

Qualitative Research: Family Function and Sexual Intention Based on Theory of Planned Behavior on Middle Adolescents in Medan

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Abstract—Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) states that behavioral intention is determined by beliefs that determine attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. The belief itself comes from background factors such as family functions. This study discusses the relationships between family function, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on teen's sexual intention. The study used a qualitative approach involving 9 female respondents aged 15-18 years who had sexual experiences in PKBI Medan, Indonesia. Non-participant observations and semi-structured interviews conducted between July- August 2018. The results of the study show the interplay between a family function with an attitude towards sexual behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control in adolescents. Weak family functions shape attitudes towards sex, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral controls that support sexual behavior. Conversely, attitude towards sex, subjective norms and perceived behavioral controls which support sexual behavior escalate conflicts between family members, increase distance in relationships, poor communication, parental neglect, and low monitoring. Attitude towards sex, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control also influence each other. The results showed that intervention should focus on the parental capacity to function their family to decrease sexual intention on adolescents through the establishment of attitude towards sex, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control.

Keywords—*adolescent, family function, sexual intention, theory of planned behavior*

I. INTRODUCTION

Vaginal sex is the sexual behavior that most negatively impacts health because it is at risk of causing pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases in adolescents [1]. Vaginal sex causes substance dependency, multiple sex partners, low academic achievement, headaches, sleep disorders, depression, and unhappiness [2] [3] [4]. In Indonesia, as a semi-restrictive society, sexual intercourse must be legitimized in a legal marriage institution [5]. This is what makes vaginal sex behavior among adolescents considered as a serious problem for the Indonesian. However, a survey from 2008 - 2017 stated that adolescents who had sex ranged from 6,9% to 63% [6] [7].

A survey conducted in Medan showed that 40% to 52% of adolescents were sexually active [8] [9]. Meanwhile, qualitative studies of Fatoni, Situmorang, Prasetyoputra, and Seftiani showed an increase in adolescent sexual behavior in Medan compared to the era of the 90s [10]. Medan is the third-largest metropolitan city in Indonesia and consists of 21 Districts. The population in 2017 was 2,247,425 people with 27,000 women compared to men [11]. The population aged 15-19 years in 2013 was the second largest age group of the total population of Medan. With a density level of 8,480 people / km² and it serves as a centre for economic growth and educational facilities in North Sumatra.

One theory that can explain the factors causing teenage sexual behavior is the theory of planned behavior (TPB) proposed

by [12]. TPB states that behavior can be predicted from the intention. Intention is determined by predictors namely attitudes, subjective norms, and behavioral control. Sexual attitude means a view of the positive and negative consequences of sex behavior. Subjective norms mean beliefs about people's expectations for them to engage in sex behavior. Behavioral control means confidence in the availability of resources needed to engage in sexual behavior [13]. The TPB mentioned that attitudes, subjective norms, and behavioral control are influenced by beliefs stored in individual memory. Belief is formed by background factors, one of which is a family function. Literature studies indicate that family function influence the premarital sex behavior [14] [15].

There are typical differences between men and women in early sex behavior. Women experience their first sex as more negative and the reasons they have sex tend to maintain relationships and emotions [16], hold traditional values about gender roles [17], were monitored more but had less sex communication with parents [18], and have a lower tendency to have multiple partners and to switch between partners [19] [20].

To the best of our knowledge, there is still no research that explores the relationship of family function with sexual intentions of girls aged 15-18 in Medan. Therefore, in this study, the research questions were asked namely 1). how is the family function? 2) how are attitudes, subjective norms, and behavior control? 3). how does family function influence attitudes, subjective norms, behavioral control that produce the intentions of vaginal sex?.

II. METHODS

This study aims to describe the relationship of family function with adolescent sexual intention using a qualitative approach involving 9 young women in Medan, Indonesia. The subject criteria were 15-18 years of age, having sexual intercourse, and receiving reproductive health services from PKBI North Sumatra selected by purposive sampling technique. Data collection was carried out using non-participant observation methods and semi-structured interviews after the subjects signed the informed consent. Interviews were conducted individually and recorded by the subject approval. The data processing begins with copying the audio recordings into verbatim transcripts. Field notes sheets and verbatim interviews are censored so that the subject's identity can be kept confidential. Data analysis begins with data reduction to separate essential information from non-essential information. The next step is coding and analyzing by determining conclusions, themes, and categories [21]. The credibility, dependability, and transferability is achieved by checking the appropriateness of the answers with the results, the subject consistency from one time to another, as well as the suitability of the subject's utterance intentions with the conclusions made by the interviewer [22].

III. RESULTS

The results of this study describe family function, sexual intention, and relationship between family function and sexual intention.

A. Family Function

- **Harmony.** The subject stated that her parents often showed hostility towards each other. Subject F said "I don't know, but I only just listens to them fighting. Never get along." Dissent between parents also causes parent's separation. Ra said "Suddenly I heard the news that mom divorced. Mom immediately went to Jakarta. I was left alone." The subject also often quarreled with siblings. Subject Al stated " I beat her up. She complained to mom and then mom beat me. I feel like I want to kill her at that time." Parental conflicts are caused by bad parental habits. Subject T said "I no longer remember how my father cheated. Often went with other women, drinking, gambling. That's why mom leaves my father".
- **Mutuality.** The subject stated that her family members cared less about each other. Subject L said "Sometimes my brother gives money to his girlfriend so I get angry. The money should buy our food despite your girlfriend, I told him." Subject An stated " You're just troubling me, mom said so. You always help my younger sister take out the trash, why can't I? I want to be coddled by mom." They do not have trust in each other. Subject Al said "She just wanted me to return her cellphone. She didn't care about me. I can't forget the pain she carved in my heart until now".
- **Communication.** The subject felt that mother didn't understand her desires. Subject F said "I often cry after being scolded by mom. Enter my room. Slam the door. The subject was reluctant to pour out her heart with the parents. Subject Q said, "I have never confided to my mother." The subject considered father as a more positive figure instead of mom. Subject Ra said "Mom always plays me. I'm like a stepchild. That's why I love dad more than mom." When subjects make mistakes, parents react emotionally with harsh words or physical punishment. Subject An said "Be scolded. If you don't want you to stay here, just take your clothes. You go away." Subject Ay said "Rude. Smack me often".
- **Concern.** Parents do not meet physical needs, providing care and protection. Subject L said "Actually, I don't want to quit school. What can I do, right? Grandma's getting old. I can't keep asking for Grandma's money." The subject also felt that the parents treated themselves in a bad way. Subject Al said " They always fight when dad came home from work. Children are always an outlet for their anger." Parents gave less affection to her. Subject Ea said "Because of, I don't get much affection at home".
- **Control.** The subject feels parents are very restraining. Subject Ra said "Yes. When I ran away from home, my father looked for me and then handcuffed my hands. Handcuffed inside the house. For one month." But on the other hand, parents are very loose. Subject Ea said "When I was in school, I wasn't that bad. I just returned home at 11:00 pm. Get to know him too. I became stubborn." When the subject violates the rules, mom expels the subject from home. Subject An said "When I got home at 11 pm, my shirt was thrown out of the house. I was forced to sleep at grandma's house".

B. Sexual Intention

- Sexual attitude. The subject considers sex as a way to make money. Subject M stated "How can I tell you? He is financing me, giving money." The subject occupied sex to get attention and protection from her partner. Subject R said, "So that he can accompany me every night." Besides, sex is an expression of love to a partner. Subject Ea said "Oh, because of love ..." Sex is also a way to satisfy their sexual urge. Subject Ay said "No. because of my desire. My sex desire." The subject considers sex at her age is prohibited by norms. Subject F said "I want to show that I can. Even though what I did was forbidden." The subject realized that sex could result in pregnancy and loss of virginity. Subject Rn said "I was afraid to get pregnant. But now there is a sex protection. It has become commonplace." Subject An: "It hurts me. No man will marry me because I am no longer a virgin, right?"
- Subjective Norm. The subject had sex because of insistence from their partners. Subject An said "He said it. If you don't give me sex, I play with other girls he said." The subject sees his friend having sex. Subject Q said "I'm curious, what are they doing? I finally peeked." Her friends told her about their sexual activity. Subject Ay said "Are you not a virgin? Nope. But don't talk to anyone, okay?" Her friend mocked when she claimed that she had never had sex. Subject F said, "It's a pity you never had sex." Parents has taught that sex is prohibited before marriage. Subject Al said "Don't do what is prohibited. It's a sin." The community opposes premarital sex behavior. Subject Rn said "My neighbor says, you're a wild night kid. But you joined the mosque's youth organization. You are embarrassing your parents".
- Control behavior. Subjects felt forced to have sex because of pressure from their partners. Subject Ea said "Not. Had he said that before, I certainly wouldn't have done it." Although the subject initially felt compelled, after that she was willing because she felt a sexual urge. Subject L said "Not. But eventually we both desire to have sex." The subject thought that as a woman she shouldn't show her desire openly. Subject Ay said "Oh, he was very happy. Because I rarely ask for sex first." The fact that she has lost virginity makes her obey her boyfriend's request to have sex. Subject Ea said "Because I think everything has already happened. He said he wanted to be serious in a relationship so I was willing to do it".

C. Relationship between Family Function and Sexual Intention

The Frequent conflicts within family encourage the subject to be more often going out the house. Subject F said "If I was already annoyed with them, I would leave quietly. Then I came home at midnight and mom would angry with me." Divorce makes parents rarely at home. Subject Ay said "No friends at home. Better hang out with friends outside." Parents who no longer meet the needs encourage her to choose to live alone. Subject Al said "Dad was instigated by his new wife not to give money to me. From that moment on, I don't want to meet everyone." The lack of monitoring leads the subject

to imitate their friend's behavior. Subject Ea said "At first, I leave at night and go home in the morning. Finally, I feel comfortable and get money there." Parent's distrust raises a harsh attitude towards the subject which in turn increases the sexual intentions. Subject Ra said "Not being allowed out all the time. If we were too bridled we will be stubborn." Feelings of resentment over parent's treatment make her mired in sex activity. Subject Rn said "Mom said, you always peddle yourself out there. I just quiet while putting on clothes. Mom didn't let me go. I insisted on going while bringing clothes."

Sex behavior creates disappointment with parents and gives up on the subject. Subject Ay "Staying up late. I was in grade 2 when I started to know the outside world. Since then my dad began to change." The subject's sex behavior makes conflicts often occur with parents. Subject Rn said "I think it's because my aunt hates me. He bad-mouthed me to mom and dad." The subject's sex behavior makes parents feel hopeless so that they no longer control her. Subject Ea said "They said, just stay at home. But I still went out. Finally, they took their hands off now".

IV. DISCUSSION

The results showed that family function was not effective. Subjects rated their family as not humble, cared less for each other, communication was hampered, parents did not meet their needs, and parental control was ineffective [23]. Conflicts among parents are caused by parent's bad habits such as drinking, gambling, drug addiction, cheating, or economic problems. Conflict and divorce make them feel depressed and uncomfortable at home [24]. The absence of a parent at home makes the subject more associating with friends and boyfriends who encourage her to have sex [25]. The subject felt disappointed over the parent's bad habits that caused split among the family. The subject also felt sad and angry over the mother's rejection and lack of warmth [26]. The subject feels unappreciated by the mother so she does not have the trust to share personal problems so that the subject feels angry and wants to rebel against the parent by having sex [27]. Meanwhile, subjects feel loved by fathers which is consistent with the statement that adolescents who have sex come from families with the support of fathers but felt rejected by mothers [28].

The subject considers sexual intercourse as a way to make money. Boyfriends will maintain a loving relationship, give attention and protection as long as the subject is willing to have sex. The insistence from her boyfriend also make her had difficulty refusing [29]. The role of peers is crucial for the subject in assessing sexual intercourse. Their friends motivate the subject to have sex even mocked when knowing the subject has never had sex. The subject learned from friends that pregnancy can be prevented and loss of virginity is no longer a problem so that the subject is more sexually active. Peer norms make the subject ignore the norms that have been taught by parents [30].

The weak family function causes high sexual intentions [31]. The economic burden is borne by quitting school and looking for work. Subjects have parents who ignore, commit violence, and have behavioral problems and parents who date other people [32] so that they tend to engage in sexual relations more quickly. As a woman, subjects feel they have low

control over their sexual behavior. The subject considered that as a woman she should not show a desire to have sex with a partner. This attitude is constructed by patriarchal culture which places women as passive objects [33].

Subject's sexual behavior on the contrary also affects the attitude of parents to themselves. Feelings of disappointment make parents drive her out of the house. Conflicts that occur increase the intensity of violence done by parents both verbally and physically. Parent who previously often advised to stay away from sexual relations to prevent pregnancy, now no longer have sexual communication. Parents let do what they want and no longer monitor the subject's existence [34].

The results of this study provide information on the interrelationships of sexual behavior and family function in teenage girls. Poor family function encourages engaging in sexual relations more quickly. But sexual behavior also causes parental treatment changes. Thus, the intervention of early sexual intercourse issues must pay attention to family function and these reciprocal relationships can predict whether it will get worse. Early sexual intercourse issues must also examine the beliefs held by adolescents. Despite the contributions of research for health counselors and psychologists, there are many limitations to this study. This study uses a qualitative approach to 9 female adolescents so this makes the results can't be generalized to a wider population. Family functions were assessed from subject's perception and were not supported by parents's perspectives. To ascertain the direction of the causal relationship also requires longitudinal research in the future.

V. CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that adolescents with early sexual intercourse come from families who are not functioning properly. Subjects have families who are split and full of conflict, as well as have less concern for one another. Subjects experience communication barriers in the family, there is no closeness with parents and siblings, and assess the mother's figure negatively. The parents do not carry out the task of caring for, loving, and controlling children. Weak family functions lead to attitudes that support sexual intercourse, to conform peers who encourage sexual intercourse and find it difficult to decide sex behavior independently. Weak family functions lead to sexual intentions and conversely, sex behavior increases disharmony, ignorance, bad relationships, anger and disappointment of parents, and loss of parental control.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge PKBI North Sumatera and all research participants in Medan.

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