


The Effect Of Peer Education On Improving Adolescent Girls' Knowledge Of Early Marriage At MA Al-Mutaqqin Suahid, Kapuas Hulu Regency

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
Keywords: Adolescents, Peer Education, Knowledge.	Adolescence is a period of rapid growth characterized by a strong sense of curiosity, often leading to the uncritical acceptance of information in various contexts. One negative condition that can arise during this stage is adolescent sexual behavior. This study aims to determine the effect of peer education on improving adolescent girls' knowledge about early marriage at MA Al-Mutaqqin Suahid, Kapuas Hulu Regency. Method: This study employed a quasi-experimental design with a one-group pre-test and post-test approach, involving 30 respondents selected through purposive sampling. The research intervention consisted of peer education activities. Data were analyzed using univariate and bivariate methods, with the Wilcoxon test applied for statistical analysis. Results: The findings indicate a significant effect of peer education on improving adolescent girls' knowledge about early marriage at MA Al-Mutaqqin Suahid, Kapuas Hulu Regency. Conclusion: Peer education has a positive impact on increasing adolescent girls' knowledge regarding early marriage at MA Al-Mutaqqin Suahid, Kapuas Hulu Regency.
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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a transitional period from childhood to adulthood marked by development across various aspects or functions essential for maturity (Handayani et al., 2020). During this phase, adolescents undergo significant growth, which fosters a heightened curiosity about various conditions. However, this often leads to uncritical acceptance of information. A critical issue during adolescence is sexual behavior, which can have negative consequences (Wahyuni et al., 2023).

Globally, the highest rates of child marriage are found in West and Central Africa, where nearly 4 out of 10 young women marry before the age of 18. High prevalence rates are also observed in East and Southern Africa (32%), South Asia (28%), and Latin America and the Caribbean (21%). While the global prevalence of child marriage has declined, significant progress in the last decade has been observed in South Asia, where the risk of

girls marrying during childhood has decreased by more than one-third, nearly halving to below 30%. However, the total number of girls married in childhood still reaches 12 million annually. Without further acceleration, over 100 million girls are projected to marry before the age of 18 within the next decade (UNICEF, 2022).

In Indonesia, child marriage remains a pressing issue, with 1.2 million cases recorded annually. Indonesia ranks as the second-highest country in Southeast Asia and eighth globally for child marriage prevalence. Data reveals that 1 in 9 women aged 20-24 began their married life as children, which adversely affects their health, education, and future (UNICEF, 2022). In 2021, a total of 59,709 child marriage applications were approved by the courts in Indonesia, a figure slightly lower than the previous year but still alarmingly high (Komnas Perempuan, 2022).

A sound understanding of reproductive health is a crucial asset for adolescents to lead a healthy life. Unfortunately, limited knowledge often leads adolescents to engage in risky behaviors, such as early dating, promiscuity, or premarital sex. Consequently, many adolescents experience unintended pregnancies, forcing them into early marriage (Satriyandari & Utami, 2018).

METHODS

This study employed a quasi-experimental design with a one-group pre-test and post-test approach. The sample consisted of 30 female students from the third grade, selected through purposive sampling. The research was conducted using a peer education intervention method, which involved administering questionnaires before and after the intervention to assess students' knowledge levels about early marriage. Data were analyzed using univariate and bivariate methods, with the Wilcoxon test applied for statistical analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Knowledge Before Peer Education Intervention

Knowledge	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Poor	26	86,7
Fair	4	13,3
Good	0	0
Total	30	100

The table above shows that before the intervention, most respondents had poor knowledge levels, with 26 respondents (86.7%).

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Knowledge After Peer Education Intervention

Knowledge	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Poor	6	20
Fair	9	30
Good	15	50
Total	30	100

The table above indicates an improvement in knowledge levels after the intervention. Most respondents achieved a good level of knowledge, with 15 respondents (50%).

Table 3. Effect of Peer Education on Increasing Knowledge About Early Marriage Among Adolescent Girls at MA Al-Mutaqqin Suahid, Kapuas Hulu Regency

	Knowledge Mean	Z	p-value
Pre	5,63	4,791	0,000
Post	10,63		

The Wilcoxon test analysis resulted in a p-value of 0.000, indicating a significant effect of peer education on increasing adolescent girls' knowledge about early marriage at MA Al-Mutaqqin Suahid, Kapuas Hulu Regency. The research findings indicate that, prior to the intervention, most knowledge levels were categorized as poor, with 26 respondents (86.7%). This condition is attributed to limited understanding among adolescent girls regarding the impact of early marriage. One contributing factor is the age group, which is still vulnerable (under 20 years), resulting in less mature thinking and limited capacity to process the information conveyed. Additionally, the limited promotion of the impacts of early marriage by health officials further contributes to the low level of knowledge among adolescent girls (Pohan, 2017).

The lack of knowledge regarding the effects of early marriage results in risky sexual behaviors, including unplanned pregnancies and the decision to marry at a young age. This situation often stems from promiscuous behavior and unprotected sexual activity before marriage (Carolin & Lubis, 2021).

The increase in knowledge post-intervention is attributed to peer education methods. Through peer-to-peer communication, information is delivered in a language that adolescents can easily understand, making the content more accessible and relatable. This approach enhances their understanding of sexual and reproductive health (SRH), allowing them to acquire more comprehensive information (Rahmawati & Sari 2023).

The findings of this research are consistent with previous studies. Research conducted by Handayani et al. (2020) shows that peer group education and counseling effectively improved adolescent girls' SRH knowledge, with an increase from 30% to 82.5% having a good understanding of SRH. Similarly, Wahyuni (2023) reported an increase in knowledge and attitudes regarding early marriage and SRH among students after peer education interventions.

Providing peer education on early marriage to adolescent girls can have a positive impact on their level of knowledge and help shape a more positive mindset. It encourages them to face challenges more effectively and approach the information they receive with greater caution. This enables them to build a defense mechanism to prevent early marriages (UNICEF, 2022).

The findings of this study align with Sulistiyawati's (2022) view that group-based discussions at the same age level are an effective learning method. In these discussions, adolescents exchange ideas and information to achieve a common understanding. A comfortable and interactive environment encourages active participation and fosters positive

relationships among peers.

Research conducted by Sari et al. (2021) highlights that adolescent girls who engage in peer education experience 1.5 times greater improvement in reproductive health knowledge compared to those who only receive traditional counseling. This suggests that peer education is more effective in transferring information and influencing adolescent behavior.

Peer education is a process in which trained individuals share health knowledge with their peers. This method is effective because peers often communicate in a more relaxed and understandable manner, especially on sensitive topics. Additionally, the shared experiences and age similarity make participants feel more comfortable discussing and asking questions (Pohan, 2017).

According to researchers, peer education has proven to be more effective in increasing adolescent reproductive health knowledge because adolescents are more likely to be open and comfortable discussing difficult or sensitive topics with their peers. This openness fosters a greater sharing of experiences, enabling them to develop a deeper understanding of the effects of early marriage. Furthermore, peer education is considered a valuable approach to prevention, as it helps to mitigate the prevalence of early marriages. By engaging in this method, adolescents are empowered to create and share messages using appropriate media, making information more accessible and relatable for their peers.

Peer education has the advantage of building strong interpersonal relationships among adolescents and peer educators. In terms of imparting sensitive reproductive health information, peer education is more beneficial than traditional methods. Adolescents feel more at ease discussing personal issues with peers rather than with teachers or adults. This approach has the potential to significantly improve adolescent knowledge, particularly regarding the implications of early marriage.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study indicate that there is an influence of peer education in increasing the knowledge of adolescent girls regarding early marriage at MA Al-Mutaqqin Suahid, Kapuas Hulu Regency.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This research was conducted successfully thanks to the support and assistance of various parties. Therefore, the researcher would like to express heartfelt thanks to the Director of Politeknik 'Aisyiyah Pontianak, the Chair of the Applied Bachelor Program and Midwifery Education Profession, and the MA Al-Muttaqien Suahid school for their cooperation, which greatly facilitated the completion of this research without significant obstacles.

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