ADOLESCENTS AND PREMARITAL SEX: PERSPECTIVES FROM FAMILY ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

Sex is a universally developmental process in any society throughout the world. Recently, the numbers of reported cases of social problem specifically related to sexuality issues among adolescent keep on increasing yearly. In Malaysian context, issue of premarital sex become a growing public concern especially with the alarming of social issue problem. Premarital sex is considered as sexual intercourse between a man and woman who are not married to each other. The increasing trend of premarital sex experience specifically among the Muslim young girls needed a serious attention especially within the Muslim majority population country since the prevalence and incidence of premarital sex become a norm by young generation. Early initiations of sexual intercourse are among the key indicators that influence the onset of premarital sexual engagement. Based on the Bronfenbrenner’s Social Ecological Theory, human interaction within their environment will reflect their types of behaviour. In this conceptual paper, the discussion will give better understanding towards issues of premarital sex involvement by not simply highlight on the onset factors but rather helping to understand more clearly by focusing on the protective factors, particularly from the family ecological context in understanding the issues of premarital sex. It is shows that those adolescents who resided within nuclear two parent families had significantly lower rates of premarital sexual intercourse. Consistency in parental communication as well as closely monitoring towards adolescents daily life practice contribute significantly positive development in young generation. Since the issues of premarital sex are alarming especially involving adolescents, therefore a serious intervention need to come into place and closely monitored.

Keywords: Adolescent, Ecological Theory, Premarital Sex, Protective Factors, Sexual Intercourse,

1.0 Introduction

Globally, adolescents’ sexuality issue has become a recent concern in much research. In particular to pre-marital sex issues, its prevalence among Malaysian adolescents is increasing tremendously. The involvement of these adolescents becomes serious where it leads to other problems of social ills such as unwanted pregnancy and teenage pregnancies. In addition, this sexual risk taking behavior also can lead to contracting with other diseases such as HIV and AIDS as well as suffering from Chlamydia diseases. In recent years, issues regards to teen pregnancy worldwide has increased and become a major health issue for both developing and developed countries. In regards to Malaysian context, issue related to adolescents’ pregnancy is alarming due to involvement of sexual activities among teenager which contributed to the rise of teen pregnancy rate. As reported by Tan et al (2012) in a cross sectional studies, about 63% of the respondents are pregnant due to premarital consensual sexual activity. Besides, based on statistic from National Registration Department, in 2013, it is recorded that about 53,000 of 510462 births are registered under illegitimate child status or child born out of wedlock (New Straits Times, 2011).

Moreover, the alarming cases of premarital sex become a worrying trend of non-marital childbirth where a statistic from 2005 until June 2011 revealed that a total number of 472 baby-dumping cases reported in Malaysia, which 258 were dead and 214 were still alive (Lee, 2012). Besides, about 5.8 percent of 5088 adolescents male and female aged between 13 to 24 years involved in sex offences (Berita Harian, 2015). Furthermore, in many developing countries, the elements of cultural taboo has hinder a young generation especially the adolescents to discuss about sexuality with their parents. Most of them gain knowledge from external influence such as from friends, internet access, as well as from magazine. Without proper intervention, this issue also will lead to another social problem such as pre-marital pregnancy, unwed mother, childbearing issues and the worst is