

The Appropriate Age for Introduction of Sexual Education in Schools: From the Adolescents Perspective in UiTM Puncak Alam

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ABSTRACT

Introduction	Drastic increase in the social problems, especially those that are related to sexual harassment has triggered the Malaysian government to take action against the situation. There were several suggestions voiced out by various sides of the community including the firm involvement from the parents who should take care of their own children, increasing the religious-based programs for the teenagers and also to introduce sexual education in schools. From all of the obtained suggestions, the idea of introduction of sexual education in schools seems to catch the attention of many people. This idea can be one of the solutions to the current social scenario, but it also has received many views from various sides. The major concern is at what age the students should be exposed to this module? Is it appropriate to start introducing it to primary school students? Or it is suitable only for upper secondary school students? Based on these questions, this study was proposed with the aim to determine the perception of adolescents on the appropriate age of implementing the sexual education in schools.
Methods	This study was conducted by using questionnaires which were distributed to 200 students in Asasi UiTM (respondents were fresh school leavers), but only 152 returned completed. Collected data were statistically analyzed.
Results	Overall result indicated that majority of the respondents did not agree (77.6%) with the idea to introduce sexual education to the primary school students compared to the lower percentages of respondents (18.4%) who agreed with this suggestion. Furthermore, 48% of the respondents agreed if the programs are implemented to lower secondary students compared to 45.5% of respondents who were not. Besides, a big number of respondents (73%) agreed if the sexual education program is introduced to the higher secondary school students compared to only 21.3% who opposed this idea.
Conclusions	Obtained data shows that generally the idea of the implementation of sexual education is accepted by the respondents, provided the program is implemented to the higher secondary school students. This is because higher secondary school students are about to leave their schooling period and enter the new adult life. This study suggests that sexual education should be introduced to prepare them to face the challenges-to-come in their adult social life.