

## The influence of father involvement on adolescents' sexual self-concept

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### Abstract

*Purpose:* Self-concept is constructed through individual experiences and knowledge. Adolescents who start to become complicated about finding their identity, self-concept is also needed to help adolescents deal with the development of sexual turmoil, in this case it is called sexual self-concept. One of the factors that influences the construction of sexual self-concept is how fathers involve themselves in parenting. This research aims to determine the influence of father's involvement in parenting on adolescents' sexual self-concept.

*Method:* This research used quantitative method with a total of 347 participants selected. They were teenagers aged 12-18 years who lived in Nganjuk Regency, East Java.

*Result:* It showed that fathers' involvement in caring for adolescents in Nganjuk was at a medium level (91.1%) and teenagers' sexual self-concept was also at a medium level (72.6%). The significance value (Sig.) in the simple linear regression test is  $0.000 < 0.05$ , with the t test result being  $-7.252 < 1.649$ , providing information that father involvement in parenting has a significant influence on adolescents' sexual self-concept.

*Conclusion:* Result that show a negative direction indicated limitations in understanding and openness regarding the importance of sexual self-concept in adolescents. Many participants thought sexual self-concept as taboo to be discussed.

**Keywords:** *father involvement; sexual self-concept; adolescent*

### INTRODUCTION

Self-concept is a person's understanding of oneself and how accurately the individual knows himself in answering "Who am I?" (Myers, 2010). Self-concept forms in childhood and adolescence, but is still unstable (Saleh, 2020). This can be understood because of the process that most children experience when entering adolescence, namely a great curiosity to find their identity. In his developmental theory, Erik Erikson calls the adolescent phase the identity stage versus role confusion (Sarwono, 2019). Not only confused with identity, adolescence will also make it difficult for children because of their sexual development. Sexual behavior carried out by adolescents in responding to sexual urges is unconsciously influenced by self-concept. This self-concept by Andersen and Cyranowski (1994) is called the *sexual self-schema* or sexual self-concept.

Sexual self-concept is considered a cognitive generalization of the sexual aspects of oneself. Thus, sexual self-concept is thought to derive from past experiences, then manifest in current experiences, and will influence the processing of sexually relevant social information to guide future sexual behavior (Andersen and Cyranowski, 1994). Meanwhile, according to Deutsch (2012), sexual self-concept is defined as how individuals feel about themselves as sexual beings. Sexual experiences, either private or mediated by social agents (peers, parents, teachers) that are

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considered necessary by the individual. These sexual experiences will lead individuals to make decisions about sex and interpret the information received by individuals regarding sex. This information-processing process is called sexual socialization (Deutsch, 2012). In the process of sexual socialization, a culture adopted by society will also regulate the prevailing gender roles, affecting the development of individual identity (Breakwell and Millward, 1997).

Sexual socialization will make adolescents digest subjectively sexual information and experiences. The conclusions and understanding gained later, will depend on the assessment of social agents who are identifying figures for individuals. This places adolescents in a sense of curiosity about their role or identity, as well as the need for recognition from others about their sexual development. This tendency eventually makes adolescents prone to being trapped in the vortex of risky sexual behavior to deviant sexual orientation.

The 2017 Indonesian Demographic and Health Survey (IDHS) (Nugroho, 2021) recorded that around 2% of adolescent girls aged 15-24 years and 8% of adolescent boys of the same age admitted to having sexual relations before marriage, 11% of whom experienced unwanted pregnancies. Then, as many as 59% of women and 74% of men reported starting their first sexual encounter at the age of 15-19 years (Nugroho, 2021).

Cases of sexual orientation deviation are also recorded by government agencies in Indonesia, one of which is Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) behavior. According to the East Java Health Office in 2013 (Siyoto and Sari, 2017), based on testimony from Gaya Nusantara, one of the pioneers of gay organizations in Indonesia, there are 348 thousand people with gay sexual orientation or MSM (Men Like Men) out of 6 million people in East Java.

Hasnah and Alang (2019) mentioned data in 2016 that some independent domestic and foreign survey institutions said Indonesia had a population of 3% LGBT. In other words, out of 250 million people, there were around 7.5 million people experiencing deviations in sexual orientation. Data related to mapping the number of LGBT behaviors in Indonesia has never been updated for the last five years. However, the number from year to year continues to increase, and the surge still accompanies cases of people with HIV / AIDS. The number of PLHIV (People with HIV/AIDS) based on the period October-December 2020 was recorded at 7,670 people. PLHIV in the age group of 15-24 years amounted to 21.1%, with the highest risk found in homosexuals, namely 24.9% (P2P Kemenkes RI, 2020).

Risky sexual behavior that often targets adolescents in the research of Breakwell and Millward (1997) is stated to have a relationship with sexual self-concept. *Sexual assertiveness*, as one aspect of sexual self-concept, is related to the intensity of risky sexual behavior in women, as well as other forms of dangerous behavior, such as consuming alcohol and smoking (Breakwell and Millward, 1997). Similar to the results of research by Pai, et al. (2012), sexual self-concept is stated to affect the intensity of healthy sexual behavior (*sexual health behavioral intentions*). Then, *self-esteem*, *self-efficacy*, peers, and parents as factors that influence the development of sexual self-concept (Deutsch, 2012 in Winarni et al., 2016) explained to have a relationship with premarital sexual behavior.

Based on the results of research by Winarni et al. (2016), it is known that parental control can reduce risky sexual behavior, namely premarital sexual relations in adolescents. Winarni et al. (2016) stated that parent and child communication about sex and *parent-child* relationships is an

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essential factor in the formation of safe sex attitudes and practices. This opinion is in accordance with the concept of sexual socialization according to Deutsch (2012), how parents or peers convey thoughts and feelings about sexual behavior will help adolescents in representing themselves as sexual beings. However, the journey of adolescents in representing themselves will require identification figures, which unconsciously adolescents will take over the behavior, habits, attitudes, norms, and values of these identification figures (Sarwono, 2019).

The father is one of the identifying figures or social agents in the family that is important to the child. Lamb (2000) mentions three components of fathers' parenting involvement: *engagement*, *availability* and *responsibility*. *Interaction* refers to the direct contact of the father with the child through parenting and joint activities. *Availability* is the potential presence or absence of fathers to interact when children are in need. *Responsibility* refers to the father's role in caring for and being responsible for things that are the child's needs.

The involvement of fathers in parenting can form *self-objects* which are the child's subjective experiences of his relationship with fathers, and according to Dick (2004), children need to feel connected to fathers he admires, stable, calm, and wise. Indifferent fathers will cause low self-esteem in children. Like Rosenberg and Wilcox (2006) explain that *nurturing fathers* can have an impact on the development of self-esteem, and psychological well-being, give children a healthy model of masculinity, and help protect girls from seeking romantic and sexual attention in men prematurely.

Research by Putri, et al. (2022) also states that the presence of fathers in parenting affects perceptions of masculinity or self-femininity, two important perceptions in gender roles that according to Deutsch (2012), also shape sexual self-concept. Identification of masculinity and femininity role models is needed so that later in life, adolescents have an identity that matches their gender roles. In the case of homosexual offenders, the findings of Azhari et al. (2019), Rosadi et al. (2022) and revealed that a person becomes a homosexual perpetrator because he experienced sexual abuse by same-sex adults at an early age, and had a bad relationship with his father. Rosenberg and Wilcox (2006) stated that children who live in *father-absent* homes, often face a higher risk of physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect than children who live with their fathers.

Children who lose the existence of a father as a figure who can protect the family cause feelings of disappointment and hatred toward male figures (Azhari et al., 2019; Rosadi et al., 2022). Fathers with their responsibilities as male figures mean as well as being masculine *role models* for their children. Brescia and Afdal (2021) found that the involvement of fathers in parenting influences gender roles that occur in homosexual offenders. Fewer forms of paternal involvement cause a person to seek comfort in a male figure who is better than a father figure at home, but more attention from fathers to adult children is recognized by one participant (Brescia and Afdal, 2021) raises the desire to seek similar attention from a male figure. So, at a more complex level, the involvement of fathers in terms of quality and quantity can influence the way children perceive gender roles in the future. Based on the problem above, the hypothesis proposed in this study is that there is an influence of fathers' involvement in parenting on adolescent sexual self-concept.

## **METHOD**

This research uses a quantitative approach, which is a process of finding knowledge that uses numbers to analyze information about what you want to know. The data analysis method to be

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used is simple linear regression, which determines the influence of variable X on Y. Variable X in this study is father involvement in parenting, with variable Y being adolescent sexual self-concept.

The population in this study was adolescents in Nganjuk Regency, East Java. The research location was chosen based on several considerations. The first consideration is regarding location affordability. The second consideration is because there are cases of applications for marriage dispensation from dozens of teenagers due to premarital pregnancy in Nganjuk Regency (Basalamah, 2023), but similar cases regarding adolescent sexual behavior are still very minimally reported. This condition is considered worthy of further study to find out how adolescents in Nganjuk Regency deal with sexual turmoil.

Data collection in this study used *purposive sampling* techniques provided to subjects aged 12-18 who resided in Nganjuk Regency. The total population of adolescents aged 10 – 19 years according to data from Badan Pusat Statistik Nganjuk Regency (2022), reached  $\pm 150,000$  people. So, the total sample used was 347 respondents, with an error rate of 5%. This decision was based on the table that determined the number of samples developed by Issac and Michael (Hikmawati, 2020).

The data collection method used was a psychological scale in the form of a *Likert* scale distributed *online* and *offline*, with answer choices SS (Very Appropriate), S (Appropriate), TS (Not Suitable), and STS (Very Inappropriate). The psychological scale used consists of the father's involvement scale in parenting and the adolescent sexual self-concept scale. The scale of father's involvement in parenting was developed from aspects of *fatherhood*, namely engagement, availability, and *responsibility*, initiated by Michael E. Lamb (2000). The adolescent sexual self-concept scale was developed based on aspects of sexual self-concept by Buzwell and Rosenthal (1996), namely sexual *self-esteem*, sexual *self-efficacy*, and sexual *attitudes*.

The validity test of the content of the research scale is carried out with the help of *expert judgment*, with the qualifications of the assessor who has mastered the field of psychology and quantitative research. This study's total *expert judgment* for the content validity test amounted to 3 people. The range of V values obtained is 0.75 to 1.00. Referring to the Aiken table, items with five assessment scores and three validators need a V value of  $\geq 0.92$  to be declared valid. Based on these provisions, the father's involvement scale in parenting has 39 valid items and six aborted items, while the adolescent sexual self-concept scale has 40 valid items and seven aborted items.

Furthermore, reliability tests were carried out to determine the consistency of measuring results, namely how high the accuracy of items in measuring variables (Azwar, 2020). Psychological scales were tested on 40 respondents from areas other than Nganjuk Regency. The correlation coefficient criterion used is 0.3. Of these values, two items of variable X were eliminated after two reliability tests, and 25 items of variable Y were eliminated after four reliability tests. The reliability coefficients of the paternal involvement scale in parenting and the adolescent sexual self-concept scale with *Cronbach's Alpha* were 0.953 and 0.742, respectively. So, the scale in this study is categorized as reliable because the Alpha value is  $\geq 0.60$  (Sujarweni, 2023).

## RESULT

**Table 1**

*Participant Characteristics By Gender*

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Laki-laki	154	44,38%
Perempuan	193	55,62%

Based on Table 1, 154 adolescent boys participated in the study with a proportion of 44.38%, while adolescent girls were 193 participants with 55.62%.

**Table 2**

*Participant Characteristics By Age*

Age	Frequency	Percentage
12	2	0,58%
13	5	1,44%
14	28	8,07%
15	52	14,99%
16	81	23,34%
17	92	26,51%
18	87	25,07%

Based on Table 2, participants aged 17 have the highest number with a percentage proportion of 26.51%. The lowest number of participants was adolescents aged 12 years, with a percentage proportion of 0.58%.

**Table 3**

*Father's Involvement Data Categorization*

Category	Range	Frequency	Percentage
Low	$< 74$	19	5,5%
Medium	$74 \leq X < 111$	316	91,1%
High	$\geq 111$	12	3,4%
Total		347	100%

The scale of paternal involvement in parenting consisted of 37 items, with answer scores of 1 for STS, 2 for TS, 3 for S, and 4 for SS. The categorization score showed that 5.5% of participants felt low involvement from a father figure in parenting, 91.1% stated moderate involvement of fathers, and 3.4% of participants felt high involvement of fathers in parenting. Therefore, based on these results, most adolescents in Nganjuk Regency feel the involvement of fathers in parenting at a moderate level.

**Table 4**  
*Adolescent Sexual Self-Concept Data Categorization*

Category	Range	Frequency	Percentage
Low	< 30	35	10,1%
Medium	$30 \leq X < 45$	252	72,6%
High	$\geq 45$	60	17,3%
Total		347	100%

For the adolescent sexual self-concept scale, it consists of 15 items with answer scores of 1 for STS, 2 for TS, 3 for S, and 4 for SS. Table 4.5 shows that 10.1% of participants had low sexual self-concept, 72.6% had moderate sexual self-concept, and 17.3% of participants had high sexual self-concept. So, based on these results, the majority of adolescents in Nganjuk Regency have a moderate level of sexual self-concept.

**Table 5**  
 Classical Assumption Test

Kategori	Test	Sign.	Interpretation
Normality Test	Kolmogoroc-Smirnov	0,067	Normal
Linierity Test	Deviation from Linierity	0,417	Linier

Based on Table 5 the normality test performed using the *One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnof Test* indicates a normally distributed residual because significance values (Monte Carlo Sig. 2-tailed) of  $0.067 > 0.05$ . The results of significance (*Deviation from Linearity*) also  $0.417 > 0.05$ , it can be concluded that the variables of father's involvement in parenting and adolescent sexual self-concept have a linear relationship.

**Table 6**  
*Regression Linier Test*

	Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1804,964	1	1804,964	52,591	,000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	11840,598	345	34,321		
	Total	13645,562	346			

- a. Dependent Variable: Sexual Self-Concept
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Father Involvement

In Table 6, simultaneous test results with significance (Sig.) of 0.000 are obtained. Based on the criteria, if the significance value  $< 0.05$ , then there is a simultaneous influence of variable X on variable Y. So, the father's involvement in parenting simultaneously affects the variable of adolescent sexual self-concept. The simultaneous influence of variables can also be seen based on the results of the  $F_{\text{calculate}}$  and  $F_{\text{table}}$  values.

**Table 7**

T Test Result

Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(constant)	56,555	2,553		22,152	,000
	Father involvement	-,200	,028	-,364	-7,252	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Sexual Self-Concept

Table above shows the calculated value (t) is 7.252, while the t table with the formula  $t = (α; n-k) = (0.05; 347-2) = (0.05; 345)$  obtained a result of 1.967. So that  $7.252 > 1.967$  or  $t \text{ calculate} > t \text{ table}$ , there is an influence of variable X on variable Y. Furthermore, the hypothesis test results with simple linear regression get a signification value (Sig.) of 0.000 less than 0.05. The regression equation can be written with the formula  $Y = a + bX = 56.555 + -0.200X$ . So, based on the value of significance (Sig.) and the results of the regression formula equation, it can be concluded that the variable of father's involvement in parenting (X) influences the variable of adolescent sexual self-concept (Y).

**Table 8**

Determination Test

Model Summary				
Model	R	R square	Adjusted rsquare	Std. Error of the estimate
1	,364 <sup>a</sup>	,132	,130	5,858

a. Predictors: (Constant), Father Involvement

The coefficient of determination test results in Table 7 in *the Model Summary* shows an R Square (R<sup>2</sup>) value of 0.132. In other words, adolescent sexual self-concept (Y) was influenced by paternal involvement in parenting (X) up to 13.2%, and factors or variables outside this study influenced the remaining 86.8%.

**Table 9**

Father's Involvement Differentiated by Participant's Age and Gender

Category	Test	Sign.
Father's Involvement Judging from Age of Participant	Kruskal Wallis	0,209
Father's Involvement Judging from Gender of Participant	Kruskal Wallis	0,941

Table 9 has significance values (Asymp. Sig) of 0.209, so there was no difference in the involvement of fathers in parenting in terms of age of participants. Then, with the significance value (Asymp. Sig) of 0.941, it also can be concluded that there is no difference in the involvement of fathers in parenting in terms of the gender of the participants.

## DISCUSSION

The results of the hypothesis test with simple linear regression (Table 6) showed a significance value (Sig.) of  $0.000 < 0.05$ , which means that there is an influence of father's involvement in parenting on adolescent sexual self-concept, so the hypothesis proposed in this study is accepted. These results are in line with Deutsch (2012) research which states that social agents, such as parents, in this case fathers, have a role that can influence the formation of sexual self-concept in adolescents.

It was recorded that 5.5% of participants or 19 adolescents, felt low involvement of fathers in parenting, 91.1% of participants or 316 adolescents stated that the father's involvement was moderate, and 3.4% of participants or 12 adolescents felt high paternal involvement in parenting. So, it can be interpreted that most adolescents in Nganjuk Regency feel the role of fathers at a moderate level in child care. This also supports the results of different tests, which stated that there was no difference in fathers' involvement in parenting regarding age and sex of participants. In other words, most participants had a similar view when assessing how fathers carried.

This situation can be seen through how participants respond to question items on the Father's Involvement in Parenting scale. As in the Availability aspect for the father's willingness indicator, for example, item no. 2 ("my father is there when I need him") received responses in the range of affirmative (S) to strongly affirmative (SS) answers of 259 responses. Then, for the father's accessibility indicator, for example, item no. 37 ("Dad helps me in between his busy life"), which gets an average of S and SS answers (186 responses). So this indicates a father figure who still plays a role or is present for the child even though the father is involved in certain activities (Dick, 2004).

Furthermore, it can be seen from how participants respond to question items for aspects of responsibility. For example, item no. 24 ("my father taught me well how to behave in my sex"), which represents the indicator of the father as a gender role model, received an average of answer options S and SS (280 responses) from participants. The item no. 32 ("father tells me good and bad things"), which represents the indicator of the father as a moral role model, got the most answers on answer options S and SS (303 responses). This shows the role of the father figure in the aspect of *responsibility*, which is the type of involvement that shows how the father will take the main responsibility for the welfare and care of the child (Lamb, 2000).

Deutsch (2012) states that external feedback from social agents, such as peers and parents, about a person's thoughts, feelings, and sexual behavior can be a source of self-representation, so the involvement of fathers in parenting can help adolescents respond better to sexual turmoil in themselves. This can be seen in the categorization results in Table 4.4. It was found that 10.1% of participants or 35 adolescents had a low sexual self-concept, 72.6% of participants or 252 adolescents had a moderate sexual self-concept, and 17.3% of participants or 60 adolescents claimed to have a high sexual self-concept. So it can be interpreted that most teenagers in Nganjuk Regency already have a good sexual self-concept. In addition, the results of different tests explain that sexual self-concept in terms of age and sex of participants has no difference, or in other words, the majority of participants have the same perspective in responding to sexual turmoil.



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This condition was supported by how participants responded to question items on the Adolescent Sexual Self-Concept scale, such as the aspect of Sexual Self-Efficacy in the Preventive Measures indicator. In item no. 2 ("I know about precautions (pregnancy and/or sexually transmitted diseases) when having sex"), the majority of respondents chose answer options S and SS (255 responses). Then, for item no. 10 ("I feel precautions (pregnancy and/or sexually transmitted diseases) when having sex are important knowledge"), most participants chose answer options S and SS (321 responses). This indicates that participants have a good understanding of the prevention of risky sexual behaviour that can lead to pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Sexual self-efficacy is one component of sexual self-concept that tends to be considered an important aspect of contraceptive behaviour and influences sexual risk-taking (Buzwell & Rosenthal, 1996).

Then, it can also be seen from how participants answered questions on aspects of Sexual Self-Esteem. For example, for the Perception of Sexuality indicator, item no. 9 ("I feel treated well when I am with the opposite sex"), most participants choose answer options S and SS (274 responses), and Perception of the Body, item no. 4 ("I like certain body parts of my opposite sex"), the majority of participants chose answer options S and SS (231 responses). This indicates that participants already have a perception or know their value as sexual beings (Deutsch, 2012). Buzwell and Rosenthal (1996) suggest that sexual self-esteem may be a predictor for predicting greater sexual risk-taking, but this variable is not accounted for as the only important variable.

Next was the participants' response to the third aspect of the Adolescent Sexual Self-Concept scale, namely Sexual Attitude. For example, item no. 6 represents the Arousal indicator ("I am easily aroused"), with the majority of answers being strongly disagree (STS) and disagree (TS) options (281 responses). Item no. 8 represents the Commitment indicator ("I like a committed relationship with one person"), with the majority of responses from participants being options S and SS (256 responses). This suggests that by adolescence, children already have feelings such as sexual desire or energy (Deutsch, 2012) as well as well-developed perceptions of sexuality and beliefs about their sexual needs (Goggin, in Buzwell & Rosenthal, 1996).

Examining how much fathers' involvement in parenting influences the development of adolescent sexual self-concept can be seen in Table 4.10. The coefficient of determination test gives an R Square ( $R^2$ ) value of 0.132, the value will be changed in percentage form equivalent to 13.2%. So it can be concluded that the variable of father involvement has a weak influence on adolescent sexual self-concept.

The percentage is supported by how participants respond to aspects of Responsibility on the Father's Involvement in Parenting scale. In item no. 4 ("my father wants to answer my question about sexual knowledge") which represents the indicator of fathers as gender role models, participants responded with the highest accumulated answer choices, first being STS (169 responses), then TS (109 responses), S (61 responses) and SS (8 responses). So, this explains that fathers' involvement in parenting has not yet reached the stage of openness regarding conversations about sexual experiences or perceptions.

In addition, more than half of the participants responded in the range of inappropriate (TS) to very inappropriate (STS) aspects of engagement to describe the form of father's interaction in terms of quality and quantity. For example, item no. 8 ("I set special times so that we as a family can gather together") represents the quantity indicator of father's involvement with 212 responses

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consisting of TS and STS options, or in item no. 18 ("I do many things with my father") which gets 196 TS and STS responses. The item no. 7 ("I talk to me about things I like"), representing the quality indicator of father's involvement, received 193 responses in the range of TS to STS answers.

Deutsch (2012) describes the above incident as an unsurprising condition that the relationship between parental discussion of sexuality and sexual self-concept is lacking. This is due to teenagers who tend to choose to communicate their sexual perceptions or experiences with peers or romantic partners. The existence of a taboo culture regarding discussions around sexual knowledge ultimately leads to a lack of skills for parents to communicate about sexual behaviour (Gustina, 2017). So, if referring to Deutsch (2012) research, the remaining percentage at 86.8% can be influenced by other variables outside this study, such as the process of sexual socialization through feedback from peers, romantic partners, or consumption of sexual content that helps adolescents interpret their sexual experiences, and ultimately also influences how adolescent sexual self-concept is formed.

This study still have limitations, such as on the factors chosen to measure variables. So, a suggestion for future researchers who want to study the father's involvement is to consider other factors such as the father's age, type of work, and education level. As for adolescent sexual self-concept, future researchers are advised to consider other factors such as sexual content consumption, peer roles, as well as romantic partners.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation of the study's results, it can be concluded that the hypothesis proposed in this study is accepted. Fathers' involvement in parenting influenced adolescent sexual self-concept by 13.2%, or it can be explained that variable X affected variable Y in the weak category. The findings suggest that other variables are thought to influence adolescent sexual self-concept, such as feedback from peers, romantic partners, and consumption of sexual content.

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