

THE PERCEPTION OF THE TEENAGERS OF PREMARITAL SEXUAL IN DENPASAR: CULTURE STUDIES PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The Balinese culture, mainly the community of Denpasar, is the result of a long process of culture assimilation and aculturization. The modern culture which enters Bali in some aspects includes their teenagers' way of life and modern life style. This research's purposes: what are the teenagers' perceptions about premarital sex themselves? what are the factors that shaped the teenagers' perception?, and what is the effect and significance of the teenagers' perception of premarital sex within their group in social and value systems? This research is conducted by qualitative methods with a hermeneutic and phenomenological approach. The data are obtained by in-depth interview, focused group discussion (FGD) and by taking a picture with using in-depth interview, FGD and observational guide as instruments. The informants are teenagers between 10 – 24 years old in Denpasar, and the key informants are teenagers who have done sex. Teenagers are students of high school, universities as well as teens who worked and have earned. In-depth interviews are also carried out on public and religious figures, policy-maker in education affair, student advisors, onlooker sexual problems as well as parents. Informants selected *purposively*, who have a lot of information related sex among teenagers. Theories are used: The Theory of Perception, The Theory of Hegemony, The Theory of Lifestyle and Youth Sub-Culture, and The Theory of Power and Knowledge.

The result shown teenagers generally still have an ideal perception. On the other hand, there are teens who have committed premarital sex have a reality perception. The determinant factors of the perception are internal and external factors. The reality perception of teenagers stimulates premarital sex to become more widespread. The perception also influences a socio-cultural phenomenon which includes: cultural, social and health dimension. The perception need to be anticipated in a constructive way; that is by increasing the power of internal factors and eliminating negative aspect of external factors.

Key words: Perception, Teenagers, Premarital Sex

Background

As a capital city of Bali province and center of tourism, Denpasar had developed very fast. This rapid development includes the city's infrastructure and the social lives of the citizen. Along with the dynamics of life of the citizen, cases of premarital sex among teenagers have the tendency to increase. This phenomena is one of the sign of the social and value changes especially about premarital sexual among teenagers. The formulate problems for this research: (1) what are the perception of premarital sex behavior among teenagers? (2) What are the factors that shaped these perceptions? (3) What are the implications as well as the significance of these perceptions in the social and values system?

As a form of cultural research with a culture studies perspective, this research is performed using a qualitative method, with a hermeneutic as well as phenomenology approaches. This research also uses ethic and emic or *verstehen* approaches. Data collections are performed by in-

depth interviews, Focused Group Discussion (FGD) and observations. The instruments used in data collection are guidelines for in-depth interview, guidelines for FGD and guidelines for observations. Informants are teenagers who domiciles in the city of Denpasar and whose age are between 10 years till 24 years old. These informants include those who have commit sexual intercourse and those who have not. These teenagers are school students, university or college students and those who are working or earn a living. In order to get a complete data for this research, in-depth interviews are also performed to other informants such as public figures, religious figures, policy maker in the field of education, attending or counseling teachers, on looker social problems and parents. Informants are chosen by a *purposive* method by considering the amount of information which can be obtained. The data are analyzed using Theories in Perception, Theories in Hegemony, Theories of Life Style and Youth Subculture and Theory in

Relation of The Power and Knowledge

Discussion

The perception of premarital sex among teenagers shows a very wide variation. Generally, teenagers still have an ideal or utopia perception on sexual intercourse that is sexual intercourse is only allowed when once a male and female teenage couple is legally bonded by marriage.

Some teenagers who have commit sexual intercourse have a reality or empiric perception, that is they have view that on this open era, premarital sex may be committed by anyone and is considered as something usual. Other perceptions are sexual intercourse performed by teenagers is a sign of bravery and maturity, and those who have commit sexual intercourse are teenagers who have a “gaul” life style. These teenagers have reasons as to why they commit sexual intercourse. These are so that they are accepted among their peer groups, become more mature, as a

drill before building a household, to attain happiness (recreational) and also nowadays is a part of a teenage life style. Not all teenagers who have experienced sexual intercourse regret their actions. There are those who feel proud because they are considered as the most experienced. The strengthening of this perception of sexual intercourse among teenagers is generally caused by two factors: an internal (endogenous) factor, and an external (exogenous) factor. This internal factor is that factor in the teenagers’ themselves such as knowledge of sexuality and health in reproduction, and a comprehension in religious teachings and cultural values especially about sexual intercourse and self-control. Whereas the external factor is the influence of news and pictures from the mass media about the lives of teenagers, peer pressures, situation of the social environment that is becoming more permissive, teachings of sexual and reproductive health in formal education (college, university and other forms of continuing education) that are still not efficient and are not using the

correct ways, as well as weak regulations that is put up by the government/leaders.

These external factors are felt influenced stronger and are becoming uncontrollable. If this condition is not accompanied by measures that strengthen the internal factors, this will cause a teenager's perception, that accept sexual intercourse among their groups as something usual and can be performed by anyone, to strengthen and become more widespread in the community.

The strengthening and wide spreading of this perception, that do not consider sexual intercourse among teenagers as a problem, may stimulate the wide spreading and openness of premarital sex behavior among teenagers. This behavior can have negative physical, social and psychological impacts on the doer. The strengthening and wide spreading of perception that does not consider sexual intercourse among teenagers a problem will give birth to a social-cultural phenomenon which has an important three-dimension *lesson learnt*, that is cultural

dimension, social dimension and health dimension. The wide spreading of this premarital sex perception can cause: (a) distortion of ideal concepts (values) about sexual intercourse (cultural dimension); (b) weaken the values of marriage institution (social dimension); and (c) grow the practice of premarital sexual intercourse to become more open and become a media of transmitting sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), also HIV and AIDS (health dimension).

Conclusion

It can be concluded that, firstly, the perception about premarital sexual intercourse among teenagers varies widely. Generally, teenagers have a normative perception, still considering that sexual intercourse may be committed by couples who share the same household. That is why, sexual intercourse among teenagers need to be avoided because it violates social norms and religious values. Reality or empiric perception judges, premarital sexual intercourse among

teenagers may be performed provided the acts are based on the feeling of liking each other, to prove love or to heighten teenage image, becoming more “gaul”, life style of teenagers nowadays, becoming more mature, as a practice before entering the stage of having a household, or even just to obtain happiness (recreational) or *just for fun*.

Secondly, the perception of premarital sex among teenagers is influenced by two factors: internal and external factors.

Thirdly, the strengthening of perception that allows premarital sex may shift or may even change social norms and values system that are related to sexual behavior.

The wide spreading of perception that accept premarital sex among teenagers have to be anticipated constructively, that is by increasing the immunity of internal factors within the teenagers themselves, also by minimizing the variety of negative external factors which may directly or indirectly grows and strengthen the perception of the teenagers.

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