

# THE EFFECT OF PREMARITAL SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATION ON ADOLESCENTS' KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES AT MADRASAH ALIYAH PUTRI AL-KHOIROT MALANG

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Adolescents are a vulnerable group to sexual problems, which can lead to an increase in unwanted pregnancies and early marriages due to a lack of knowledge and appropriate attitudes. Premarital sexual health education serves as an important preventive effort to improve healthy knowledge and attitudes related to sexuality.

**Purpose:** This study aims to examine the effect of premarital sexual health education on the knowledge and attitudes of adolescents at Madrasah Aliyah Putri AL-Khoirot Malang.

**Methods:** This study used a pre-experimental design with a one-group pretest-posttest approach. A total of 67 students were selected using stratified random sampling. The instruments used were knowledge and attitude questionnaires, and the data were analyzed using the Wilcoxon test.

**Results:** The findings revealed a significant increase in knowledge and attitude scores after the educational intervention ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** Premarital sexual health education significantly improves adolescents' knowledge and attitudes toward healthy sexual behavior. Educational institutions are encouraged to integrate comprehensive sexual health education programs to prevent risky sexual behavior among youth.

**Keywords:** Adolescent, Health Education, Premarital Sexual.

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## BACKGROUND

Premarital pregnancy is a major issue that is increasingly attracting public attention. The rising number of early marriages is largely attributed to premarital pregnancies. Numerous researchers and media reports have highlighted the complexity of this problem. Premarital sexual behavior continues to increase despite adolescents being aware of the consequences of engaging in sexual relations with the opposite sex (Syafitriani et al., 2022). The number of adolescents in Indonesia engaging in premarital sexual activity continues to rise, even though the government has implemented various efforts to reduce it (Shakti et al., 2022).

According to UNICEF, 1,078 adolescents who are still in school have given birth, with 976 of those births being unintended (Hasibuan, 2022). Currently, there are approximately 1.2 billion adolescents worldwide, accounting for one-sixth of the global population. This number is projected to continue increasing until 2050, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, where nearly 90% of the population aged 10–19 resides.

In Indonesia, there are 45.351 million individuals, or 16.92% of the total population, aged 10–19 years, according to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BSP). In East Java Province, the number of marriage dispensation requests (Diksa) in 2022 reached 15,212 cases. The three religious courts with the highest number of cases were the Religious Court of Jember with 1,388 decisions, followed by the Religious Courts of Malang and Kraksaan, each with 1,384 decisions. According to Maria Ernawati, Head of the East Java Provincial Representative Office of BKKBN, the viral case involving hundreds of pregnant students in Ponorogo before marriage is just the tip of the iceberg. This is supported by the 15,121 marriage dispensation decisions issued by the Surabaya High Religious Court in 2022 (Kominfo, 2023).

A case that occurred in Malang Regency is a real example of the importance of sexual health education for adolescents. A 17-year-old student from Kromengan District was found to be pregnant after undergoing a random pregnancy test at her school (Radar Malang, 2024). She admitted to having had sexual relations with her partner, who was also underage. Although the couple had undergone a religious (unregistered) marriage, the relationship ended in abandonment, eventually leading to a report being filed with law enforcement. This case highlights the urgent need for preventive efforts through early sexual health education, particularly in formal education settings.

Another recent case emerged at an Islamic boarding school (pesantren) in Gondanglegi District, Malang Regency, East Java, where a caretaker with the initials BT (45) was named a suspect for allegedly molesting a female student ten times (Detikcom, 2024). The victim experienced trauma and was forced to leave the pesantren. This incident reveals the lack of supervision and inadequate sexual health education in religious-based institutions. In fact, appropriate sexual education can prevent abuse and protect children from manipulation (Siregar, 2021). The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI, 2022) also reported a rise in child abuse cases in educational institutions, including pesantrens.

The 2020 Indonesian Adolescent Reproductive Health Survey (SKRRI) showed that approximately 6.1% of male adolescents and 1.5% of female adolescents aged 15–19 years in Indonesia had engaged in touching or stimulating their partners; 53.8% of male adolescents

and 36.7% of female adolescents had experienced kissing on the lips; and 85.4% of male adolescents and 78.1% of female adolescents had held hands with their partners (BKKBN Public Relations and General Affairs Bureau, 2021). Educators must consistently provide health promotion information on sexual health issues such as premarital sex, HIV/AIDS, abortion, unwanted pregnancy, and other sexually transmitted diseases to prevent students from encountering sexual and mental health problems (Syam, 2020). Unmarried pregnancy can occur due to promiscuity, lack of self-control, lack of parental attention and supervision, and limited sexual knowledge (Alifah et al., 2022).

Based on a preliminary study conducted by the researcher on November 12, 2024, at Madrasah Aliyah Putri AL-Khoirot Malang, interviews with 5 female students revealed that three of them understood the examples and consequences of premarital sexual behavior, while two students had limited understanding regarding such behaviors and their potential consequences.

Based on the phenomenon of premarital sexual behavior frequently experienced by adolescents today and the results of preliminary surveys indicating a lack of previous research on this specific topic, the researcher was motivated to conduct a study entitled “The Effect of Premarital Sexual Health Education on Adolescents’ Knowledge and Attitudes at Madrasah Aliyah Putri AL-Khoirot Malang.

## **OBJECTIVE**

This study aims to examine the effect of premarital sexual health education on the knowledge and attitudes of adolescents at Madrasah Aliyah Putri AL-Khoirot Malang

## **METHODS**

This study employed a pre-experimental design using a one-group pretest–posttest approach to evaluate the effectiveness of a premarital sexual health education intervention. The study was conducted at Madrasah Aliyah Putri Al-Khoirot, Malang, East Java, Indonesia, from March to June 2025.

The study population consisted of 203 female students enrolled at Madrasah Aliyah Putri Al-Khoirot. A stratified random sampling technique was applied, resulting in a total of 67 respondents. The inclusion criteria were active female students who were willing to participate and provided informed consent. Exclusion criteria included students who had received a similar educational program within the previous 12 months, those who did not complete the study until the final stage, and those with diagnosed mental or cognitive disorders.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising 20 items designed to assess participants’ knowledge and attitudes related to premarital sexual health. The intervention consisted of premarital sexual health education delivered through oral presentations supported by PowerPoint media. The program was conducted in four sessions over four consecutive weeks, with one session per week. Each session included group discussions to facilitate participant engagement, experience sharing, and clarification of questions. The intervention was delivered by the research team.

Data analysis was performed using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test to compare pretest and posttest scores, as the data were non-parametric. Statistical significance was determined at an appropriate level.

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from an authorized ethics committee. Additional permissions were secured in accordance with local research governance requirements. All participants were informed about the study objectives and procedures, and written informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. Participant confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained. The full name of the approving institution and the ethics approval number are provided on the title page.

## RESULTS

Tabel 1. Classification of Respondent Characteristics Based on Age of Female Students at Madrasah Aliyah Putri AL-Khoirot Malang (n = 67)

Respondent Characteristics	Frequency	Presentation
15-16 years old	33	49,3%
17-19 years old	34	50,7%
Total	67	100%
Class X	32	47,8%
Class XI	35	52,2%
Total	67	100%

(Source data: 2025)

Based on the data presented in Table.1, the distribution of respondent characteristics in this study shows that the majority were in the 17–19 age group, with 34 respondents (50.7%). In terms of class level, the majority were from Grade XI, totaling 35 respondents (52.2%).

The data on students' knowledge and attitude levels before receiving premarital sexual health education were obtained from the results of questionnaire distribution by the researcher. The detailed distribution of knowledge and attitude levels among all respondents can be seen in the following table:

Table. 2 Distribution of Knowledge and Attitude Levels Before Receiving Premarital Sexual Health Education (N = 67)

Variable	criteria	Frequency	Presentation
Knowledge	Poor	2	3,0%
	Fair	65	97,0%
	Good	-	-
Total		67	100%
Attitude	Poor	3	4,5%
	Fair	64	95,5%
	Good	-	-
Total		67	100%

Based on the results in Table.2, the data show the knowledge and attitude levels of female students before receiving premarital sexual health education. Of the total 67 students, the majority had a fair level of knowledge, with 65 students (97.0%). Meanwhile, for the attitude variable, 64 students (95.5%) demonstrated a fair level of attitude.

Table. 3 Distribution of Knowledge and Attitude Levels Among Female Students After Receiving Premarital Sexual Health Education (n = 67)

Variable	Criteria	Frequency	Presentation
Knowledge	Poor	-	-
	Fair	4	6,0%
	Good	63	94,0%
Total		67	100%
Attitude	Poor	-	-
	Moderate	40	59,7%
	Good	27	40,3%
Total		67	100%

Based on Table 3, it can be seen that the distribution of knowledge and attitude levels among female students after receiving premarital sexual health education showed a significant improvement in knowledge, with 63 students (94.0%) categorized as having good knowledge. In terms of attitude, 40 students (59.7%) were still categorized as having a fair attitude.

Tabel 4. results of the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Analysis on Knowledge and Attitude Levels Before and After Premarital Sexual Health Education (n = 67)

Knowledge	<i>p-value</i>
Pre test	<b>0,000</b>
Post test	
Attitude	0,000
Pre test	
Post test	

Based on table 4, the knowledge and attitude levels of female adolescents before (pre-test) and after (post-test) receiving premarital sexual health education both showed a p-value of 0.000. It can be concluded that  $0.000 < 0.05$ , which indicates a significant effect of premarital sexual health education on the knowledge and attitudes of adolescents at Madrasah Aliyah Putri AL-Khoirot Malang.

## DISCUSSION

This study found that premarital sexual health education has a significant influence on adolescents' knowledge and attitudes. The findings support the notion that educational interventions are effective in improving students' understanding of reproductive health issues and shaping their perspectives toward responsible behavior. The relationship between knowledge and attitude is closely interconnected as adolescents gain more accurate and structured information, their attitudes tend to become more positive and preventive in nature.

These results align with previous studies such as those by Syam (2020), which emphasize the importance of continuous health promotion regarding issues such as premarital sex, sexually transmitted infections, and unwanted pregnancy. Education that is structured, culturally sensitive, and age-appropriate is proven to be effective in reducing risky behaviors among adolescents. Moreover, Siregar (2021) noted that a lack of sexual education contributes to increased vulnerability to manipulation and violence, especially among adolescents in environments with limited access to formal health education.

In the context of this study, female students who initially had limited knowledge and moderate attitudes showed notable improvement after receiving targeted education. This suggests that sexual health education is not only informative but transformative, particularly when delivered in environments where such topics are often taboo or under-discussed, such as religious-based schools.

Furthermore, the findings reflect the iceberg phenomenon described by BKKBN (2023), where visible cases of adolescent pregnancy represent only a fraction of the broader issue. Providing early education could play a crucial role in equipping students with the awareness and critical thinking needed to make safe, informed decisions

## CONCLUSION

Premarital sexual health education had a positive impact on the respondents' knowledge and attitudes. There was an improvement in knowledge from the moderate to good category, and an improvement in attitude from the poor to moderate category.

Premarital sexual health education plays a pivotal role in shaping adolescents' knowledge and attitudes, making it a key preventive measure in addressing reproductive health challenges among youth.

Future studies should be added control group to examine comparison with intervention group and using larger sample. Involving other Madrasah Aliyah in Malang or other districts to see if the results are consistent in different cultural contexts. Adding a long-term follow up to ensure if the knowledge and attitude persist.

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## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest in this study

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