

## Factors Causing The Phenomenon of Extramarital Pregnancy among Adolescents

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### Abstract

The problem of extramarital pregnancies, especially among teenage girls, is becoming more prevalent and alarming. This is because extramarital pregnancy is a very complicated and complex issue for adolescents, especially for those who are directly involved in it. It is undeniable that many people today are still unaware of the increasing problem of unmarried mothers which in the end also contributes to other social symptoms such as the problem of abortion. Therefore, Malaysia needs people with high morals and admirable morals to face the problem of globalization so that it can be curbed and reduced. The main objective of this research is to study the factors of adolescent pregnancy before marriage. This research is a qualitative research that uses a case study approach through in-depth interviews. This research was conducted at Rumah Harapan Sekolah Harapan located in Jasin, Melaka. This research involved in-depth interviews of 32 residents as research respondents. Sample selection was done through purposive sampling technique and the data obtained were analyzed using thematic analysis. The results of the research found that there are two main factors that motivate adolescents to get involved in extramarital pregnancies, namely internal family factors and external family factors.

**Keywords:** Adolescence, Extramarital Pregnancy, Involvement Factors.

### Introduction

Moral and social behavior problems among adolescents are not a new phenomenon. This problem occurs everywhere, from ancient times to the present. The problem of moral deprivation is a nature that requires efforts to increase the potential and develop morality in them. The phenomenon of critical social problems such as murder, theft, illegal motorcycle racers, abortion of babies and illegitimate children is becoming more prevalent among the youth and because teenagers and students are the future heirs of the country, their negative activities are hotly debated and get attention from all layers of society (Hoffman & Maynard, 2008). The media often publishes various news and stories about the delinquency of teenagers who are still in school and the various social problems that afflict them. Looking at the social problems and criminal acts involving students and teenagers, this issue really

worries our country. Through the mass media as well as the print media, various cases of social symptoms are often the main topics or issues discussed.

In general, social problems include various types of negative behavior of members of society that do not bring support and benefits to the strength of the system and economic structure practiced by a society or country (Harding, 2022). In addition, social problems are also a mismatch between elements of culture or society, which can endanger the lives of social groups. If there is turmoil between the existing elements, it will be able to cause disruption of social relations such as instability in group life and society (Chen et al., 2017). There are many factors that motivate teenagers nowadays to engage in these unhealthy social symptoms. According to Boardman (2016), the involvement of adolescents in various social symptoms stems from several factors, among them are the internal factors of the adolescent himself in terms of personality development, failure of family institutions and also the influence of peers. Brassard (2015) stated that the influence of the school environment is also a cause of moral decay among adolescents.

The involvement of adolescents in various social symptoms is due to the internal factors of adolescents themselves which include aspects of personality development that will result in tension and emotional stress in adolescents if they do not get full guidance in facing the challenges of adolescence. This causes adolescents to be inclined towards engaging in activities that degrade morals and are illegal (Bakar & Hamzah, 2019). In addition, Ibrahim et.al (2016) stated that the morals of adolescents can be formed through themselves, namely from the point of view of education and also the appreciation of religion that is in themselves. If their identity is intact, then they will be motivated to do positive things. On the other hand, if their personality traits are not good, then there are moral deviations and negative actions that violate the norms in society, including social problems.

Therefore, all parties must be united and work together to take concrete and proactive action to address the problem of social symptoms. Parents in particular need to play an important role in shaping the future of their children so that they become teenagers and youths who contribute to the progress of the country. If this matter is taken seriously, then the social symptoms that occur in society in our country will be easily overcome.

### **Literature Review**

Studies show that adolescents tend to have sex when they lack parental supervision (Fergusson et. al., 2007). This is because the family is one of the main influences in the life of a teenager. The failure of parents in educating their children will affect their future so much so that it can cause them to become involved with social symptoms and not be able to shape themselves to be useful and visionary people (Ekstrand, 2009). In addition, Rumble et al. (2018) explained that family background as a factor in adolescent deviant behavior is due to low parental income and children growing up in an idle state. Studies by Purnama (2020) also found that social problems are related to family income. In the west countries, Mannes, et al (2005) reported that adolescents from low-income families were twice more likely to engage in negative behaviours than other adolescents.

According to Breuner & Mattson (2016), studies have found that there is a lack of awareness and knowledge about sexual and reproductive health among adolescents. The number of sexually active adolescents is small but is gradually increasing. He also pointed out that unsafe sex practices among these adolescents occur due to lack of sexual knowledge resulting in adverse effects such as unwanted pregnancies (Kai et al., 2015).

From a religious point of view, the majority of adolescents have sex because they do not have strong religious beliefs where it is in line with the decision of adolescents who do not regret their actions of having sex before marriage (Yahya & Nasrun, 2016). In general, religious education in a person's life is inseparable. This is because with the religious beliefs in an individual is said to be able to guide their lives towards a prosperous life. If judged from a personality point of view, relatively a person who has a loose religious belief will easily fall towards the social problems that exist. This shows that the weakness of religious values in life is the basis of the social problems that occur. This finding is supported by a study made by Zulkefli and Mustapha (2017), who noted the existence of today's society that lacks awareness of the importance of religion either among parents or the general public.

Also, the factor that influences a teenager to have sex outside of marriage is driven by a great curiosity to try all the things that were never known. Studies by Lunquist (2014) show adolescents engage in sex because they have high feelings or curiosity and have feelings to try new experiences in adolescence. The teenagers also thought that the sexual behaviour they did didn't have a negative effect on them. This is because, curiosity and trying will increase if the teenager has never gone through a new experience (Giordano et al., 2010).

In addition, the contribution to the increase in social problems of extramarital pregnancies can also be seen from the point of view of the mass media. This is in line with the findings of studies by East (2017) who stated that mass media factors influence the formation of adolescent morals today. It can be seen that the mass media nowadays displays a lot of scenes of intercourse between men and women. Most of the scenes exhibited do not preserve the boundaries of aurat between the sexes and this contributes to the problem of free association, symptoms of free sex, extramarital pregnancies and the like (Bakar & Hamzah, 2019).

### **Statement of Problem**

The problem of extramarital pregnancies, especially among teenage girls, is becoming more prevalent and alarming. This is because extramarital pregnancy is a very complicated and complex issue for adolescents, especially for those who are directly involved in it. According to WHO data (2012) found about 16 million girls aged 15 to 19 years and 2 million girls under the age of 15 give birth each year (WHO, 2012). According to National Registration Department statistics, 4,992 illegitimate children were born to teenage girls aged 18 and under, in 2017 and a total of 120 cases of abortion were reported that year. Meanwhile, a total of 1,664 illegitimate children were born to underage mothers from January to June 2018 (Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, 2018). It is still undeniable that many members of society today are still unaware of the increasing problem of unmarried mothers which ultimately also contributes to other social symptoms such as the problem of abortion. Therefore, Malaysia needs people with high morals and admirable morals to face the problem of globalization so that it can be curbed and reduced.

### **Research Problem**

What are the factors that cause teens to get involved with extramarital pregnancies?

### **Research Objective**

To study the factors that cause adolescents to be involved with the problem of extramarital pregnancies.

### **Research Methodology**

In this study, the researcher used qualitative research methods. According to Othman (2009), qualitative research is important to obtain more in-depth information about some other elements that cannot be measured using a numerical scale. As such, researchers feel that this method is more suitable to be used to obtain the data needed to answer the research questions. According to Robson (2002), for qualitative research in the form of "grounded theory", researchers need to go to the field with an open mind without adhering to any theory but have knowledge of previous relevant studies.

The research location is at Sekolah Harapan Rumah Harapan (SHRH) in Jasin, Melaka. The purpose of the establishment of Sekolah Harapan Rumah Harapan (SHRH) is to provide protection to teenagers who are pregnant underage and out of wedlock. The Sekolah Harapan can accommodate a maximum of 40 students at a time. The total sample for this research is 32 people. Sample selection for this research is using purposive sampling technique. The research sample was selected based on key criteria such as female, Malay and involved in extramarital pregnancies.

In-depth interview method and observation method are used by researchers to collect the required data. Through in-depth interviews with respondents, researchers are able to see the world through their glasses (Alston & Bowles, 2003). The interviews were conducted individually and face to face between the researcher and the respondents using topics that had been determined by the researcher. The interviews conducted use more open-ended questions because it can encourage and give freedom to the respondents to express all their views, expressions and feelings in more depth. In addition, the researcher also used the method of observation on the body language shown by the respondents during the interview session. This is to ensure comfort and safety between both parties whether the researcher or the respondent is guaranteed.

After each interview session was completed, all verbatim information obtained from the interview session was collected for the purpose of data analysis. To ensure the accuracy of the information from the respondents, the researcher has read each verbatim 2 times so that the researcher can appreciate and understand the essence in more detail. After that, information is extracted to find themes that arise for the data. Themes are identified by combining components or fragments of ideas or experiences, which they make less meaningful when viewed alone (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Through the thematic analysis method, the data obtained were screened to obtain specific themes raised by a respondent. Researchers have also made distinctions with certain themes derived from other respondents. After that, to identify themes that have similarities each of the data categories were analyzed horizontally and were grouped as one common theme. After that, the themes were analyzed according to the questions and objectives of the study.

## Results and Discussion of the Study

Research shows that there are two main factors that motivate adolescents to engage in extramarital pregnancies. The two main factors are the internal factors of the family and the external factors of the family.

Family internal factors are factors that occur to adolescents due to family problems. There are three main factors that motivate adolescents to get involved in extramarital pregnancies, namely family problems, lack of appreciation or religious education and lack of attention from parents. A total of twenty-nine respondents stated that family problems were the main factor that motivated them to engage in symptoms of social problems. Adolescents from families who experience divorce will usually experience a variety of emotions and feelings due to the absence of parents as the main leader in ensuring the functioning of a family runs smoothly. Parental divorce factors impact on the happiness of family life especially to children who lose the parental support they are supposed to get. This situation will also cause them to tend to feel lonely and feel lost due to the troubled family situation.

*"It all started in 2018, when both my parents divorced. Because of that, I had to follow my mother to move house and school. Everything became more tangled and worse until I met a man during PJK time on the field. We often hang out together at my house because my mother is often homeless because of work. Until one day, I invited her home and we started kissing. From that moment, there is a desire to do something further, which is to have sex. I felt very happy then because I was able to do what I wanted in life for the first time." (Respondent 1)*

*"I have a stepmother that I don't know much about. My daily life is full of fights that make me increasingly bored of sitting in that house. When I was in Form One, I started hanging out and going out at night with my male friends. Due to lack of interest in studies, I decided to work part-time in the city. From there I got acquainted with my boyfriend who is also my co-worker. During this time, I began to study forbidden things. We had sex even though it was only 15 minutes. Yes, it's Raya time, there aren't many customers, so it's easy for us to do the project." (Respondent 7)*

*"My mother is very busy with her work so she has no time to be with us siblings at home. His attitude of being too obsessed with work makes us siblings neglected and lacking in love. The mother's attitude was far different from that of my boyfriend who was very concerned about myself and my siblings. Because I loved her too much, I was not willing to lose her and decided to give my body to her so that she would not look at other women besides myself." (Respondent 10)*

The second factor, stated by twenty-five respondents is the lack of appreciation and religious education from the family. Religious beliefs are the most superior force to prevent and oppose all negative elements that attack the emotional and mental. Strong adherence to principles and stances based on religious teachings can prevent a teenager from being influenced by the elements of unhealthy and excessive free association.

*"My parents are drug users and my life is not about religion and I never knew what school was, what religion was or who my god was. My life from day to day is having fun and seeking the pleasures of the world. Having sex was not a problem for me because my parents never cared about my life and let me do whatever things I liked. Not counting how many men I have slept with. All because of lack of knowledge about religion." (Respondent 9)*

*"My parents are not strong in religion. They themselves never pray and fast. They never taught me anything about Islam. They also never once forbade me to wear a headscarf and be friends with men. They don't even care if my boyfriend comes home and comes into my room." (Respondent 13)*

*"I never knew and knew about Islam from my parents. They never taught me anything about Islam. They themselves do not practice any Islamic teachings. Even my father was a drunkard and a strong gambler. They never care who I am friends with and who I go out with every night." (Respondent 17)*

Next, twenty -three respondents admitted that lack of attention from parents made them choose to get caught up in social problems. Serious parental preoccupation leads to neglect of attention and love for children. This is because, loneliness is one of the negative feelings affecting the well-being of individuals.

*"My mother is very busy with her work so she has no time to be with us siblings at home. His attitude of being too obsessed with work makes us siblings neglected and lacking in love. Because my mother's busyness is also the reason I get involved in this social problem" (Respondent 15)*

*"My parents are skincare traders. They are both very busy every day. They never had time for me. My sisters and I were allowed to live with a wage earner every day. My siblings and I are less cared for. We never felt the love of our parents. Due to lack of love and attention from my parents, I started befriending my boyfriend and ended up getting pregnant before marriage." (Respondent 24)*

The second major factor, which always pushes teenagers to get involved in the problem of extramarital pregnancies is the external factors of the family. Family external factors are factors that influence adolescents to engage in extramarital pregnancy problems through their environment. There are five external factors of the family that motivate adolescents to engage in extramarital pregnancy problems. Among them are being deceived by the persuasion of boyfriends, liking, curiosity, the influence of the mass media and the influence of peers.

Twenty -five respondents stated that they were involved in social symptom problems due to persuasion as well as appeal from boyfriends. Making love at a very young age causes teenagers to get caught up in immature love. Adolescents who make love at a young age are easily influenced according to the wishes or requests of their boyfriends without being able to think rationally.

*"I met a man a year ago and he was 20 years old at the time. It was then that I went out to town with my friends to hang out and I met him while we were eating at the cafe of a shopping mall. It all started from a casual conversation and asking me to get acquainted until our conversation started to turn to stories in bed. He invited me to follow him to a place far away from my friend. Strangely enough, I seemed to be mesmerized at that time by just following what he said even though we only knew each other for less than a day. Realize, I've already had an affair with him and after that he sent me home" (Respondent 8)*

*"The story takes place last year. The day before celebrating the New Year, I followed my boyfriend who is a school athletic athlete to the city. On the way home, he asked me to have sex. I refused out of fear but he sprinkled various sweet promises on me, even saying that he would be responsible for his actions. This makes me believe it" (Respondent 11)*

In addition, eighteen respondents admitted that their involvement in the symptoms of social problems was voluntary. Relationships of friends and romance that go beyond social boundaries and are driven by environmental factors cause adolescents to engage in sexual crimes.

*"It all started while studying at university. In my third year there, after 8 months of befriending a hardworking and well-mannered man, I got engaged. Yet after a month of tying the engagement ropes, we were tested. I have a part-time job at the moment, I trade in veils. So often, housemates help but that day my fiancé volunteered to help. While he was packing, the door of the house opened wide but unknowingly we had sex. All on the voluntary factor and no coercion at all. From that day on, once a week we must be on." (Respondent 6)*

*"Year 2019 ago, I couple with a man three years older than me. We met on the "wechat" application at that time. We had this relationship for about 2 years. Although our relationship is normal like any other couple, but I admit that sometimes we do something more intimate. We do it happily." (Respondent 9)*

In addition, fifteen of the respondents stated that their involvement in social problems was due to curiosity about something new. When going through the developmental processes of the surrounding conditions, there will be things that they have never seen or experienced. Therefore, teenagers will have a desire to try things they have never experienced.

*"The story started in June last year when my boyfriend invited me to have sex after we watched a porn video together. I who at that time was full of curiosity just followed his wishes, but without my suspicion he actually recorded our video using his mobile phone." (Respondent 22)*

*"Every time I talk to my boyfriend, my boyfriend will talk about sex. My boyfriend also once posted a video of him masturbating. When I always listen to sex stories and watch porn videos that are posted, I get aroused and I start to want to feel what it feels like to have sex. So, one day, when we went out to watch a movie,*

*after finishing the movie, I had sex for the first time with my boyfriend ".  
(Respondent 29)*

Next, eleven of the respondents were involved in the problem of extramarital pregnancies was due to the influence of the mass media. The rapid development of modern communication technology tools carries both negative and positive implications. Mass media is a material that is very easy to attract teenagers such as watching pornographic videos, finding friends easily, hanging out through chat, having fun with cyberspace and so on giving space for teenagers to act freely without control in sexual misconduct.

*"I found out about sex during form 1, before that it wasn't anymore but when I entered high school, everything started. My friends often tell stories and exchange views about this sexual activity and this makes me so curious about the matter. So I started using websites to access pornographic pictures and other pornographic materials." (Respondent 4)*

*"During high school, I lived in a school dormitory. My roommates always watch porn videos after school. I always watch those porn videos with them. Eventually, I became addicted to watching pornographic videos every day. And every time I watch a porn video, I will masturbate to satisfy myself. And when I started having a boyfriend, I started having sex with my boyfriend." (Respondent 30)*

Furthermore, seven respondents stated that peer influence was a major factor in their involvement in sexual problems. Peers are very influential in the formation of one's morals and personality, especially to teenagers who spend a lot of time with friends at school or outside of school hours if they go out together.

*"One day, I tricked my mother by saying that I had activities at school and had to come home late even though I and some other friends tried dirty activities in an old building behind the school. We are so happy after being able to try the things we really want to know all this time. " (Respondent 12)*

*"I started getting involved in this sexual activity because of my friends. My friends always invite me to watch porn videos after school. At first I refused. But, one day, I also invited friends to watch porn videos together. Since that day, I always watch porn videos with friends. And one day, my friends invited their boyfriends to watch porn videos together. While watching, they started having sex together - with their boyfriends. "(Respondent 32)*

## **Conclusion**

Moral and social behavior problems among adolescents are not a new phenomenon. This problem occurs everywhere, from ancient times to the present. The problem of moral decay can only be addressed through the joint efforts of all layers of society by increasing the potential and developing morals in adolescents. This phenomenon of extramarital pregnancy is due to two main factors that drive adolescents to engage in this sexual problem. Those factors are internal family factors and external family factors. Therefore, all levels of society



must stand shoulder to shoulder and work with the government to help today's youth to face all obstacles and constraints in forming a perfect personality and personality.

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