

Local Wisdom–Based Approaches to Maintaining Students’ Reproductive Health

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:
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This study aimed at analyzing the problem of the behavior of santri in choosing menstrual pads in terms of health anthropology in Nurul Jadid Probolinggo Islamic Boarding School. This study used field research with a qualitative approach. The numbers of respondents were 4 respondents, with purposive sampling technique. In the process of collecting data, it used several data collection techniques, namely, library research and in-depth interviews. The results of the study showed that the informants in choosing menstrual pads were based on economic and health factors.

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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a time when adolescents experience puberty and sexual maturation rapidly due to hormonal changes that accelerate growth and development both physically and secondarily. (Yusuf, 2005). Adolescence is a stage of life where people reach the process of emotional, psychosocial, and sexual maturity, which is characterized by the beginning of the functioning of the reproductive organs and all their consequences. Adolescent sexual development is characterized by menstruation in women and wet dreams in men, 152 girls (86.36%) use sanitary napkins as absorbent materials during the menstrual cycle, 42% (73 women) perform vaginal cleansing every day 57% (n = 100) women experience regular menstruation (Neelima Sharma, 2013).

Reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, which is not solely free from disease or record, in all matters relating to the reproductive system, as well as its functions and processes. Adolescent groups sometimes experience difficulties, even opposition from adult groups, when trying to obtain the necessary reproductive health information and services (RI, 2010).

The importance of maintaining women's reproductive health, especially in terms of the use of sanitary pads is very important, we can know together that sanitary napkins are one of the causes of cervical cancer. Cervical cancer is a terrifying threat to women. Of the various sanitary napkins that are widely circulated on the market, some of them do not include information about raw materials or product hazards.

In addition to maintaining environmental health and cleanliness, it is necessary to optimize actions and practices in maintaining personal hygiene, namely the cleanliness of the reproductive organs. Efforts to maintain the cleanliness of the reproductive organs to avoid various health problems

including itching, irritation, rashes and so on H Nadesul (Utami, 2014).

Menstruation is an indicator of sexual maturity in adolescent girls. Menstruation is associated with several misconceptions of personal hygiene practices during menstruation that can be detrimental to the health of adolescents (Dasgupta, 2008). Complaints of menstrual disorders in adolescents and incorrect hygienic practices during menstruation can lead to unwanted health disorders such as pelvic inflammatory diseases and even infertility (El-Ganiya, 2005; Sharma, 2013).

Throughout history, women have used various kinds of menstrual protection, starting from the time of ancient Egypt. Talking about the issue of needs, Indonesian people are sensitive to the development of the times. Consumers are spoiled with so many product options to decide which one to buy. Consumers are also very critical in choosing a product, until the decision to buy a product. Based on the results of research that has been conducted by Peter & Olsen on purchasing decision-making, when customers are faced with choices such as brand name, price and various other attributes, they will tend to choose a brand name and then think about price. The importance of brand names for a consumer is to reduce risks, especially in products related to health, beauty and safety (Rangkuti, 2002).

Based on the results of the researcher's interview with the coordinator of female students, it is known that the Nurul Jadid Women's Islamic Boarding School applies a regulation for female students to use traditional sanitary napkins (cloth) during menstruation, the existence of these regulations creates values and norms for students living in Islamic boarding schools. As a boarding school, the use of sanitary napkins that are usually used is made of fabric that is considered effective and safe. Because the use of cloth does not contain chemicals, waste waste is also efficient and can be cleaned and can be used repeatedly.

Given the potential danger to women who use disposable sanitary napkins and the potential danger of waste to the environment, and considering that until now there have been no parties that consistently handle this special waste, efforts to socialize the use of practical cloth sanitary napkins are a fundamental need

The concept of local wisdom or traditional wisdom or indigenous knowledge *system* is the distinctive knowledge of a certain society or culture that has developed for a long time as a result of the process of mutual relations between the community and its environment. So, the concept of a local wisdom system is rooted in a local or traditional knowledge and management system. Because of their close relationship with the environment and natural resources, local, traditional, or indigenous peoples, through "experimentation" have developed an understanding of the ecological systems in which they live that have been considered to be preserving natural resources, as well as abandoning activities that are considered to be environmentally damaging (Mitchell, 2003).

Various previous studies have explained that good and correct reproductive health behaviors are very important for women and should be implemented from an early age. The researcher is interested in studying the reproductive health behavior of female students in Islamic boarding schools with a different focus. The cultural diversity in the Islamic boarding school as female students live in the same location is the reason for the researcher's interest in researching the experiences and variations of reproductive health behaviors and daily habits of female students at the Nurul Jadid Islamic boarding school and see its influence on reproductive health behavior. At the same time, the interest in conducting this research is as part of research on health anthropology that focuses on biological and socio-cultural aspects.

The main problem that the researcher studied was reproductive health behavior in the selection of sanitary napkins for female students at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School. The purpose of this study is to analyze the behavior of adolescent students in maintaining reproductive health based on local wisdom. For students as an example of role models in terms of preserving and managing,

especially reproductive health based on local wisdom. Furthermore, it can add enrichment in further studying knowledge and skills for people with formal education, namely high school/equivalent students in an effort to maintain reproductive health and preserve the surrounding environment by utilizing local wisdom.

To examine social problems in a society, there is an anthropological study framework, namely the concept of culture. Culture is the entire system of knowledge, ideas, ideas, all activities, actions, and all human works that are made the personal property of each individual obtained through the learning process in people's lives (Koentjaraningrat, 2009). Overall, culture encompasses all human life starting from the way of behavior, beliefs or beliefs, attitudes and results of human activities or activities that have their own characteristics in a certain group of life (Siregar, 2002).

Reproductive Health (Menstrual Concept)

Health problems in Islamic boarding schools are also related to social and cultural aspects. According to Natamiharja, health problems can be seen from two factors, namely behavioral factors from biological and epidemiological aspects and behavioral factors from socio-cultural aspects. Behavioral and socio-cultural factors can be seen from prevention efforts (preventive measures), efforts to use health facilities, efforts to meet nutritional needs in food and so on (Natamiharja, 2002).

The concept of women's reproductive health does not only mean being free from diseases or health problems during the reproductive process, but achieving a healthy condition as a whole, namely physically, mentally, and socially healthy. This means that women have the ability to reproduce, women are able to go through pregnancy and childbirth safely (Nugroho, 2010).

Everyone, especially adolescents, is important to know sexual rights and reproductive health in order to know everything about the well-being of their reproductive functions, processes, and systems, reproductive and sexual health rights according to the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo (1994), including:

1. the right to live and be free from the threat of death due to pregnancy, childbirth, and gender issues,
2. the right to secure and freedom of reproductive health services,
3. the right to equality and freedom from various forms of discrimination,
4. The right to personal confidentiality or privacy in the exercise of reproductive health,
5. the right to make decisions and freedom of thought in reproductive health,
6. the right to access reproductive health information as well as reproductive education,
7. the right to choose, to build, plan, and decide a family,
8. the right to determine the freedom to have children and the freedom to determine the distance of birth,
9. the right to security in reproductive health services,
10. the right to be able to enjoy the benefits of scientific advances in reproductive health,
11. the right to freedom of participation in political fields related to reproductive health,
12. the right to freedom from pain and guilt over mistreatment in reproductive health (RI, Adolescent Health: Problems and Solutions, 2010).

Bandage Concept

Entering adolescence/puberty, every woman will experience a period called menstruation. This process is natural because of the release of the uterine wall (endometrium) which is accompanied by bleeding. The average period begins when a woman is about 10/11 years old and usually stops around the age of 45-55. During that time, a woman will need sanitary napkins to continue her activities during her menstrual days.

Sanitary pads are products in the form of sheets/pads made of cellulose or synthetic materials that are used to absorb menstrual fluids or vaginal fluids. In the production process, sanitary napkins derived from cellulose are bleached. The bleaching used is those that do not use chlorine, usually using hydrogen peroxide. This method is declared to be dioxin-free (Ministry of Health, 2016)

Sanitary napkins and Pantyliners Ordinary sanitary napkins, including the classification of fast-food consumer products and disposable products. That's why regular sanitary napkin manufacturers often recycle waste paper and make this waste paper into a basic material to save production costs. In this process of recycling waste paper, of course, many chemicals are used for the re-bleaching process, eliminating the smell of waste paper waste and the process of sterilizing bacteria found in waste paper waste. Cloth Sanitary Napkins, Sanitary napkins made from fabric-based materials. Cloth as a bandage as before. The problem with fabric is that it has poor ability to absorb blood, which will become a good medium for germ growth. If used during menstruation, the fabric will be more moist and very possible for the growth of germs and bacteria. Fabrics for reuse must also be guaranteed to be clean when washed (Marhaeni, 2016).

Sanitary napkins that function to accommodate menstrual blood to be better maintained have appeared in written records since the 10th century. Currently, sanitary napkins that are circulating in the community and in great demand are disposable sanitary napkins. Originally disposable sanitary napkins were made of wool, cotton, or the like, square in shape and given an absorbent layer. As the times have evolved, the shape and basic materials of sanitary napkins have undergone many changes, and many of them on the market are made of cotton with gel in the middle so that it has high absorbency and is practical. This type of sanitary napkin is indeed cheap and practical, but it also has the potential to cause a number of dangerous diseases for the female reproductive organs

Local Wisdom

Local wisdom is part of the culture of a society that cannot be separated from the society itself. Local wisdom is usually passed down from generation to generation through word of mouth. Local wisdom as a knowledge expressed by certain local communities through a collection of knowledge in trying and integrating with an understanding of the culture and natural state of a place (Pramana, 2010). Local wisdom is the cultural identity or personality of a nation that causes the nation to be able to absorb, and even cultivate culture.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research design with a case study design. The data collection techniques in this study are; 1) participant observation; 2) in-depth interview; and 3) documentation. The data analysis technique is carried out through; First, the data that has been collected from various sources through observations, interviews, document studies and so on at the Nurul Jadid Paiton Probolinggo Islamic Boarding School, is read and analyzed carefully to be used as a reference for thinking and finding the right solution, and further research is expected to produce valid data results. Second, the data that has been collected, reduced so that it is systematically arranged, will more clearly show the most important points to be the focus of the research, in order to provide a sharper picture of the phenomenon that occurred at the Nurul Jadid Paiton Probolinggo Islamic Boarding School. Third, the reduced data, arranged in units that function to determine or define the categories of units that have been categorized, will be given certain codes to facilitate data control and its use at all times, so that data mining can be used as a foothold to facilitate research.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Rational choice of *santriwati* in choosing cloth pads as protection during menstruation

In accordance with the results of research in the field, it was found that the reason for choosing sanitary napkins by students has 2 factors, namely, economic reasons and health reasons.

Typical economic considerations are related to the consumer's economical calculation of the goods or services to be purchased. Consumers will calculate economically about the benefits that will be obtained with the sacrifices made (Tambunan, 2009).

Sanitary napkins made of environmentally safe fabrics can be washed and reused. So as to reduce paper or plastic waste that is usually generated from the use of ordinary sanitary napkins (Koswarini, 2018)

Al-'urf al-sahh is a custom that occurs in the midst of society that is not contrary to nash and does not eliminate benefits, nor does it lead to harm. This is a good habit and must be maintained, in this case, consumers choose a product influenced by the socio-cultural environment in the process of entering information in consumer decision-making (Mulyadi, 2012). In addition to socio-cultural environmental factors, another factor that consumers consider in buying is rational view. This consideration is based on the idea that a good and service purchased is rationally calculated which includes economical, efficient, effective and as needed elements.

Based on field research findings, the decision of *santriwati* to use cloth pads during menstruation is influenced by rational considerations that align with both economic and health-related factors. These considerations demonstrate that the choice is not merely habitual but is based on conscious evaluation of benefits, risks, and long-term impacts. This reflects a rational decision-making process where students actively assess available alternatives before determining the most suitable menstrual protection.

From an economic perspective, cloth pads are considered a cost-effective option. Unlike disposable sanitary napkins that must be purchased repeatedly every month, cloth pads can be washed and reused for an extended period. This significantly reduces monthly expenses, which is an important consideration for *santriwati* who generally depend on limited allowances from their families. According to Tambunan (2009), consumers tend to evaluate goods based on a comparison between the benefits obtained and the costs incurred, and cloth pads offer clear economic advantages in this regard.

In addition to direct financial savings, cloth pads contribute to reducing environmental waste. Disposable sanitary napkins generate a considerable amount of non-biodegradable waste due to their plastic and chemical components. Koswarini (2018) emphasizes that environmentally friendly menstrual products help minimize paper and plastic waste, thus supporting sustainable living practices. For *santriwati*, this environmental awareness aligns with moral and ethical values taught within Islamic boarding schools, where cleanliness and responsibility toward nature are emphasized.

The preference for cloth pads is also closely related to the concept of *al-'urf al-ṣaḥīḥ*, which refers to socially accepted customs that do not contradict Islamic teachings or cause harm. This form of local wisdom legitimizes practices that bring benefit (*maṣlaḥah*) and prevent harm (*mafsadah*). In this context, the use of cloth pads has become an accepted norm within the *pesantren* environment, reinforcing collective behavior shaped by cultural and religious values (Mulyadi, 2012).

Moreover, rational choice theory explains that consumers tend to select products that are efficient, effective, and suited to their needs. Cloth pads meet these criteria by providing comfort, safety, affordability, and environmental benefits. The rationality of *santriwati* in choosing cloth pads reflects a balanced consideration of economic efficiency, health safety, religious values, and

sustainability, demonstrating that menstrual health practices are deeply embedded in both rational thinking and local wisdom.

Hygenis, and healthy

Health reasons are the basis for choosing the use of cloth pads, the habit of using unhealthy or non-standard sanitary pads will result in a bad impact on health. The consequences arising in long-term use cause cancer. Based on research by the Indonesian Consumer Institute Foundation (YLKI), 9 brands of sanitary napkins and 7 brands of pantyliners were found to contain substances harmful to women circulating in Indonesia. The Indonesian Consumer Institute Foundation announced that chlorine in sanitary napkins can cause cancer.

The chlorine in sanitary napkins can evaporate out in contact with the skin with menstrual blood that is absorbed through the pores of the sanitary napkin layer. Sanitary napkins containing chlorine are high risks to women's reproductive health, including the risk of: vaginal discharge, itching, irritation and causing cancer (Ramadhani, 2018).

Health considerations play a central role in the decision of *santriwati* to use cloth pads during menstruation. Awareness of the potential health risks associated with non-standard disposable sanitary napkins has increased concern among students regarding reproductive health. Menstrual hygiene is not only a personal matter but also a crucial factor in preventing long-term health problems, particularly those affecting the reproductive system.

The habitual use of unhealthy sanitary products has been shown to have serious consequences. Research conducted by the Indonesian Consumers Foundation (YLKI) revealed that several brands of sanitary napkins and pantyliners circulating in Indonesia contain harmful chemical substances, including chlorine. Chlorine is commonly used as a bleaching agent during the manufacturing process, yet its presence poses significant risks to women's health.

Chlorine contained in sanitary napkins can evaporate and be absorbed through the skin, especially when in contact with menstrual blood. This absorption may occur through the pores of the sanitary pad layer, increasing exposure to toxic substances. Ramadhani (2018) notes that prolonged exposure to chlorine can lead to various reproductive health problems such as vaginal discharge, itching, irritation, and even increase the risk of cervical and vaginal cancer.

Cloth pads are perceived as a safer alternative because they are typically made from natural fabrics and free from harmful chemicals. When properly washed and dried, cloth pads maintain hygiene standards and reduce the risk of skin irritation or infection. *Santriwati* believe that using cloth pads allows them to have greater control over cleanliness, as they can ensure that the pads are thoroughly cleaned using safe detergents and hygienic drying methods.

Furthermore, the emphasis on cleanliness (*ṭahārah*) in Islamic teachings strengthens the preference for hygienic menstrual products. Maintaining bodily purity is a fundamental principle in daily religious practices, and the use of safe, clean menstrual protection supports this value. Therefore, the choice of cloth pads among *santriwati* reflects not only health awareness but also religious commitment and local wisdom that prioritize long-term reproductive health and well-being.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study showed that informants in choosing sanitary napkins were motivated by economic factors and health factors. There are many factors that can affect a woman's reproductive health. Considering that reproductive health is very important to support women's work productivity and also the continuation of the next generation, women need to pay attention to everything related to their reproductive health. Various ways can be done to improve reproductive health both individually and institutionally. Perhaps the easiest thing to do is that individually, women always

behave in a way that can maintain their reproductive health.

Based on a literature review, it is known that there is a possibility that sanitary napkins on the market contain dioxins that are very harmful to women's reproductive health. Therefore, it is highly expected that the authorities both from government institutions and the Indonesian Consumer Foundation will take an active role to protect the public or consumers in particular. Efforts to maintain reproductive health are carried out daily both physically and spiritually. Efforts to maintain physical health are carried out by preventing risk factors, especially by maintaining the cleanliness of the reproductive organs, while efforts to maintain spiritual health are carried out by praying and worship

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