



The Importance of Sex Education in Preventing Free Sex in the Modern Era: A Literature Review

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Abstract: Social changes and technological developments in the modern era have had a significant impact on adolescent behavior, including in the sexual aspect. Sex education is one of the strategic efforts to prevent free sex, which has the potential to cause various risks such as unwanted pregnancy, the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, and mental health disorders. This study aims to examine the role of sex education in preventing free sex in adolescents in the Modern Era. The type of research used was a literature review, with the collection of articles from two main sources, namely Google Scholar and Garuda. Inclusion criteria applied included articles published between 2019 and 2024, in Indonesian or English, and articles available in open access or full text format. Based on the analysis of articles that meet these criteria, it shows that sex education carried out comprehensively through schools, families, and communities can improve adolescents' understanding of body boundaries, reproductive health, and the consequences of unhealthy sexual behavior. However, the main obstacles such as cultural inappropriates, lack of parental literacy, and the negative influence of digital media are still a challenge in its implementation. The conclusion of this study confirms the importance of multi-stakeholder cooperation in designing sex education programs that are relevant and based on moral and religious values. The development of digital-based education technology is also an opportunity to reach adolescents in various layers of society.

Keywords: Free sex; Modern era; Sex education; Teenagers

Introduction

The development of information and communication technologies in the modern era has a significant impact on the social life and behavior of adolescents (Gruet et al, 2022; Prasetyo et al, 2024; Reed-Berendt & Clough, 2024). On the one hand, these advances provide wide access to information, including relevant education, but on the other hand, they increase exposure to negative content, such as pornography and inappropriate information about sexuality (Padli et al., 2024; Prasetyo et al., 2024). Adolescents, who are in transition and tend to have great curiosity, are often a vulnerable group to the adverse effects of uncontrolled access to information (Gruet et al., 2022; Indika et al.,

2023; Kazmerski et al., 2024; Sari et al., 2023). The phenomenon of free sex is one of the real impacts of the lack of information control and the lack of comprehensive sex education. This behavior not only impacts physical health, such as the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and unwanted pregnancies, but also affects adolescents' mental health through stress, depression and decreased self-esteem (Nyoman et al., 2024; Sari et al., 2023; Selviani et al., 2024).

Data released by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KPPPA) shows that until 2023, Indonesia recorded more than 9,000 cases of sexual violence against women and children, most of which involved adolescents (Cahyaningrum & Arinjani, 2023; Ilham et al., 2024). In addition, the increasing rate

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of out-of-wedlock pregnancies at a young age is also clear evidence of the need for more systematic and comprehensive sex education interventions. For example, research by Huang et al. (2024) found that sex education provided in a structured manner was not only able to reduce the number of risky sexual behaviors, but also increase adolescents' awareness of the importance of maintaining reproductive health.

However, the implementation of sex education in Indonesia still faces various obstacles. One of the main obstacles is the inappropriateness attached to the topic of sexuality in most societies. Research by Sophia Quine (2012) shows that more than 60% of parents feel awkward or do not have enough knowledge to talk about sexuality with their children. As a result, many teenagers get information from non-credible sources, such as peers or social media (Sharkey et al., 2021; Tinmaz & Singh Dhillon, 2024). This parental unpreparedness shows the need for educational programs that actively involve families in efforts to provide sexuality knowledge to. On the other hand, schools as formal institutions have an important role in delivering structured sex education. Research by Tolossa et al. (2024) confirms that a comprehensive sex education curriculum can help students understand body boundaries, the risks of unsafe sexual behavior, and how to protect themselves from sexual harassment. However, in practice, many schools in Indonesia do not yet have a well-integrated curriculum, especially in rural areas, so sex education tends to be neglected.

In addition to family and school, digital technology also plays a dual role in the context of sex education in the modern era. While technology opens up opportunities for the dissemination of educational information through online learning applications or platforms, many teenagers are more often exposed to negative content such as pornography. According to Mellor et al. (2024), a technology-based approach can be a solution to reach teenagers more widely, but must be accompanied by strict supervision and strengthening digital literacy.

Previous studies have also shown that sex education has a positive impact on preventing sexual violence. Beerman et al. (2023) found that sex education-based counseling can provide children with a deeper understanding of how to protect themselves from risky situations, such as sexual harassment or exploitation (Bilişli et al., 2024). This program is very important, considering that data shows an increase in cases of sexual violence against adolescents every year, which not only affects physical health but also mental health.

The importance of sex education in preventing free sex in the modern era is very important because social changes and technological developments have had a

significant impact on adolescent sexual behavior. With easier access to information via the internet and social media, many teenagers are exposed to unverified or even false information about sexuality. Comprehensive sex education can provide a correct understanding of the aspects of reproductive health, social consequences, and the ethics of sexual relations. In addition, this study is also relevant for identifying factors that encourage promiscuity, as well as finding effective approaches to educating young people to make wise and responsible decisions in their sexual lives. Thus, sex education can be key in shaping a healthier society that is aware of the importance of safe and respectful relationships.

This study aims to explore the role of sex education in preventing promiscuous sexual behavior among adolescents, with an approach involving families, schools, and communities. In addition, this study will analyze the challenges faced in implementing sex education in Indonesia as well as opportunities to optimize the use of digital technology as a means of education. Thus, this study is expected to provide a significant contribution to the development of relevant, effective, and sustainable sex education policies in the modern era.

Method

This study uses a literature review approach to understand the role of sex education in preventing free sex behavior in adolescents. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to summarize and combine relevant research results to obtain a broader and deeper picture. By relying on quality literature, this study aims to provide a strong theoretical basis and applicable recommendations to support the implementation of sex education among adolescents.

Data collection was carried out by selecting scientific articles published in the period 2019–2024. The articles used were taken from trusted sources, such as Google Scholar and Garuda. The main focus is literature that discusses sex education, adolescent behavior, and preventive measures against free sex and sexual violence. The selected articles have full text access to ensure a comprehensive analysis.

Inclusion Criteria are articles must be in Indonesian and relevant to the context of adolescents in Indonesia. Article topics include sex education, reproductive health, free sex, or sexual violence. Articles published in the period 2019–2024 to maintain data relevance to current conditions. Exclusion Criteria are articles that do not have full text access. Articles that focus on topics outside of sex education or are not relevant to adolescent behavior.

Relevant articles were identified based on keywords such as adolescent sex education, free sex, adolescent reproductive health, and sexual violence. Boolean operators such as “AND”, “OR”, and “NOT” were used to narrow the search results. For more details, see Figure 1



Figure 1. Flowchart of the article review process

The search focused on articles that met the inclusion criteria, by first screening the title and abstract to ensure suitability. The analysis approach used was thematic qualitative synthesis, which allowed researchers to identify patterns, trends, and research gaps. Thus, this study not only collected data but also offered new perspectives on how sex education can be implemented effectively in the Indonesian socio-cultural context.

Result and Discussion

This research review explains the importance of sex education in preventing free sex in the modern era. Articles that meet the inclusion requirements are consolidated in a table containing authors, research methods, results, and insights. The findings from the analysis of 12 research publications can be presented in the form of table 1 as follows:

Table 1. Research Results from Literature Review

Author	Research Method	Main Result	Insight
(Kartikasari & Setiawati, 2020)	Analytical Descriptive	Parental communication about sex education to adolescents tends to be minimal because it is considered inappropriate.	Parental involvement in sex communication is important but needs a kinder approach.
(Cahyaningrum & Arinjani, 2023)	Literature Study	Sex education strategies such as clothing rules, cooperation with the health department, are effective in preventing sexual violence.	The effectiveness of sex education can be improved by involving families and formal institutions.
(Munawaroh et al., 2024)	Literature Study	Early implementation of sex education can prevent sexual abuse and improve children's understanding.	Sex education should instill knowledge about the body and boundaries to prevent sexual violence.
(Wajdi & Arif, 2021)	Literature Study	Sex education is needed to equip children with the understanding to prevent sexual violence.	Sex education is an important tool to build awareness of reproductive health.
(Azizah & Zulfiani, 2024)	Literature Study	Sex education plays an important role in preventing sexual violence through a literature-based counseling approach.	The counseling approach can adjust the needs of children in understanding and preventing sexual abuse.
(Zubaidah, Sabarrudin, & Yulianti, 2023)	Literature Study	Sex education helps adolescents understand and prevent out-of-wedlock pregnancies, sexual diseases and improve mental health.	The importance of sex education for adolescents is seen in its role in reducing the adverse impact of access to negative information.
(Rahmi, 2019)	Experiment	Early sex education is effective in increasing elementary school students' understanding of the dangers of sexual harassment and increasing self-efficacy	Increasing students' knowledge of reproductive organs and reproductive health to protect themselves from sexual harassment
(Asman & Dewi, 2022)	Literature Study	Sex education strategies can reduce sexual violence in children by increasing understanding of sexual rights	Implementing sex education strategies to prevent sexual violence among elementary school children
(Oktora et al., 2023)	Public Lectures	There is an increase in knowledge about sex education after being given education through public lecture and discussion methods.	Analyzing primary school children's level of knowledge about sex education and its impact on sexual violence

Author	Research Method	Main Result	Insight
(Maudi, Halidjah, & Ghasya, 2022)	(R&D) with the Borg and Gall model	The developed sex education video was validated with the category "very valid" based on the assessment of media and material experts	Development of sex education videos to prevent sexual harassment in elementary schools
(Anggara, Sianturi, Florency, & Michael, 2020)	Conceptual Approach	Sex education included in the school curriculum can help children understand the function and importance of vital organs to prevent sexual abuse	Emphasize the importance of education for child victims of sexual violence so that they understand their rights and prevent further violence
(Situmorang, 2020)	Experiment	After being given sex education, children showed an increased understanding of body protection and sexual violence prevention	Providing sex education to preschoolers to prevent sexual violence when they are teenagers

The Role of Parents in Sex Education

Parents play a central role in their children's sex education. However, communication about sexuality is often considered inappropriate in many cultures, causing most parents to avoid talking about this topic with their children. This leads to low understanding of adolescents about the importance of maintaining reproductive health and the consequences of unsafe sexual behavior (Hall et al., 2016). According to Kartikasari et al. (2020), many parents feel uncomfortable discussing sexuality, which results in children's ignorance about basic things about their sexuality. Therefore, a more open and friendly approach is needed in communication between parents and children to improve children's understanding of their bodies and the risks associated with free sex.

Open communication with parents can create a safe space for children to ask questions and discuss things they may encounter in daily life or the media (Sari et al., 2024; Selviani et al., 2023). With good education from parents, children can be better equipped to make wiser decisions regarding their sexuality, as well as avoid the negative impacts of promiscuity or misconceptions about sex (Jones et al., 2016).

Sex Education Strategies in Schools

Schools have a major role in providing comprehensive sex education. Sex education programs implemented from primary to secondary school levels can provide clear information about the body, sexual rights, and the risks associated with unhealthy sexual behavior. Structured sex education in schools can help adolescents recognize and understand the limits of their bodies, as well as teach them about the long-term consequences of casual sex, such as sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies (Fine & McClelland, 2023).

Sex education strategies in schools should include teaching based on an interactive and inclusive approach, using various methods such as discussions, simulations, and visual media, so that adolescents can more easily understand the material presented. The importance of

introducing body boundaries and teaching about the consequences of unhealthy sexual behavior, so that students can avoid risky free sexual behavior (Cahyaningrum & Arinjani, 2023). With the right approach, sex education in schools can serve as one of the important pillars in the prevention of promiscuous sex among adolescents.

Sex Education for Sexual Violence Prevention

In addition to preventing casual sex, sex education also plays an important role in sexual violence prevention. Education that teaches children and adolescents about their body's boundaries, as well as ways to protect themselves from risky situations, can be an effective preventive measure (Haley et al., 2019). Through a good understanding of body rights, children will be better able to recognize inappropriate behavior and have the courage to say "no" if they feel threatened.

Sex education that teaches the concept of respecting one's own and others' bodies can help reduce incidents of sexual abuse, both experienced by children and adolescents. Education that emphasizes body boundaries and how to protect oneself is very effective in preventing sexual violence. This also relates to the findings of Azizah et al. (2024) who showed that counseling-based education can help children and adolescents understand the importance of reporting any form of abuse they experience, as well as giving them the courage to act (Munawaroh et al., 2024).

The Urgency of Sex Education in the Digital Age

In the digital era, new challenges in sex education emerge along with greater access to information through the internet and social media. Adolescents are often exposed to age-inappropriate sexual content that can influence their mindset (Leung et al., 2019). This is where the importance of sex education that not only teaches about the body and self-protection, but also how to sort out relevant information online.

Sex education provided from an early age can help adolescents make sense of sexual information encountered online. It gives them the skills to

differentiate between positive and potentially harmful information, and teaches them to take care of their reproductive health. With adequate sex education, adolescents are not only better prepared to face challenges related to promiscuity, but also able to avoid the adverse impacts that often arise from exposure to inappropriate sexual content, such as the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and the risk of unwanted pregnancy (Zubaidah et al., 2023).

Conclusion

Sex education plays an important role in preventing sexual promiscuity and sexual violence in adolescents. By involving parents, schools and communities, a comprehensive sex education program can help adolescents understand the risks and act more wisely. Through the integration of cultural and religious values in teaching, sex education not only builds awareness but also supports the moral development of adolescents in the modern era. Further research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of various sex education methods in the Indonesian cultural context. In addition, innovations in digital-based learning technologies can be a solution to reach more adolescents who need this information.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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