

## PEER INFLUENCE FACTORS ON FREE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN STATE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL 2, ENREKANG DISTRICT

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### ABSTRAK

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#### Abstract:

Sexual behavior among adolescents is a growing trend, especially in the school environment. Adolescents are generally known to have strong curiosity and the process of searching for identity, if not accompanied by adequate guidance and understanding, has the potential to lead to deviant behavior. This study aims to analyze the influence of peers on promiscuous sexual behavior among adolescents at SMA Negeri 2, Enrekang Regency. The type of research used is quantitative with a cross-sectional design. The study sample consisted of 249 students in grades X and XI, selected through proportional random sampling. Data were collected using a closed questionnaire and analyzed using the chi-square test. The results of the analysis showed that the majority of respondents had low sexual behavior compliance, namely 65.9%. Peer factors were proven to have a significant relationship with promiscuous sexual behavior ( $p = 0.010$ ). These findings indicate that peer influence is a dominant factor in adolescent sexual behavior. It is recommended that adolescents need to increase awareness and be selective in choosing friends.

#### Abstrak:

Perilaku seksual bebas di kalangan remaja menunjukkan tren peningkatan yang mengkhawatirkan. Remaja umumnya dikenal dengan dengan rasa ingin tahu yang besar serta proses pencarian jati diri, sehingga apabila tidak disertai arahan dan pemahaman yang memadai, berpotensi menimbulkan perilaku menyimpang. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis faktor pengaruh teman sebaya terhadap perilaku seks bebas pada remaja di SMA Negeri 2 Kabupaten Enrekang. Jenis penelitian yang digunakan adalah kuantitatif dengan desain cross-sectional. Sampel penelitian terdiri dari 249 siswa kelas X dan XI, yang dipilih melalui teknik proportional random sampling. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan kuesioner tertutup dan dianalisis dengan uji chi-square. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar responden memiliki perilaku seksual yang kurang baik, yaitu sebesar 65,9%. Faktor teman sebaya terbukti memiliki hubungan yang signifikan dengan perilaku seksual bebas ( $p = 0,010$ ). Temuan ini mengindikasikan bahwa pengaruh teman sebaya merupakan faktor dominan terhadap perilaku seksual remaja. Disarankan kepada remaja perlu meningkatkan kesadaran serta selektif dalam memilih pergaulan.



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## INTRODUCTION

The trend of casual sex among Indonesian teenagers is increasingly worrying. Puberty is a time of self-discovery, where individuals begin to explore values and ways of life independently. The World Health Organization (WHO) reported in 2020 that approximately 21 million pregnancies occur annually among adolescent girls aged 15–19 in developing countries, 49% of which are unplanned [1].

Premarital sexual activity carries the risk of serious consequences, such as unintended pregnancy and the transmission of STIS [2]. A survey by the Ministry of Health showed that curiosity was the primary cause of premarital sexual behavior among adolescent boys. Meanwhile, for adolescent girls, the most common reasons were coercion by their partners or unplanned sexual activity [3].

The high number is related to the increasing tendency of deviant sexual behavior among teenagers [4]. Indonesia is included in the category of developing countries that also face the problem of deviant sexual behavior among teenagers. Every year, approximately 12 million teenage girls aged 15 to 19 years in developing countries experience pregnancy, and almost 49% are included in the category of unwanted pregnancies [5]. Data from the Population Service of South Sulawesi Province shows that the number of teenage girls who experience free sex is 33.7%, and boys 63.3% [6].

Data shows that the number of sexual violence cases in Enrekang Regency is experiencing a slight increase. Data from the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency shows 10 cases in 2022, with the same number recorded again in 2023. In 2024, this number increased to 14 cases, indicating an upward trend that requires closer attention. Data from the Enrekang Regency Health Agency shows an increase in STD cases due to promiscuity, particularly HIV infection. Over the past three years, the number of cases has continued to rise, with 12 cases in

2022, 13 cases in 2023, and a surge to 21 cases in 2024. Promiscuity is influenced by various factors, both internal and external. Internal factors include knowledge about reproductive health, attitudes toward sexuality, and self-control. Meanwhile, external factors include family parenting styles and peer influence [7]. A lack of comprehensive sex education, minimal open communication within the family, and strong peer pressure can increase the risk of adolescents engaging in premarital sexual behavior [8].

Previous research on adolescent promiscuity generally focuses on family factors, reproductive health knowledge, and media exposure. However, studies specifically analyzing peer influence are relatively limited, particularly in Enrekang Regency [9]. Based on Bandura's Social Learning Theory, adolescent behavior tends to be shaped through observation and imitation of behavior exhibited by their peers [10].

Furthermore, in the Theory of Planned Behavior, subjective norms derived from peers play a significant role in shaping individual intentions and behavior. This situation indicates a gap between the theoretical foundation that emphasizes the strong influence of peers and the limited empirical evidence in the local context. Therefore, research that specifically examines peer influence on adolescent promiscuity in Enrekang Regency is needed.

Based on the results of initial data collection in Enrekang Regency, researchers found cases related to premarital sexual behavior in one of the schools. This school is considered one of the quite popular and well-liked high schools in Enrekang Regency, both in terms of achievement and number of students, so it is considered representative to describe the social conditions and behavior of adolescents in general. This study aims to determine the influence of peers on adolescent sexual behavior at SMA Negeri 2 Enrekang.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

This study used a quantitative approach with a survey method and a cross-sectional design. The population in this study was all students in grades X and XI who were actively enrolled in the academic year of the study, with a total of 659 students. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with an error tolerance of 5%. Furthermore, the sampling technique used was proportional random sampling. The sample size was divided into 127 students from grade X and 122 students from grade XI. Therefore, the sample in this study was 249 students.

The research instrument used was a closed questionnaire compiled based on theoretical studies and previous research, consisting of 10 items for peer influence, the measurement scale used was yes-no, for peer influence with a score of 1 for appropriate answers and 0 for inappropriate answers.

Alternative answers	Alternative answer scores	
	Positive	Negative
Yes	1	0
No	0	1

Determination of categories is done using a cut off score of 50% of the total maximum score, where a value of  $\geq 50\%$  is categorized as poor and  $< 50\%$  as sufficient.

The collected data were then processed using SPSS version 26. The analysis used the Chi-Square test, with the provision that the relationship is considered significant if the calculated  $\chi^2$  value  $\geq \chi^2$  table or p value  $< 0.05$ . This test is used to determine the factors that influence promiscuous sexual behavior in adolescents.

**RESULT AND ANALYSIS**

**Table 1.**  
**Distribution of Student Characteristics at State Senior High School 2, Enrekang Regency**

Characteristics	n = 249	%
Age (years)		
15	28	11,2
16	145	58,2
17	71	28,5
18	5	2.0
Gender		
Male	105	42,2
Female	144	57,8

Table 1 shows that of the total 249 respondents, the majority were 16 years old, namely 145 people (58.2%), and the majority were female, namely 144 people (57.8%).

**Table 2.**  
**Frequency Distribution of Sexual Behavior of Adolescents at State Senior High School 2, Enrekang Regency**

Behavior	n	%
Fair	85	34,1
Not Good	164	65,9
Total	249	100.0

Table 2 shows that of the 249 respondents, the majority had a less than good behavior category, namely 164 people (65.9%).

**Table 3.**  
**Influence of Peers on Sexual Behavior of Adolescents at State Senior High School 2, Enrekang Regency**

Peer Category	Behavior Category				Total	p-Value	
	Not good		Enough				
	n	%	n	%			
Not Good	129	70.5	54	85.0	183	100.0	0.010
Enough	35	53.0	31	47.0	66	100.0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>69.9</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>34.1</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 3, of the 183 adolescents with less than ideal peers, 129 (70.5%) had less than ideal sexual behavior, and only 54 (29.5%) had moderately good behavior. Meanwhile, of the 66 adolescents with more than ideal peers, 35 (53.0%) had less than ideal behavior, while 31 (47.0%) had moderately good behavior. The results of the statistical test showed a p value of

0.010 ( $p < 0.05$ ), which indicates a significant and negative relationship between peer influence and adolescent sexual behavior.

## DISCUSSION

The influence of peers on adolescents' premarital sexual behavior can be explained through the concepts of conformity and subjective norms in the Theory of Planned Behavior [11], where social pressure from peers influences an individual's decision to engage in or avoid a behavior [12].

A social environment that is permissive towards premarital sexual behavior will tend to form subjective norms that lead to the justification of this behavior [13]. Teenagers who are in social groups that are accustomed to engaging in or talking about premarital sexual behavior will feel compelled to adapt to remain accepted in their group [14].

This finding is supported by research by [15] which showed that peer conformity significantly influences premarital sexual behavior. The higher the level of conformity, the greater the tendency for adolescents to engage in premarital sexual behavior [16].

Research by [17] also shows that peers are one of the strongest factors influencing sexting behavior among adolescents, where social recognition and acceptance from peers are the primary motivations for engaging in online sexual behavior [18].

The results of this study indicate that peers influence the sexual behavior of adolescents at State Senior High School 2 in Enrekang Regency [19]. Adolescents in the identity-searching phase tend to prioritize social acceptance from their peers, so the opinions and behaviors of friends play a significant role in shaping their decisions and actions [20]. One of the main causes of this influence is adolescents' need for acceptance and recognition within their social group, which often leads them to follow the behavior of the majority in

that group, including in sexual behavior [21].

Research findings indicate that 70.5% of respondents in the negative peer influence category engaged in inappropriate sexual behavior [22]. This indicates that information about sexuality obtained through peers in this group tends to be unsupported by adequate scientific understanding and has the potential to encourage risky sexual behavior [23]. Peers can also act as a source of modeling, namely role models for behavior, so that adolescents in each group engage in certain sexual behaviors, and some adolescents tend to imitate them as a form of solidarity or self-validation [24]. This is reinforced by social pressure or peer pressure, both explicit and implicit, which encourages adolescents to follow group norms to avoid being ostracized [25].

This finding is also supported by research by [26] which shows that peer conformity has a positive and significant influence on premarital sexual behavior in adolescents. The desire to be accepted within a group drives adolescents to adapt to the values and behaviors prevailing in their social environment [27]. This study explains that adolescents with high levels of conformity tend to follow the norms and behaviors prevailing in their peer group, including regarding sexual behavior [28].

Peer influence on adolescent sexual behavior also differs by gender. Boys tend to be more influenced by group norms that emphasize social recognition and masculinity, making them more likely to adopt behaviors considered acceptable in their social circles [29]. Meanwhile, for girls, peer influence is more related to the need for emotional acceptance and relational closeness [30].

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that peer influence has a significant relationship with promiscuous sexual behavior among adolescents at State Senior High School 2, Enrekang Regency.

This finding indicates the need for contextual and sustainable prevention efforts. In practice, schools are advised to implement peer-educator-based reproductive health education so that the information received by adolescents is more accurate and better aligned with the dynamics of peer relationships. Families are expected to establish open and supportive communication with their children regarding reproductive health and social interactions, so that adolescents do not rely entirely on information from peers.

Furthermore, cross-sectoral collaboration is needed between schools, community health centers, health services, and related institutions to strengthen education, counseling, and mentoring for adolescents as an effort to prevent risky sexual behavior.

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