

PORNOGRAPHIC MEDIA, PARENTAL ROLES, AND ADOLESCENT SEXUALITY

By Fenny Etrawati



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ABSTRACT

Access to pornography among adolescents can inflict various threats such as pornography addiction, risky sexual behaviour, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), unplanned pregnancies, and illegal abortions. Thus, this study aimed to identify exposure to pornographic media and the role of parents in adolescent sexual behaviour. This study used a qualitative approach with a purposive sampling technique to select informants, including 12 adolescents as key informants, 12 parents and 4 teachers as expert key informants. Data were collected using 2 methods: in-depth interviews with expert key informants and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with adolescents as key informants. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis technique. The data validity, were assessed using a triangulation method, mainly the source, method and data itself. This study found that low self-control in adolescents drives them to engage in risky sexual behaviour, such as holding hands, kissing, and touching their partner's sensitive areas. Exposure to pornography encouraged them to imitate the acts in such videos, ranging from masturbation to sexual stimulation of a partner. Lack of reproductive health information and parental supervision often makes adolescents make sexual decisions without careful consideration. Providing comprehensive sex education accompanied by parental supervision can be a preventive effort against deviant sexual behaviour among adolescents.

Keywords: adolescent sexual behaviour, parents, risky pornography

Introduction

The increasing incidence of sexual activity among adolescent in Indonesia remains a concerning issue in adolescent development. A report of Indonesian Demographic and Health Survey (IDHS) in 2017 showed an increase in the prevalence of premarital sexual relations among adolescent, namely 8% in male adolescent and 2% in female adolescent. This figure is considered to have increased when compared to data in the previous IDHS report, namely in 2012 where the figure for male adolescent was still around 7% and 1% for female adolescent who reported similar experiences. Of the adolescent who had premarital sexual relations, it was known that 59% of female adolescent and 74% of male adolescent reported starting sexual intimacy for the first time at the age of 15-19 years with a percentage of 49.5% having hugged, 49.5% having kissed on the lips, and 21.5% of adolescent who were dating dared to touch or be touched on sensitive body parts.¹

The increasing sexual activity among adolescents is closely linked to critical reproductive health issues in reproductive health, such as Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and unintended pregnancies, and even the emergence of illegal abortion practices that are highly risky and potentially fatal. In 2021, the prevalence of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) in Indonesia reached 11.133 reported cases, consisting of 2976 cases of syphilis, 892 cases of advanced syphilis, 1482 cases of gonorrhoea, 1004 cases of gonorrhoea urethritis, 143 cases of genital herpes, 342 cases of trichomoniasis, 7650 cases of HIV, and 1677 cases of AIDS.²

In Social Cognitive Theory, the concept of reciprocal determinism explains that the environmental factors (such as parental roles and media exposure), cognitive factors (such as beliefs and values), and behaviour influence each other reciprocally, forming attitudes and behavioural tendencies, including adolescent sexual behaviour.³ Exposure to pornography for example, can lead adolescents to imitate behaviors observed in such content through an observational learning process that ultimately shapes their perception of sexual norms and influences their decisions. Conversely, parents who actively provide supervision, education, and moral values can play a preventive role in reducing sexual behaviour among adolescents.⁹

A study conducted in Mexico, based on Social Cognitive Theory found that the use of pornographic materials affects sexual risk behaviour in adolescents, this is because such risky behaviours can be acquired and reinforced through social interaction and the process of observing and imitating the actions of others. When the outcomes of observed behaviors are perceived as rewarding or satisfactory, individuals tend to repeat the behaviour. In this context, exposure to online sexual contents such as pornography, nudity, sexual conversations, and cybersex can stimulate sexual arousal in adolescents. This has the potential to trigger risky and impulsive sexual behaviour.⁴

With the rapid advancement of technology, access to information has become significantly easier one of the key factors influencing adolescent sexual behaviour. Negative content such as

pornography is now readily available accessed from various types of media including magazines, television, radio, and film, or video-sharing platforms and social networking site. This allows pornography to be easily accessible to all ages, especially adolescents. Based on survey data from the National Commission for Child Protection in Indonesia of 4,500 adolescents in 12 major cities, it was found that nearly 100% of the respondents reported having accessed pornographic content.⁵

Adolescent who are exposed to pornography tend to be more sexually active at an early age.⁶ Another study found that respondents who were exposed to pornography were 31 times more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviour than those who were not.⁷ The higher the level of adolescent addiction to pornography, the higher the risky sexual behaviour they engage in.⁸

During their developmental stage, adolescents require proper guidance and access to relevant information from their immediate environment such as family, school, and the wider community—on how to avoid exposure to pornography and engagement in risky sexual behavior, particularly through the responsible use of smartphones and social media.⁹ Parents play a crucial role in shaping and monitoring adolescent sexual behavior. Research has shown that adolescents who experience strict parental supervision are less likely to engage in sexual intercourse or participate in risky sexual behaviors.^{10,11}

Although the influence of pornographic media and parental involvement on adolescents' sexual behavior has been widely studied, most existing research employs quantitative approaches that focus on statistical relationships such as the frequency of pornography exposure and its correlation with risky sexual behavior while offering limited insight into how adolescents perceive and respond to pornography in the context of their daily lives.^{12,13} Furthermore, although some studies have identified a significant relationship between parent-adolescent communication and adolescent sexual behavior, the nuanced aspects of parental supervision processes and their role in adolescents' sexual decision-making have also not been widely addressed.^{14,15} Given this gap, this study adopted a phenomenological qualitative approach to explore the lived experiences of junior high school students exposed to pornography, as well as understand the role of parental and teacher supervision in monitoring adolescent sexual behavior. This approach is expected to provide deeper contextual insights, which are important for the development of effective prevention strategies that are relevant to the realities of adolescents' lives.

Method

This research was conducted by analyzing data matrices from the author's thesis entitled "Environmental Factors Affecting Sexual Behavior in Junior High School Adolescents in Palembang City in 2018".¹⁶ The study employed a descriptive qualitative design with a phenomenological approach, aiming to explore in-depth information and to understand the meaning of informants' experiences about the relationship between pornographic media, the role of parents,

and adolescent sexual behaviour. This study involved students from SMP Negeri 13 Palembang (a public junior high school) and SMP Muhammadiyah 3 Palembang (a private Islamic junior high school). The selection of informants was carried out using a purposive sampling method and data were collected using two methods: in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). In-depth interviews were conducted with 16 key informants, including parents and teachers, while FGDs were conducted with 12 adolescents. The adolescent informants consisted of 12 junior high school students in Palembang city aged 12-15 years old who had been dating and were willing to be informants. In contrast, adolescents who are married were excluded. This study also included 16 expert key informants, comprising 12 parents of adolescent who lived in the same house and were responsible for their children's daily behavior, as well as 2 homeroom teachers from grades 1, 2, or 3 and 2 counseling teachers who closely observed students' behavior at school. All informants were selected based on their direct involvement in the respondents' daily lives and their willingness to participate in the study. Parents who do not directly care for children and teachers who do not directly interact with students were excluded.

To ensure the validity of the data, researchers used triangulation, which are source triangulation, method triangulation, and data triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by examining information from various informants, while method triangulation was achieved by combining interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and indirect observation to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic. Additionally, data triangulation is conducted by analyzing data from various sources, including students, teachers, parents, and relevant institutions. The data were analyzed using a thematic analysis technique to identify important information and understand the core meaning of each piece of data. Furthermore, the data is coded to group the information based on similarities in meaning, to facilitate the compilation and analysis of information.¹⁷ This research received ethical approval from the Health Research Ethics Commission, Faculty of Public Health, Universitas Sriwijaya with Number.22/UN9.1.10/KKE/2018.

Results

Based on the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions that have been conducted, the results obtained will be explained as follows. Table 1 presents the characteristics of the adolescent informants, consisting of 12 individuals with an equal distribution of male and female participants. The informants were aged between 12 and 15 years, with an average age of 14.

Table 2 presents the characteristics of 12 expert key informants from parents, comprising an equal number of fathers and mothers (6 males and 6 females). Most parent informants have high school as their educational background with their occupations are as stay-at-home mothers and

entrepreneurs. Meanwhile, the school informants include two male and two female teachers, serving as homeroom and counseling teachers. The majority completed a Master's degree.

Table 1. Characteristics of Key Informants

Informant's Initial	Sex	Age
AT	Male	13 years old
ARS	Male	14 years old
TA	Female	15 years old
MRS	Male	14 years old
RS	Female	14 years old
ZH	Female	12 years old
WA	Male	12 years old
MFAR	Male	15 years old
NR	Female	14 years old
SW	Female	13 years old
MR	Female	12 years old
M.RHS	Male	15 years old

Table 2. Characteristics of Expert Key Informants

Informant's Initial	Sex	Educational Background	Occupation
JHR	Male	Senior High School	Entrepreneur
US	Male	Bachelor's degree	Entrepreneur
MRN	Female	Junior High School	Seller
DST	Female	Senior High School	Stay-at-home Mother
HB	Male	Vocational High School	Security Guard
SKW	Male	Primary School	Unemployed
EJY	Male	Junior High School	Seller
SPYN	Female	Senior High School	Stay-at-home Mother
APN	Female	Senior High School	Stay-at-home Mother
HA	Male	Senior High School	Entrepreneur
GHM	Female	Senior High School	Stay-at-home Mother
KYG	Female	Associate's degree	Civil Servant
SP	Male	Master's degree	Counseling Teacher
WG	Female	Master's degree	Homeroom Teacher
MN	Female	Bachelor's degree	Counseling Teacher
HR	Male	Master's degree	Homeroom Teacher

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Table 3. Main Themes and Subthemes

Main Themes	Subthemes
Adolescent Sexual Behaviour	A. Adolescent Dating Styles that Potentially Leads to Risky Sexual Behaviour B. Sexual Behaviour for Fulfilling Individual and Social Needs
Pornography Media	A. Adolescent Tendency to Access Pornography B. Tendency to Engage in Sexual Behaviour after Accessing Pornography
Role of Parents	A. Lack of Giving Information on Adolescent Reproductive Health B. Lack of Parental Supervision

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Table 3 summarizes the results of the thematic analysis, which identified 3 (three) main themes and 6 sub-themes derived from the data. The main themes include Adolescent Sexual Behaviour, Pornography Media, and Role of Parents.

Theme 1: Adolescent Sexual Behaviour

Teenage Dating Styles that Potentially Leads to Risky Sexual Behaviour

Analysis of transcripts and interviews with 12 adolescent showed that their dating style had led to risky sexual behaviour. Most of the informants admitted having engaged in sexual behaviour such as holding hands, hugging, kissing, touching or stimulating their partner's sensitive and private part of the body while dating.

"We did kiss definitely, when it comes to hugging also, we do it all if the parents aren't home." (ARS)

"It's just common and reasonable to hold hands, hug our partner, kiss, and grope, isn't it?" (YSR)

The adolescent revealed that they tend to behave in risky sexual behaviour because they were carried away by the atmosphere or the mood, as, for example, when the environment was quiet, dark, or dimly lit. The locations of the actions took place are quite varied, from parks, boarding houses, friends' houses, and even cinemas.

"In a quiet place, boarding house, or in the park too, usually in the corner of the Kambang Iwak park with dim lights." (MFAR)

The teacher also stated that currently the adolescent's dating style is overly loose or rather open. Adolescent nowadays are perceived to be no longer ashamed to show affection in public, starting with being alone together, holding hands, kissing and even touching sensitive areas, even to the pregnancy before marriage.

"Here, we're used to finding students who get caught for having pornographic content on their phone, and we often find them alone together at school as well. The action taken by the school is that we often will advise them, and their parents will be called, especially considering if the student wants to change or resolve themselves and still wants to be accepted at this school. If they don't want to change, we may give them a warning letter. There was one time also a case of premarital pregnancy, she was pregnant and was going to be dismissed from school, but fortunately at that time it was during the national exams." (WG)

"Some were dating, some even kissed in class openly to the point where I asked them about what they did to the girl student. Only then did they admit that they ever kissed and touched her breasts." (MN)

Sexual Behaviour for Fulfilling Individual and Social Needs

The girl adolescents revealed that sexual behaviour was carried out voluntarily, mainly because of mutual consent and without asking for anything in return. The adolescents revealed that this was seen as a way for a partner to prove their love and affection.

"There's no actual reward for doing it since we did it consensually and both are in love though, so yeah, we think it's just fine." (RR)

"We get nothing, Sis. It's just a form of love from ourselves to our partner." (SW)

"To be more romantic in our relationship." (ARS)

However, there were differences in responses from male teenager informants where they considered that the sexual behaviour they did was purely only to seek pleasure, to satisfy curiosity, to vent desires and lust, and to be a source of pride.

"Just for fun, and maybe just a practice for the future." (MRHS)

"create a sense of joy within yourself" (WA)

"It felt like I had the pride for doing it, and also for venting the lust." (MFAR)

"it gave me a sense of confidence" (MRS)

Theme 2: Pornography Media

Adolescent's Tendency to Access Pornography

This study found that the adolescent are more likely to access pornography than to seek information about reproductive health and/or sex education. They even rarely or never access reproductive health information. These adolescent more frequently access pornographic content than sex education, especially blue films, with frequencies varying from 1-3 times a day.

"Yes, I have heard about sex education, but I only notice it when it passes through my social media's timeline suddenly. When it comes to watching blue films, I can say I do it quite often, like 3 times in a day, hehehe...." (YSR)

"If I want to search for information on sexuality, I usually only do it from my phone. Then, usually, there are these erotic ads that appear on the screen that make me curious, from there I will open them. And for blue film, I access it 3 times a day every day, especially since I already owned a phone." (YSN)

The media used in accessing pornography by the adolescents are also quite varied, mainly it is the gadget they own, like mobile phone and personal computer/PC (laptop), while for the internet platforms used are social media (YouTube and LINE), search engines (Google), and other sites that can be accessed from browser applications on their devices.

"From Google and YouTube.." (WLN,ZA,)

"From LINE application." (YSR)

Parents of the adolescent also expressed their concerns about their children's use of mobile phones and the internet. They worry that easy access to the internet via mobile phones and other devices will lead their children to deviant sexual behaviour.

"It definitely can. Social media could just definitely allude them to deviant behaviour since it becomes the medium that bridges these adolescent to that notion." (JHR)

"I believe it can change him definitely, as social media can help with claiming new horizon or knowledge, while on the other hand it also brings the risk that it may destroy the mind if not used properly." (APR)

In the interviews conducted with the teachers at school, it was also revealed that they often found indecent or vulgar videos and any pornographic contents on mobile phones when raids were being carried out on students by the teachers at school.

"There were about 2 students whose smartphones were caught red-handed storing 17 pornographic videos, basically indecent explicit contents, like groping breasts." (HR)

Tendency to Engage in Sexual Behaviour after Accessing Pornography

Early adolescents are still vulnerable to exposure they get and tend to imitate what they see. The results of the FGD showed that the majority of adolescents who access pornography engage in sexual behaviour such as masturbation, fantasising with partners, and imitating the scenes from videos, one of which is stimulating their partner's sensitive areas.

"Regarding the blue films, I actually access them quite often, Ma'am. After accessing blue films, I also want to try practising what I watch. I even masturbate twice a week. I think it's better for me to do it myself like this than to do it with my girlfriend." (MFAR)

"Talking about blue films, yes, I often access blue films. And after watching, I usually masturbate and when I've finished watching then I meet my girlfriend, there's this feeling of wanting to kiss her. We would've kissed after watching, and other times, we'd also not kissed because we already felt satisfied just from watching it." (ARS)

Teachers in in-depth interviews also disclosed that frequent use of media will have influence on a person's behaviour, especially in sexual behaviour due to frequent access to pornographic sites.

"The influence is very significant, because the more often he watches porn, the greater his desire to know more about sexual behaviour. Then he will imitate what he sees because of lust. Things that are usually done are kissing and holding breasts. There are cases like these and when they're asked, the reason is because they often watch porn videos." (WG)

The parents also believe that there are many negative impacts from exposure to pornographic sites, ranging from porn addiction, peeping, rape, sexual harassment, and the desire to try out the watched scenes with one's boyfriend or girlfriend.

"I think, maybe it's because they are influenced by what they watch, from that it makes them want to do it too." (HA)

"It will take effect, I believe. And the effect is clearly profound. Of course, I will be addressing him for what he's doing since I think it's nasty. When you're not careful enough as a parent, if he has a girlfriend, he could have made out with her. It's really that significant." (GR)

Theme 3: Role of Parents

Lack of Giving Information on Adolescent Reproductive Health

Provision of reproductive health information by parents is still rarely concluded and committed because parents assume that children will eventually understand it by themselves. The parents only remind the children to keep their distance in social interaction from the opposite sex during the period of wet dreams or menstruation, without explaining why risky sexual behaviour should not be done and what the impacts are.

"That's how our children are nowadays, they have already understood everything so there's no need to explain this and that, they'll figure it out on their own. For girls, they're usually asked whether they're menstruating or not, and for boys, they're rarely asked. I think puberty itself is the most crucial moment when to advise them." (GR)

"To be honest, I rarely remind my child, only occasionally when we're chilling out and watching TV together in the living room, the thing I usually tell my child is like 'be careful with someone's daughters, don't be too intimate, later if something unwanted happens, Dad will be embarrassed'." (KYG)

One teenage respondent also said the similar thing where they were rarely given the information about reproductive health. The parents would only advise their children not to be too close to the opposite sex and not to date or hangout excessively.

"Only talk with them occasionally, like during family quality time or relaxing, and then we would talk about puberty, was told that if I have a wet dream, don't forget to take a Ghusl bath, and don't do inappropriate things when dating." (WA)

Meanwhile, the teachers argued that the parents should be the first to provide information about sexual education to children because when it comes to educating these kinds of topics, teachers are thought to have very limited reach considering the number of students. Formal education or lecture currently that is to specifically discuss sex education has not existed yet.

"Parents should be able to guide their children by providing information related to sex education. The school itself has not yet facilitated sex education though. Information related to sex education can be given by the parents when the children begin to experience puberty."

Parents should be the first to start providing sex education to children and then followed by teachers at school.” (MN)

Lack of Parental Supervision

From the interview, the teenage girls felt that they did not receive supervision from their parents, while the teenage boys felt that they received supervision when they were dating. The parental supervision that they received was in the form of monitoring the dating activities, for example by observing, giving advice, occasionally checking on them by calling them on the phone and asking where they were when outside the house, having communication with the friends' parents, getting to know them through their close friends, to being spied when they were dating.

“I have never really got such supervision, Ma'am...” (AT)

“I don't really know if I'm under such supervision or not, but I think I'm not.” (ZA)

“My parents were spying on me through my friends, then reporting back to them.” (WA)

“Being followed, there was once that time I hung out with my lover at a cinema, it turned out my mother was also there, actually I feel bothered.” (MRHS)

Unlike the confessions of some adolescent who felt unsupervised, all the parents stated that they have already provided supervision instead. This supervision includes monitoring and controlling the time of the children going out with their partner or friend, communicating with the children's friend's parents, and reprimanding them if necessary.

“I basically often keep an eye on them like asking them where to go, what direction, with who, and so on, always in control, then I will look for him if they have been outside for too long or not been at home. Basically, I will limit their time to play outside.” (EJY)

“Given a stricter supervision. If she wants to go out or if there was a male friend who asked her to go out, he had to come to our house and met me first before leaving.” (SP)

Some parents admitted that their busy work schedules often prevent them from monitoring their children's behaviour closely, especially when it is dating. They assign the responsibility of supervision to other family members, such as aunts or uncles.

“When it comes to supervision, I assign my sibling to do it since I have to work out of town, this is actually my homecoming after a while. When it comes to dating, I just stay alert by looking into my child's phone.” (DH)

In terms of supervision on media, the parents only check their adolescent phones casually or even rarely. The parents also realise that today's adolescent are wiser in using phones, so they tend to perform no strict control and rely more on trust with their children.

“I actually hardly ever check on his phone, I trust him.” (SKW)

“I believe it so, insyaallah, but we also get to know that these days our children are smarter than us, the parents, that's also why I rarely look into my child's phone.” (KYG)

Regarding the lack of parental role, the teachers argued that parents must take part in supervising the children. The involvement or the parents' presence is important for the supervision itself. Parental supervision can be done through giving advice, friendly communication, and assertive action.

"Parents play a big role in this matter. They should monitor, regulate, and guide their children hereafter. Don't let them go into unstructured socialisation or delinquent behaviour as the further impact is not good. Their interactions should be supervised, don't be too loose if possible. It's not only applied to girls but also to boys. We must communicate things down with the children, so that they are willing to be told. They want to be disciplined, but it's not with violence. A friendly approach to children is needed." (MN)

Discussion

This study aimed to explore in depth the experiences of adolescents regarding the relationship between exposure to pornographic media, the role of parents, and their sexual behavior. The results showed that most adolescents aged 12-15 years have been exposed to pornographic content on a regular basis which contributed to risky sexual behaviors such as masturbation, stimulation of the partner's intimate organs, and other sexual activities. In addition, the lack of supervision and communication from parents also reinforces this tendency. These findings indicate that pornographic media and the role of parents play a significant role to the emergence of adolescent sexual behavior, as revealed through the direct experience of the informants.

This study found that most of the adolescent respondents in the aged of 12-15 years had engaged in dating and exhibited behaviors that lead to risky sexual behaviour such as holding hands, hugging, kissing, to touching or stimulating their partner's sensitive areas. Adolescent sexual behaviour often begins with their interest in the opposite sex which then continues to develop a romantic relationship or what is perceived as "dating". Attraction to the opposite sex is a natural part of adolescence development, driven by hormonal changes that occur during puberty. These hormonal shifts in addition to physical maturation, stimulate sexual interest and motivation in both male and female adolescents.^{18,19}

Hormonal changes during puberty are not the only factors that influence adolescent sexual behavior. The adolescent respondents in this study reported that certain environmental conditions—such as quiet, dimly lit surroundings—can influence their decision-making. Additionally, a lack of self-control plays a significant role in adolescents' engagement in sexual behavior. According to a study by Magnusson, adolescents with low self-control—manifested as impulsivity (the tendency to act without careful consideration) and low inhibitory control (difficulty in resisting temptations)—are more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviors.²⁰

From the perspective of female adolescent respondents, risky sexual behavior is perceived as a natural expression of love in a romantic relationship between males and females. Such behaviors are often carried out willingly—without coercion—and with little consideration for their potential negative consequences. This study analyzes the issue from two main perspectives. Unlike teenage girls, male adolescents tend to view sexual behavior primarily as a means of seeking pleasure and satisfying lust. A similar pattern was found in a study conducted in the Fiji Islands, where emotional experiences such as the desire to express love and strengthen intimacy with a partner were identified as key motivators for adolescents to engage in sexual behavior.²¹

When engaging some sexual activities of the sexual behaviour tendencies, adolescents generally focus more on the aspects of pleasure and emotional intimacy involved. Although they may be aware of the risks, the urge to experience the thrill and pleasure from sexual activity and also to build an emotional connection with their partner often make them ignore the consequences.²² However, it does not matter how the adolescent perspectives may interpret the risky sexual behaviour, but in reality this behaviour still carries consequences that must be borne by both boys and girls. According to Indonesian Demographic and Health Survey (IDHS) data in 2017 11% of adolescents aged 15–24 who reported having had sexual intercourse also experienced unintended pregnancies. Furthermore, as noted by Bogale and Seme, engaging in sexual activity during adolescence places individuals at risk of reproductive health issues and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS.²³

Exposure to pornography by early adolescents serves as an introduction to sexual behaviours. This study found that adolescents not only accessed pornographic content occasionally but did so frequently and habitually. Study by Astuti demonstrated that continuous exposure to pornography can lead to pornographic addiction, which may manifest in the "act out" phase or where individuals replicate what they have observed in pornographic content.²⁴ The significant impact of pornography in the study was evident in the findings that the majority of adolescents engaged in sexual behaviours, such as masturbation, sexual fantasies, and stimulating their partner's genital area after watching pornographic contents indicating a strong tendency toward imitative behavior.

The most frequently accessed pornographic content by adolescents in this study was through porn video, which is pornographic videos, often referred to as a blue film. In conveying information, video media has a stronger influence in affecting adolescents' perspectives towards sexual behaviour, because the information is conveyed through multiple sensory channels and can simulate real-life experiences if it is a video as to indirectly say it is similar to a real-time experience. Adding to this, a study also revealed that adolescents who are first exposed to pornography in video format are more likely to engage in higher-risk sexual behaviors. It can be stated that pornography is not only a medium that introduces sexual behaviour to adolescents but

can also increase the likelihood of sexual behaviour in adolescents. Similar to a study conducted by Setyawati, it revealed that pornography can have a negative impact that affects a person's behaviour and attitude as they tend to imitate what they see. Over time, repeated exposure can lead to pornography addiction and increase the risk of developing deviant sexual behaviors.²⁵

This study also identified a lack of access to reliable reproductive health information among adolescents. An exploratory study conducted in Scotland revealed that adolescents' infrequent access to reproductive health information on the internet was attributed to several barriers, such as doubts about the accuracy of the information, complicated or unattractive website designs with excessive text and medical terms or jargons, and also concerns about stigma and judgement from others, particularly when accessing visual or audio content related to reproductive health.²⁶ Inadequate knowledge about reproductive health can be one of the causes of adolescents engaging in sexual behaviour. Without formal education on reproductive health, adolescents may resort to unverified online sources, which can result in misconceptions and increase the risks associated with unprotected sexual activity.²⁷ Consequently, less accurate information when it comes to reproductive health can leave adolescents susceptible to misinformation, increasing the possibility of engaging in risky sexual behaviours and making incautious decisions that compromises or even endangers their future.²⁸

Parents play a crucial role in providing reproductive health information to their children. However, this study found that information about reproductive health was rarely given by the parents to their children. Many parents feel hesitant or uncomfortable discussing reproductive health topics, which results in a significant lack of information among adolescents. The persistent societal taboo surrounding reproductive health often leads to the expectation that children will naturally acquire knowledge about sexuality and reproductive health on their own. This misconception assumes that adolescents will develop an understanding of these topics through maturation without the need for explicit guidance. Moreover, some parents fear that providing sex education may inadvertently encourage early sexual activity among their children, further contributing to their reluctance to engage in open conversations about reproductive health.²⁹

Providing reproductive health information to adolescents has been shown to effectively reduce their risk of engaging in risky sexual behaviors and contracting Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). A study by Briandemonstrated that students who received comprehensive sex and HIV education exhibited significantly lower rates of unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections compared to peers who received abstinence-only education or no sex education at all.³⁰ Comprehensive reproductive health education empowers adolescents to make informed decisions regarding their sexual behavior, thereby fostering a sense of personal responsibility and promoting healthier outcomes.³¹

Parents have a responsibility to monitor various adolescents' behaviours. A study conducted in Brazil showed that the greater the parental supervision of children, the lower the likelihood of children engaging in sexual behaviour.³² Supervision carried out by parents has different types according to the type of family and the gender of the child. This study shows different findings from several other previous studies. Generally, teenage girls receive more parental supervision than teenage boys.^{33,34}

In this study, it was found that parental supervision focuses on observing the activities that adolescents do, especially male adolescents in dating. This is because the parents assume that boys must be given strict supervision because they are more likely to engage in sexual behaviour while dating. Males are more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviours than females, this is because biologically and socially men are more easily stimulated and tend to exhibit more aggressive dating behaviours, such as touching, stroking and having sexual intercourse, compared to women.³⁵ Factors such as maintaining family reputation and honour also contribute to parents' having strict surveillance of their sons. In particular, the fear of premarital teenage pregnancy, which is often seen as irreparably damaging to a young woman's future prospects, hopes, or dreams—prompts parents to implement stricter monitoring of their son's behaviour.

This study also revealed a discrepancy between parents' and their children's perceptions of supervision. While parents reported providing adequate supervision, their children often felt neglected due to their parents being overly preoccupied with work. A lack of emotional intimacy and insufficient communication further reinforced the children's feelings of inadequate attention and supervision. Moreover, parental busyness outside the home can widen the communication gap between parents and children. Effective communication is essential in facilitating parental supervision, as open and supportive parenting helps children develop a strong moral foundation, including awareness about reproductive health and religious values. This foundation can ultimately reduce the likelihood of adolescents engaging in risky or deviant behaviors.³⁶

This research has several limitations. First, the data collected is inherently subjective and heavily depends on the honesty and openness of the informants in sharing their personal experiences. Second, the geographic scope of the study is limited to specific schools in Palembang City, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to adolescents at the national level. Third, the study does not explore the role of cultural and religious values in shaping adolescents' sexual attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, future research employing a mixed-methods approach with broader geographic coverage and cultural considerations is highly recommended.

Conclusion

Limited access to accurate reproductive health information leads adolescent to make unwise decisions regarding sexual behaviour, including dating that may escalate to risky activities such as

holding hands, hugging, kissing, to touching a partner's sensitive areas. Furthermore, exposure to pornography withlow self-control increases the likelihood of adolescents imitating the sexual behaviors they observe. In this context, parents play a crucial role in providing comprehensive reproductive health education and actively supervising internet use to help prevent risky sexual behavior among adolescent.

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