the category of middle adolescents. At this age range, adolescents experience the puberty phase. The puberty phase is the phase where a teenager starts thinking about sex and is attracted to the opposite sex. The beginning of puberty, based on Freud's Segment theory, is when adolescents enter the genital stage. This opinion is in accordance

with the results of research by Nurcahyani (2015) which states that the relationship between puberty age and sexual behavior has a contingent coefficient value of 0.594 ( $p$ -value  $0.000 < \alpha 0.05$ ) (16). In Pratiwi and Basuki's (2011) study, data show that late adolescents are more likely to behave sexually unsafe when compared to early adolescents and middle adolescents (17). This is also consistent with the research of Sabon (2003) that the older the adolescents behave at risk of HIV / AIDS (18).

The results showed that most adolescents, 36 people (50%), had primary school education. Most of the respondents were currently studying at the junior high school level (SMP) and there was a small proportion of them who did not continue junior high school. This condition was influenced by peers, parent low economic conditions, and parent low perceptions of education. It is relevant with the ecological theory, which views that the development of adolescents can be influenced by parents, peers, and the surrounding environment. However, it is different from a research which states that premarital sex behavior occurs more frequently in adolescents with higher education. The results of this study are in line with Wittrup's (2016) research which states that there is a significant relationship between academic performance, namely dissatisfaction with academic results which has implications for sexual behavior (19).

Based on the results of the study on the indicators of the meaning of premarital sex and forms of premarital sex, 44 people (61.1%) had negative perceptions. Respondents answered that they disagreed with every negative statement stating that teenagers were allowed to have sex with multiple partners, hugging, kissing, holding intimate organs, and intimate relationships and answered that they agreed on every positive statement which stated that sexual relations could only be done when married. However, most of the teenagers agreed to the negative statements which stated that dating and holding hands is normal. This opinion is continuous with the opinion of Dariyo (2004) that if adolescents have negative perceptions of premarital sex behavior, they will have a tendency not to do it (20-22). This is in accordance with the research which explains that there is a relationship between knowledge and sexual attitudes, knowledge with premarital sex behavior, and attitudes with sexual behavior. In line with the results of research by Mangando (2014), there is a relationship between knowledge and acts of premarital sex and attitudes with premarital sex acts (13). It is supported by research by Pratama, Sri, and Eva (2014) that there is a relationship between knowledge about sex education and premarital sex behavior in adolescents (23-25).

In the next indicator, 44 people (61.1%) had negative perception of the factors that influence premarital sex behavior. Respondents answered that they disagreed

with every negative statement which stated that sexual behavior was influenced by peers, pornographic video media, and themselves. Most of the respondents answered that they agreed on every positive statement about parents having to teach adolescents to guard themselves from premarital sex and most of the teenagers answered that they agreed that asking their parents about sex was something that was not allowed.

Based on the results of research by Saputri and Hidayani (2016), the results show that there is a relationship between knowledge, the role of parents, and sources of information on adolescent sexual behavior(26–28). It is in line with the research results of Alfiyah, Tetti, and Titin (2018) that there is a relationship between family norms and smartphone use with premarital sexual behavior (12,27). This opinion is supported in research by Mahmuda, Yaslinda, and Yuniar (2016) which states that adolescent sexual behavior is influenced by exposure to sexual sources of information, negative attitudes from the environment, and gender, especially men (29,30).

The next indicator is adolescent perceptions of the impact of premarital sex behavior. 44 people (61.1%) perceived negatively. Most of the adolescents answered agreed on positive statements, such as having sex more than once can lead to pregnancy and premarital sex can cause disease. However, most adolescents answered that they agree that negative statements about sex just once cannot lead to pregnancy. This statement is related to the perception of adolescents regarding the frequency of premarital sexual behavior.

Based on the results of Kasim's research (2014), the impact of sex has a risk of cases of unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV / AIDS, and is considered bad by the community (31,32). The results of research by Rahmi, Kiki, and Asih (2015), which discussed the knowledge of adolescents in one school, obtained sufficient knowledge of the impact of premarital sex behavior and recommended that health workers provide education about the reproductive system, especially regarding sexually transmitted diseases in the school environment(33,34). This continues with the findings of researchers regarding the adequate knowledge of adolescents on the impact of premarital sexual behavior.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that most adolescents still have negative perceptions of premarital sexual behavior. This is the basis for developing appropriate education for individuals and groups of adolescents in order to reduce the prevalence of teenage pregnancy, premarital sex behavior, and sexually transmitted infections in adolescents. Nurses can act as caregivers, educators, and advocates in efforts to prevent premarital sexual

behavior.

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