

SOCIO-CULTURAL TABOOS AND THE RISE OF DIGITAL MEDIA UTILIZATION AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON SEXUALITY BY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on John Macionis' definition of sexuality, this study explores the increasing use of digital media as the primary source of information on sexuality among university students, driven by socio-cultural taboos surrounding discussions of sexuality and the declining role of parents in providing education and guidance on sexual matters. It examines the impact of these socio-cultural factors and their implications for students' understanding of healthy and responsible sexuality. It also aims to provide insights for stakeholders in developing more effective and open approaches to sexual education within both family and educational institutions. This study was conducted using a mixed-method approach combining quantitative and qualitative data, involving university students in Bandung City. The result of this study suggests in many cultures, sexuality remains a sensitive and taboo subject, particularly within family settings. The lack of comprehensive parental involvement in sexual education further strengthens students' reliance on these digital resources. They seek information about sexuality through digital platforms such as websites, social media, and apps, which offer easy and anonymous access to various sources.

Key words: sexuality; sociocultural; taboo; digital; sources

ABSTRAK

Mengacu pada definisi seksualitas yang dikemukakan oleh John Macionis, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi peningkatan penggunaan media digital sebagai sumber utama informasi tentang seksualitas di kalangan mahasiswa, yang didorong oleh adanya tabu sosial-budaya dalam diskusi tentang seksualitas serta menurunnya peran orang tua dalam memberikan pendidikan dan bimbingan terkait masalah seksual. Penelitian ini mengkaji dampak dari faktor sosial-budaya tersebut dan implikasinya terhadap pemahaman mahasiswa mengenai seksualitas yang sehat dan bertanggung jawab. Selain itu, penelitian ini bertujuan memberikan wawasan bagi para pemangku kepentingan dalam mengembangkan pendekatan pendidikan seksual yang lebih efektif dan terbuka, baik dalam keluarga maupun institusi pendidikan. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan pendekatan campuran, memadukan data kuantitatif dan kualitatif, melibatkan mahasiswa di Kota Bandung. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dalam banyak budaya, seksualitas masih menjadi topik yang sensitif dan tabu, terutama dalam konteks keluarga. Kurangnya keterlibatan orang tua secara komprehensif dalam pendidikan seksual semakin memperkuat ketergantungan mahasiswa pada sumber daya digital. Mereka mencari informasi tentang seksualitas melalui platform digital seperti situs web, media sosial, dan aplikasi yang menawarkan akses mudah dan anonim ke berbagai sumber informasi.

Kata kunci: seksualitas; sosiokultural; tabu; digital; sumber

INTRODUCTION

In the context of postmodernism, sexuality is understood as a dynamic concept; it is related not only to sexual relations but also to gender and sex (Davies, 2019). Additionally, the concept of sexuality is closely linked to culture, functioning as a socially constructed phenomenon shaped by norms, values, and customary influences. It encompasses both cultural and biological dimensions of sexual behavior and identity that shapes how societies interpret, express and regulate their sexuality (Macionis, 2014). Moreover, sexual expression plays a crucial role in healthy human development across all age groups, as it inherently involves the right to access information, as well as safe, effective, affordable, and acceptable sexual health services. For

adolescents, factors such as age, socio-economic status, family atmosphere, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, and personal experiences significantly influence the timing, nature, and expression of their sexual activity. Depending on the context, this sexual expression can be either positive or negative (Nwagwu, 2007).

Sexuality is often reduced to a simplistic notion of "sex" (Caroline & Yunanto, 2020), focusing solely on sexual activities and viewed merely as a biological and psychological phenomenon—desires and thoughts—a perspective that neglects the social responsibilities, norms, and values that are interlaced into the topic in a broader context. Thus, sexuality is not just a biological phenomenon, but is part of culture (Macionis, 2014). Sexuality does encompass human

biological desires and needs; however, the ways in which these needs are fulfilled are heavily influenced by the sociocultural context in which individuals exist. As cultural beings, humans create culture, and culture, as a product of human creation, reflects human existence within each society (Hikmawan, 2017), including the perceptions and practices of sexuality within that context.

Sexuality is not a topic which can be discussed and practiced openly by members of societies, especially unmarried youth. There are taboos on sexuality, which are deeply ingrained in society and often stem from historical, moral, or religious beliefs. These taboos, as a cultural phenomenon, encompass actions and topics deemed socially unacceptable or prohibited within a particular society that arise from perceptions of shame, danger, controversy or immorality (Zubiel-Kasprowicz, 2017). It often functions as a form of social regulation (Brandes, 2018), regulating behavior and discourse to uphold societal norms and moral codes. Unmarried youth are discouraged from asking questions or talking about their sexual feelings and experiences due to taboos on sexuality. It fosters an environment of shame or guilt among youth around natural sexual development and curiosity (Ismail & Abd Hamid, 2016; Bungener et al., 2022). It also puts unmarried youth into a problematic situation. On one hand, they are sexual beings who need accurate information and guidance from parents and adults about their bodies, relationships, and reproduction. On the other hand, cultural constraints limit their access to receiving such information. The inadequacy of accurate and comprehensive information about sexuality exposes unmarried youth at higher risks of unintended or unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and unhealthy relationships that stems from a limited understanding of consent and personal boundaries.

Taboo on sexuality also limits the role of potential actors to disseminate knowledge about sexuality. In early days in some societies, there was a tradition in which social actors disseminate information and educate unmarried youth about sexuality. One among the traditions exists in Banyumas, Central Java. Unmarried young male from noble families were sent to Gowok prior to his wedding to learn about responsibility as household head, including sexuality. However, this tradition has now disappeared as society changed (Fadilah, 2022). This tradition represents a time when the structured transmission of sexual knowledge was not only accepted but actively practiced within society. Its disappearance in modern society reflects a shift in society's

perception of sexuality that have resulted in the decline of open and organized conversations about sexuality taught upon adolescents, leaving behind a void in which modern social actors, particularly parents, have yet to adequately address. Nowadays, parents are often the main actors in the family socialization, internalization, and enculturation of all aspects including sexuality. However, most parents are hesitant in educating their children about sexuality. Lack of open and honest communication within the family, leaving children unprepared and uninformed about essential aspects of sexual health, relationships, and identity. In Indonesia, conversation about sexuality has long disappeared in the family, between parents and their children (Giriani & Hapsarani, 2021). Most parents feel uncomfortable discussing sexual topics with their children, often because they themselves were not educated about sexuality in an open manner. This discomfort also leads them to avoid discussions about puberty, reproduction, safe sex, consent, and relationships, leaving children to learn about these issues from peers, media, or unreliable sources. Parents worry to discuss these topics, as they may believe that talking about sex with their children will lead to experimentation, even though evidence suggests that comprehensive sexual education delays sexual activity (Caroline & Yunanto, 2020).

This study aims to explore and describe intersectional issues on youth sexuality: how the social and cultural taboos on sexuality persist and become a significant obstacle for youth to learn and search for information and guidance about the topic of sexuality that is crucial for them, amidst the development of their biological drive to sex. This situation is exacerbated by the diminishing role of parents and elders as the legitimate actors in delivering information and guidance on sexuality to their kids; but due to social and cultural taboo, they hesitate to do so. As a consequence of this given situation, youth attempt to search for other sources of information and guidance for their sexuality in the digital media. An anthropological perspective has been used to analyze these intersectionality issues, in particular to describe how socio-cultural taboos on sexuality were constructed and become the roots of problems in youth sexuality. Drawing on the case of university students as a sample, this study focuses on how this early matured socio-cultural group navigates their need for sexuality. The findings of this study aim to serve as a starting point for the development of sexual education programs that are culturally sensitive, concerning modern media's role in negotiating cultural taboos and societal changes, highlighting the need for a balanced approach to sexual education that is

attuned to current cultural and social norms while meeting the needs and behavior of adolescents.

University students, typically among the age of 17 to 24, are classified by the United Nations as part of the youth demographic. Biologically, this group is undergoing an unraveling situation in which they experience transition from adolescence to adulthood. However, they are often perceived as asexual beings with no need for sexual and reproductive health services (Situmorang, 2011). Therefore seeking detailed knowledge about sexuality and reproductive health is considered taboo for them; despite many of them having reached sexual maturity physically; and some may begin to experience biological needs and urges on sexuality which result in a heightened curiosity to explore it. Problems arise when there is a gap between the age at which adolescents reach sexual maturity and develop biological urges, and the age at which they typically marry and gain legitimacy to fulfill those urges (Sokowati, 2018). It is natural for adolescents to experience sexual needs, urges, and curiosity. However, due to prevailing social and cultural norms and traditions, they are expected to wait until they gain socio-cultural legitimacy through marriage before engaging in sexual activities. These expectations are not always adhered to, and many, if not most, may end up participating in sexual activities, thereby challenging social norms.

Nowadays, sexuality is often constrained by taboos based on social and cultural norms and values, but it was discussed in previous times as shown in many historical and ethnographic studies on human sexuality. Sexuality was openly shown in reliefs of temples, discussed in folklore and manuscript. There were also actors with legitimate authority to educate young people about sexuality. Knowledge and practices regarding sexuality are passed down from one generation to the next, incorporating norms, values, and social responsibilities associated with these practices. Typically, each generation learns about sexual education from parents, elders, or community figures who hold cultural legitimacy. In recent times, socialization around sexuality in modern society has become inadequate compared to the education provided in older indigenous societies. Parents and teachers are no longer the primary sources of information and education on sexuality; instead, their roles have largely been replaced by social media (Sihaloho, 2023).

With advancements in technology facilitating easy and instant access to information, traditional practices like Gowok are fading from existence (Fadilah, 2022) and the roles of parents and teachers have increasingly been replaced by digital sources, such as the internet and social

media, which can provide vast amounts of information about sexuality and reproductive health with just a few clicks. Social media and the internet have become the primary means of information for adolescents due to cultural constraints, such as taboos and norms that restrict open conversations about sexuality and reproductive health within families and schools (Retania, Hasfi, & Luqman, 2024). Previous research by Zakiyah, Prabandari, & Triratnawati (2018) highlighted that topics related to sexuality are often viewed as pornographic within families, leading many parents to avoid discussing them with their children due to discomfort and a lack of knowledge on how to approach the subject. These findings are further supported by research from Pinandari et al. (2020), which reveal that taboos surrounding sexuality prevent both parents and adolescents from engaging in discussions about sexuality and puberty, resulting in a significant lack of understanding of reproductive health among adolescents. Additionally, research by Pakasi (2013) revealed that reproductive health education provided in schools is not sufficiently comprehensive. Similar to the family context, this education is still considered taboo, focusing primarily on biological aspects and emphasizing religious prohibitions without addressing the realities and needs of adolescents, including cultural norms surrounding sexuality, gender issues, and adolescents' rights in reproductive and sexual health.

These constraints result in the absence of parents and schools, ideally the primary educators, in delivering and providing adolescents with adequate and comprehensive education on sexuality and reproductive health. As these primary actors fail to fulfill their roles effectively, adolescents with needs and curiosity turn to easily accessible digital sources, regardless of whether these platforms provide age-appropriate or accurate information. Adolescents can easily access knowledge about sexuality through the internet, particularly via social media (Zainafree, 2015). However, problems arise when they encounter a plethora of information from these platforms without guidance on what is accurate and reliable (Baskoro & Kistiana, 2024). While these digital sources can be a tremendous help for adolescents lacking alternative sources of information typically provided by parents and teachers, reliance on them also carries the risk of misinformation and a fragmentary understanding. For instance, pornography often exclusively emphasizes the pleasure associated with sexual activities while failing to address the potential consequences and responsibilities that adolescents may face when engaging in such actions (Zainafree, 2015).

Research by Herdayani & Fatimah (2023) indicates that parents, peers, and social media all significantly influence the sexual behavior of high school students, revealing that students who lack adequate communication with their parents tend to exhibit riskier sexual behaviors. Similarly, Mulati & Lestari (2019) explored the relationship between adolescent sexual behavior and social media use, along with peer influence, demonstrating that both factors significantly affect sexual behaviors. These studies highlight the roles of parents, peers, and social media as important influences on how adolescents explore and act on their sexuality. However, they do not address why parents fail to fulfill their roles as ideal primary educators or why adolescents ultimately turn to peer groups and digital sources like social media and the internet for information.

Again, this study aims to fill that gap by discussing how cultural constraints, such as taboos and norms, have hindered parents and teachers from effectively fulfilling their roles, resulting in adolescents turning to more easily accessible digital sources for information. The study will also explore and describe how these digital platforms offer a wide range of information on sexuality and reproductive health to university students who are the primary focus of this research.

METHOD

This study was conducted using a mixed-method approach. This approach offers a more comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand as quantitative data provides numerical insights of trends and attitudes within a population, while qualitative data explores and interprets the meanings individuals ascribe to specific social phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Primary data were collected through online surveys and in-depth interviews. Sample for online survey were drawn using convenience sampling principles. Google-form questionnaires were distributed through social media to university students in Bandung. After 30 days of the survey, a total of 49 participants, consisting of 35 females and 14 males, have completed the survey. The characteristics of the respondents in this study are presented in table 1 below:

Table 1. Characteristics of respondents

| | John | Kris | Nina | Jenny | Alif |
|------------------|------|------|--------|--------|------|
| Sex | Male | Male | Female | Female | Male |
| Age | 21 | 21 | 22 | 22 | 22 |
| Year of Entrance | 2020 | 2020 | 2020 | 2021 | 2020 |

| | John | Kris | Nina | Jenny | Alif |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Degree | Bachelor | Bachelor | Bachelor | Bachelor | Bachelor |
| Relationship Status | Single | Single | Single | Single | Not single |
| Residence | With parents | With parents | With parents | With parents | Dorm |
| Sexual Orientation | Heterosexual | Heterosexual | Heterosexual | Heterosexual | Heterosexual |

Source: Primary data

Of those numbers, there were 10 respondents who stated their willingness to participate further in this study as informants for in-depth interviews. However, among them, only 5 were interviewed based on the consideration of feasibility. In-depth interviews were conducted following the principle of phenomenological study to explore the individuals' experiences related to their experiences on sexuality and searching for information about it. In addition to involving university students as primary informants, this study also includes two additional informants who play a significant role in the research topic, even though they are not the primary subjects: a parent of Nina and an older sibling of Jenny who act as her guardian. All names of the participant in this study were displayed as pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Exploring Digital Sources

Adolescent sexuality, which encompasses behaviors, identity, orientation, and other aspects, can be influenced by various factors, such as upbringing, school education, and cultural norms and customs (Kar, Choudhury, & Singh, 2015). Both survey and interview results indicate that parents and teachers are no longer the primary actors in the socialization of sexuality among the university students who participated in this study. Nearly all informants reported that information regarding sexual activities, risky sexual behaviors, and other knowledge related to sexuality was mostly acquired through digital sources such as internet and social media or through peers. This finding aligns with Sihalo's (2023) statement that internet and social media has shifted the role of parents and teachers as the primary actors in knowledge dissemination of sexuality today.

All informants interviewed in this study reported that they had accessed information associated with both sexuality and reproductive health. The information accessed covered a range of topics including sexual activities such as

masturbation and sexual intercourse, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) or sexual orientation, sexual harassment, deviant sexual behaviors such as exhibitionism highlighted in news reports, and adult films. Additionally, they accessed reproductive health information, such as hygiene, sexually transmitted infections, irregular menstrual cycles, menstrual pain, physical changes during puberty, managing diseases or infections, pregnancy, and miscarriages.

On average, this information was obtained through the internet or social media. The primary reasons that motivated informants to seek out information or services were curiosity. This curiosity was driven by various factors, one of which was a permissive living environment where discussions about sexuality were common from an early age. Another prevalent reason among informants was the necessity of obtaining this information due to its relevance to their personal health and their belief that sexuality and reproductive health are knowledges that are essential for them to know, learn and understand.

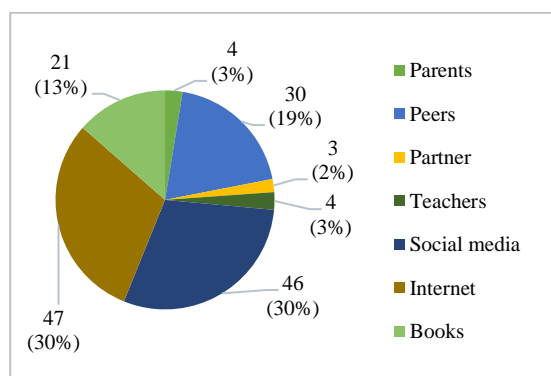


Figure 1. Sources of knowledge

Source: Online survey

Out of 49 respondents, 47 of them reported gaining their understanding of sexuality and reproductive health from the internet, followed by 46 respondents who cited social media as their primary source of information. In further interviews, all five informants also acknowledged acquiring knowledge and information regarding sexuality and reproductive health through the internet and various social media platforms, such as Instagram, YouTube, TikTok and X (formerly known as Twitter). Not only were the platforms diverse, but the types of content that contributed to their understanding were also highly varied. These sources included educational content from doctors, news about sexual activities or behaviors, sexually suggestive comedic content, and conversations or discussions about sexuality,

particularly sexual activities and reproductive health on social media.

Table 2. Types of content in different platforms

| Platform | Type of information |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Internet (Google, Safari, etc.) | News, articles, telemedicine websites (Halodoc, Alodokter, etc.) |
| Instagram | Infographics, short videos (reels) |
| YouTube | Videos |
| TikTok | Short videos |
| X | Discussions among users via replies, quote reposts, base, communities, etc. |

Source: Online survey & interview

TikTok and Instagram share similar content types, primarily featuring short videos that typically range from 30 seconds to 1 minute in duration. Educational content on both platforms is highly diverse, with some delivered directly by experts such as psychologists and doctors. Dr. H. Boyke Dian Nugraha, SpOG MARS, commonly known as Dr. Boyke, is a gynecologist and sexologist who is quite active on Instagram and frequently shares educational content on sexuality. On his Instagram account, Dr. Boyke has a dedicated series titled "Tanya Dr. Boyke" ("Ask Dr. Boyke"), where he answers questions related to sexuality and provides explanations through short videos or reels. Two informants, Kris and John, stated that they are familiar with Dr. Boyke and consider him a reliable source of information on sexuality. Given his medical background, the content shared by Dr. Boyke is regarded as credible and trustworthy.

In addition to Dr. Boyke, there are several other well-known accounts that provide education and information on sexuality, such as @tabu.id and @perkumpulan.samsara. As its name suggests, @tabu.id is a digital learning space that frequently discusses topics still considered taboo, such as sexuality and reproductive health. Meanwhile, @perkumpulan.samsara is a non-governmental organization that not only offers educational content but also hosts workshops and provides a hotline service for counseling on sexual and reproductive health. Both accounts regularly share educational content in the form of visually appealing and easy-to-understand infographics, covering topics such as gender, sexual orientation, contraception use, safe sex, pregnancy, and sexual violence. These accounts are also vocal advocates for creating safe spaces and ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health services, especially for young individuals. In addition to infographics, @tabu.id occasionally hosts webinars or live broadcasts in collaboration with

@yield_hub to address issues related to sexuality and reproductive health, including the significance of practicing safe sex through the use of condoms.

While Instagram offers a variety of content types such as infographics, short videos, and the use of live broadcast features, TikTok primarily focuses on short videos and live features. Similar to Instagram, TikTok also hosts a significant amount of educational content, discussing sexuality in detail and openly, particularly regarding sexual activities and organs. The open presentation of sexuality education, combined with a relaxed speaking style, makes the topic more engaging and helps to reduce the stigma surrounding discussions of sexuality. Additionally, this approach establishes a secure environment for viewers and followers to freely take part in discussions and ask questions, particularly due to the ease of maintaining anonymity on social media.

Social media algorithms often display content that users do not intentionally search for, bringing new information to the surface and sparking curiosity. Several informants initially stumbled upon content related to sexuality on social media but were then prompted to seek further information. According to interviews, X (formerly Twitter) emerged as one of the most open platforms for users to engage in discussions and interact with each other, facilitating numerous conversations on various topics, including sexuality and reproductive health. On X, quite similar to other social media platforms, users can easily maintain anonymity, which may account for the more candid and explicit nature of discussions surrounding sexuality and reproductive health compared to other platforms.

One notable feature of X is called "base," an account specifically designed to collect messages from X users, which are then automatically posted by a bot. Bases are typically created around specific topics, so the messages sent are focused on those subjects (Khairunnisa, 2023). One example is a base dedicated to adult discussions, where many X users ask and answer questions about sexuality and reproductive health quite openly, addressing topics such as sexual activities or issues related to reproductive organs. These bases are specifically intended for adult conversations, providing a space for individuals to discuss sexuality and reproductive health without "disturbing" other users who may not be interested or might feel uncomfortable with such content,

and to prevent users under 18 from encountering it. However, the platform does not have an age verification feature before accessing base profiles, meaning underage users can freely view and read these discussions.

Bases can serve as a valuable and beneficial feature, allowing users to exchange questions and answers about various concerns or curiosities, akin to other discussion platforms. Beyond conversations about sexual activities, these bases also include questions and discussions related to reproductive health issues, such as menstruation and pregnancy planning. This suggests that these bases are not solely focused on sexual topics; they also provide information and support regarding reproductive health, even though the responses may not always be accurate or reliable, as they often stem from users' personal experiences rather than being provided by medical professionals. Additionally, discussions and debates about sexuality frequently take place on this platform. Typically, these conversations begin when someone shares an opinion through a post, which then circulates via algorithms and prompts responses in the replies or quotes sections. These features enable a broad and open dialogue, incorporating various perspectives from different users.

Social media also allows young people to access foreign media content that presents diverse perspectives on sexuality (Termeulen, Prastowo, Page, & van Reeuwijk; Miranda, 2020). In addition to social media and the internet, informants' understanding of sexuality is influenced by various other forms of media, including films, videos, and television series, particularly those produced internationally. Some informants expressed that they learned about sexual terms or behaviors from watching Western content or Korean dramas, which tend to reflect more permissive cultures and often include kissing scenes or even more intimate moments. Such media introduce concepts and viewpoints about sexuality that differ from those commonly found in local cultures, igniting curiosity and interest. By showcasing various representations and more open practices of sexuality, media significantly influences the broader introduction of sexuality to society, especially given its accessibility. Furthermore, social media has not only shifted the roles of parents and teachers as primary actors of socialization regarding sexuality and reproductive health for adolescents and university students, it now plays an essential role in shaping the values and norms related to sexuality, influencing what is deemed acceptable or unacceptable within this context (De Ridder, 2017).

Sexual Practices Among University Students

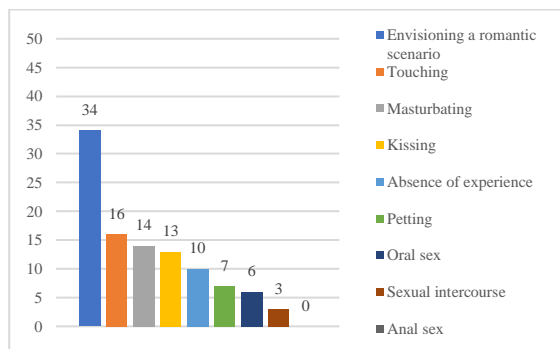


Figure 2. Sexual activities that have been done

Source: Online survey

Regarding sexual practices, out of 49 survey respondents, only 10 reported having no experience with any of the sexual activities listed in the survey, which included kissing, touching, masturbation, sexual intercourse, petting (non-penetrative sex), oral sex, anal sex, and envisioning romantic scenarios. The remaining respondents had engaged in at least one of the aforementioned sexual activities, with envisioning romantic scenarios being the most frequently selected, reported by 34 respondents.

Based on a follow-up interview with one informant, Nina, she explained that imagining romantic scenarios typically occurs when she reads romance-themed literature on X or formerly known as Twitter, commonly referred to as 'AU' which is short for 'alternative universe.' During the reading process, she visualizes the scenes described in the story. Some of the activities or scenarios she envisions include kissing and holding hands with characters from the narrative. However, other respondents reported having imagined romantic scenarios involving individuals they are attracted to in real life.

Additionally, an interesting finding is that one informant, Kris, admitted that although he had actually engaged in some sexual activities, he did not mark those activities in the questionnaire. In other words, Kris did not fully disclose his experiences in the survey. Kris explained that he felt reluctant or uncomfortable being open in the questionnaire, even though he could be more candid during interviews or casual conversations, because he viewed some of the terms listed in the survey as taboo and felt they were never openly addressed in educational contexts.

Absence of Ideal Primary Actors

Amidst inadequate education in schools that tends to focus exclusively on biological aspects and prohibitive discourse (Pakasi, 2013), parents play a crucial role in educating and guiding their children about reproductive health and sexuality. The lack of involvement from both parents and

teachers, who should ideally act as primary educators in this domain, has driven adolescents to seek information from social media, the internet, and their peers (Retania et al., 2024). Four out of five informants interviewed acknowledged that sexuality is regarded as a taboo subject, rarely discussed let alone taught within their families. Consequently, this has led to their discomfort and reluctance to share concerns or seek assistance from parents regarding information or services related to sexuality or reproductive health that they need. Instead, they prefer to independently access and find help through the internet, social media, or friends. All informants reported feeling comfortable discussing sexuality with their peers or close friends. Some even indicated that they frequently engage in conversations about these topics, often treating them as subjects of humor, particularly in relation to sexuality.

Overall, informants felt that friends could be more understanding and less judgemental in terms of discussing issues related to sexuality or reproductive health, allowing them to feel less scared compared to talking with their parents, whom they worry might judge them. This may also be attributed to the closed-off attitudes of their parents. The difference in experiences is evident between Nina and Jenny. The latter reported never receiving education or discussing topics related to sexuality nor reproductive health with her parents ever since she was a child and this lack of openness made Jenny uncomfortable and unaccustomed to discussing sexuality with them. She also noted that when faced with issues requiring medical assistance, she would rather go on her own without informing her parents. Jenny however, felt more at ease discussing sexuality with her older sister, Mira, who had lived with her and was very open to conversations about these topics. In her interview, Mira expressed that during her teenage years, she felt she lacked friends or outlets to talk about sexuality, despite being exposed to such topics from a young age, as her parents often joked openly about sexual matters, and her mother is a midwife. Because of this experience, Mira aspires to be a trustworthy figure for her younger siblings and aims to foster open discussions about sexuality, ensuring they do not face the same challenges she encountered in her adolescence.

In contrast, Nina, as the only informant who received education from her parents, felt comfortable seeking help and discussing matters with them when necessary. Unlike other informants, Nina was frequently exposed to discussions about sexuality within her community, where such topics were openly addressed, even in the presence of underage

children. Both of Nina's parents are teachers and are quite open in providing sexuality education, although they acknowledge that the topic is still considered taboo and deemed inappropriate, particularly in religious contexts. According to Ahmad, Nina's father, who was interviewed, he believes that the taboos surrounding discussions of sexuality should be temporarily set aside to ensure that children receive appropriate education, as sexuality is a crucial aspect that must be taught. As a teacher himself, Ahmad also asserts that while schools have a responsibility to provide education about sexuality and reproductive health, parents play a vital role in supervising and guiding their children. He emphasizes the importance of parental involvement, especially given how schools are still often restricted in the way they can provide these educations due to the existing taboo that surrounds the topic and the ease with which adolescents can access information from digital sources, which he believes contributes to the rise in underage sexual behaviors. Ahmad argues that educational institutions need the active participation of parents to effectively shape adolescents' understanding, attitudes, and behaviors regarding sexuality.

Unlike the female informants who still have figures they can openly discuss sexuality with, albeit not always their parents like Jenny, the three male informants reported never receiving any education on the topic from their parents or family members. Alif, Kris, and John explained that discussions about sexuality in their families are considered taboo and are never addressed. As a result, these three informants sought information through independent exploration on the internet, social media, and peers, which became their primary sources for sexuality education. Alif revealed that he first encountered information related to sexuality through social media, prior to receiving any education on the subject at school, particularly through comedic video content on YouTube that contained sexual humor. Similarly, Kris stated that he was motivated to search for information about sexuality after coming across videos related to LGBT topics, which raised new questions about what he had previously understood. He admitted to "accidentally stumbling upon something he should not have watched," as he encountered these videos while still underage.

Parents' behavior towards topics of sexuality and reproductive health plays a crucial role in shaping children's understanding of these subjects. Parents who consider sexuality and reproductive health as taboo and do not provide education to their children may lead them to seek information independently. However, without

proper guidance, they may access inaccurate or age-inappropriate information. Yet, discussing these topics openly doesn't necessarily guarantee better outcomes either. One informant felt that parents who are overly permissive and candid about sexuality can stimulate their children's curiosity about the discussed topics. Exposed to aspects of sexuality from a young age by her parents, Mira acknowledged that this was one of the reasons she wanted to marry at a young age. By the age of 19, her curiosity and desire to engage in sexual activities were already strong.

Similar patterns are also observed in Nina's permissive and open environment regarding sexuality, where on average, teenagers in her neighborhood marry right after high school without pursuing higher education. In fact, many of them marry because they are already pregnant. Both Mira and Nina acknowledge that this pattern is evidence that young exposure to sexuality without proper education can foster curiosity and a desire to engage in sexual activities without considering the long term consequences. Mira and Nina's perspectives highlight the importance of striking a balance between exposure to sexual information and providing comprehensive education that includes both biological and sociocultural aspects. With this balance, young people can acquire accurate knowledge and manage their curiosity wisely. A well-aimed and comprehensive education will help them understand the consequences of their actions and make better decisions regarding sexual activities and reproductive health.

CONCLUSION

Advancements in technology have facilitated easier access for students to information about sexuality; however, all informants feel that the available information does not fully meet the current needs and behaviors of society. Despite increasingly open sexual behaviors among university students, discussions surrounding sexuality and reproductive health continue to be constrained by taboo and stigma, rendering it inadequate to support the existing behavioral changes in society. Reproductive health education in schools remains inadequate and mismatched with society's current behavior in reality, as the usual traditional discourses of prohibition are no longer effective. Furthermore, sexuality education, deemed crucial and urgent, is still significantly lacking. The information provided in educational settings is often too general and superficial, with topics related to sexuality and reproductive health frequently neglected. It is vital to acknowledge that sexuality and reproductive health are interrelated areas that can mutually address each other's challenges and issues.

Taboos, norms, and stigma have acted as sociocultural constraints that hinder the involvement of parents and teachers as primary agents of socialization. At the same time, the rise of accessible digital sources has shifted the primary means through which adolescents seek information about sexuality and reproductive health, leading them to increasingly rely on the internet and social media to address their curiosities and concerns now that parents and teachers fail to provide them with the information they actually need. While cultural taboos surrounding sexuality have been deeply ingrained in society for years, the rise of digital media has transformed the ways in which adolescents seek and gain knowledge which exposes them to risks of misinformation as they can easily bypass traditional sources of information, such as parents or teachers. Digital sources are indeed helpful and valuable tools that enable adolescents, such as university students lacking socialization agents, to access the knowledge they need. However, they also present challenges, highlighting the necessity for a balance between information exposure, parental guidance, and comprehensive education provided by schools that includes both biological and sociocultural aspects.

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