

## A holistic approach to menstrual hygiene: Analyzing the interconnected roles of knowledge, socio-cultural correlates, and attitudes in adolescent girls

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Adolescent girls are vulnerable to reproductive health problems such as genitalia infections, due to lack of personal hygiene during menstruation. Adolescent girls' attitudes towards personal hygiene during menstruation can be influenced by several factors, including the level of knowledge about menstruation and socio-cultural aspects that influence perceptions of personal hygiene during menstruation.

**Objectives:** This study was conducted to analyze the relationship between knowledge and social culture with attitudes about personal hygiene during menstruation among adolescent girls.

**Methods:** This study uses quantitative correlation with a cross sectional approach. Sampling using purposive sampling with a total of 112 adolescent girls. The research was conducted at MTS Al-Hidayah Satron, Tasikmalya Regency in April-July 2023. Data were collected using knowledge, socio-cultural, and attitude questionnaires about personal hygiene during menstruation. Data were analyzed using univariate and bivariate with Spearman rank.

**Results:** The results of research on adolescent girls mostly have poor knowledge as many as 51 people (45.5%), most of them were 62 people (55.4%) with unsupportive socio-culture, and most of them were 65 people (58%) with negative attitude. The statistical test results showed that there was a relationship between knowledge and attitude about personal hygiene during menstruation with a p-value of 0.001 and there was a relationship between social culture and attitude about personal hygiene during menstruation with a p-value of 0.000.

**Conclusions:** Knowledge and social culture of adolescent girls are associated with attitudes about personal hygiene during menstruation. Further research is needed to change the attitude of adolescent girls about personal hygiene during menstruation by increasing the knowledge and socio-culture of adolescent girls so that they can perform personal hygiene during menstruation.

**KEYWORD :** attitude; socio-culture; knowledge; personal hygiene during menstruation;

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## INTRODUCTION

Reproductive health problems that often occur in adolescent girls are reproductive tract infections. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), in 2021, the prevalence of reproductive tract infections in women due to poor personal hygiene is 35% (1), the incidence rate is highest among adolescents aged 10-18 years (35-42%) and young adults (27-33%), and globally the prevalence of female morbidity due to reproductive tract infections is 22% (2). According to the Indonesian Ministry of Health in 2022 in Indonesia, the prevalence of reproductive tract infections due to inadequate genital hygiene is still quite high, with the number of patients with reproductive tract infections in Indonesia ranging from 90-100 cases per 100,000 population per year (3). Based on the West Java Health Office Survey in 2022, the prevalence of abnormal vaginal discharge due to reproductive tract infections was 27.60% of the total population of West Java, occurring in adolescents and childbearing age between 10-24 years caused by personal hygiene (4). Based on the report of Mitra Citra Remaja (2022) There were 150 adolescent girls who consulted about reproductive health problems, about 90 people experienced vaginal discharge and 60 people experienced sexually transmitted infections.

According to Singh et al. (2023) the main role in preventing reproductive diseases is to practice personal hygiene in daily life. Menstrual hygiene is an important part of

personal hygiene that determines the health status of adolescent girls, especially in the prevention of reproductive organ infections, this is done to maintain genital hygiene during menstruation to avoid excessive microorganisms that hinder the function of reproductive organs (7). Moreover, hygiene maintenance during menstruation aims to maintain cleanliness and health to achieve physical and psychological well-being (8). The attitude of adolescent girls towards personal hygiene during menstruation can be influenced by a number of factors, including the level of knowledge about menstruation and socio-cultural aspects that affect the perception of personal hygiene during menstruation. Adolescents ignoring reproductive health are vulnerable to adverse effects on sexual and reproductive health, and this group can even have irreparable consequences (9).

This study was motivated by a research gap in research Angin (2019) on Relationship between Knowledge and Attitude of Adolescent Girls about Personal Hygiene during menstruation at SMP Negeri 6 Sijarango Village in 2019, which showed that there was a relationship between knowledge and personal hygiene attitudes during menstruation in Adolescent Girls at SMP Negeri 6 Sijarango. However, in contrast to research Damayanti (2021) on the Relationship Between Knowledge and Attitudes of Adolescents with Personal Hygiene during Menstruation, it shows that there is no significant relationship between knowledge

and personal hygiene attitudes during menstruation.

Research on socio-culture with personal hygiene attitudes during menstruation to date there has been no research linking socio-culture with attitudes about personal hygiene during menstruation, only in the form of research conducted by Hayu et al. (2023) about the relationship between economic status and culture with personal hygiene during menstruation in adolescent girls at SMAN 01 Lembah Melintang which shows that there is a cultural relationship with personal hygiene during menstruation. Research conducted by Dewi (2020) on Cultural Aspects and Myths on the behaviour of adolescent girls during menstruation. Research conducted by Astuti (2019) on the Relationship between Knowledge and Myths Developed in Society with Personal Hygiene Behaviour during Menstruation at SMP Negeri 1 Cigandamekar.

This study is expected to provide a significant contribution regarding the relationship between knowledge and socio-culture with the attitude of adolescent girls about personal hygiene during menstruation. This study not only provides an in-depth understanding of the factors that influence adolescent girls attitudes about personal hygiene during menstruation, but also serves as a foundation for the development of more targeted reproductive health education strategies, including increasing knowledge, addressing the socio-cultural stigma of menstruation, and increasing access to

supportive resources. Thus, the contribution of the study is not only potentially on knowledge, socio-cultural in adolescent girls but also can form a positive attitude towards personal hygiene during menstruation, thus holistically contributing to the improvement of personal hygiene behavior of adolescent girls during menstruation.

Based on preliminary studies conducted by researchers at MTS Al-Hidayah Satron, Tasikmalaya Regency on 02 March 2023 by interviewing 8 adolescent girls, only 3 adolescent girls had a positive attitude about personal hygiene during menstruation, while 5 adolescent girls had a negative attitude about personal hygiene during menstruation. In addition, adolescent girls at MTS Al-Hidayah Satron still believe in the culture during menstruation such as being prohibited from washing hair and cutting nails. If this condition is carried out continuously by adolescent girls, it will cause reproductive health problems.

Socio-cultural research on adolescent girl's attitudes regarding personal hygiene during menstruation has never been conducted directly in Indonesia and is a novelty in this study. This study used the latest socio-cultural instrument created by the researcher which was tested for validity and reliability. Compared to several previous studies on personal hygiene during menstruation, this study is different because it examines the socio-cultural aspects of menstruation in adolescent girls using a questionnaire tool.

This study aims to analyze the relationship between knowledge and social culture with attitudes in adolescent girls about personal hygiene during menstruation at MTS Al-Hidayah Satron, Tasikmalaya Regency. The results of this study can add to the scientific treasure of midwifery in reproductive health in adolescents, such as personal hygiene during menstruation. Practically, this research is useful for midwifery education, midwifery practice, and midwifery researchers to improve attitudes about adolescent reproductive health related to personal hygiene during menstruation.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

In this study, the research design used quantitative correlation with a cross-sectional approach. In addition, this study has passed the research ethics testing stage at the research ethics committee of 'Aisyiyah University Bandung (Ethics Approval Letter Number: 417/KEP.01/UNISA-BANDUNG/V/2023). The independent variables in this study were knowledge and socio-culture, while the dependent variable in this study was attitude about personal hygiene during menstruation.

The population in this study were all adolescent girls at MTS Al-Hidayah Satron Tasikmalaya Regency as many as 115 people. Inclusion criteria in this study are adolescent girls who have menstruated, willing to become respondents, physically and mentally healthy. Exclusion criteria in this study were adolescent girls who were not

present during the research activities. Sampling in this study used purposive sampling that met the inclusion criteria so that a sample of 112 people was obtained.

The instrument used is a questionnaire that has been tested for validity and reliability, namely a questionnaire about personal hygiene on knowledge 18 questions ( $r_{bis} = 0.379-0.568 > 0.361$  and  $r_{11} = 0.781 > 0.60$ ) using multiple choice, socio-cultural 25 questions ( $r_{bis} = 0.369-0.635 > 0.361$  and  $r_{11} = 0.859 > 0.60$ ) using Guttman scale, and attitude 15 questions ( $r_{count} = 0.394-0.637 > 0.361$  and  $r_{count} = 0.751 > 0.60$ ) using Likert scale. The questionnaire has been declared valid and reliable so that it is suitable for use as a data collection tool. Data collection in this study used knowledge, socio-cultural, and attitude questionnaires about personal hygiene during menstruation which were carried out manually or met directly with respondents using a paper-based test. During the distribution of questionnaires, the researcher was assisted by the research team to streamline time and facilitate the research process.

The questionnaire in this study was tested for normality using Kolmogorov Smirnov data with normally distributed results. Researchers have carried out data processing in this study through the process of editing, coding, entering data using a computer statistical program, cleaning all data from errors, and analyzing. Data analysis of this study used univariate analysis to determine the frequency distribution of

knowledge, socio-cultural variables, and attitudes about personal hygiene during menstruation. In this study, bivariate analysis used the Spearman rank correlation test to determine the relationship between knowledge and socio-culture with attitudes about personal hygiene during menstruation. This research was conducted in April-July 2023 at MTS Al-Hidayah Satron, Tasikmalaya Regency.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### RESULTS

Based on **Table 1**, it is known that most of the respondents were 14 years old as many as 40 people (35.7%). The most respondents were class VIII as many as 45 people (40.2%). Most experienced menarche at the age of 13 as many as 44 people (39.3%). Most received information about menstruation from their parents as many as 58 people (51.8%).

Based on **Table 2**, shows that the Spearman Rank correlation test statistical results obtained P value (0.001) <  $\alpha$  (0.05) with a correlation coefficient of 0.312, which means that there is a relationship between knowledge and attitude about personal hygiene during menstruation.

Based on **Table 3**, shows that the Spearman Rank correlation test statistical results obtained P value (0.000) <  $\alpha$  (0.05) with a correlation coefficient of 0.583, which means that there is a strong relationship between socio-culture and attitude about personal hygiene during menstruation

**Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Respondent Characteristics**

Characteristic of Respondent	Frequency	Percent age (%)
Age		
12	3	2.7
13	22	19.6
14	40	35.7
15	37	33
16	10	8.9
Class		
VII	25	22.3
VIII	45	40.2
IX	42	37.5
Age of Menarche		
11	15	13.4
12	33	29.5
13	44	39.3
14	20	17.9
Sources of information		
Parents	58	51.8
Teacher	21	18.8
Friend	11	9.8
Social media	14	12.5
Health professionals	8	7.1

### DISCUSSION

Based on the results showed that there is a significant relationship between knowledge and attitude about personal hygiene during menstruation with a p-value of 0.001. Based on research, it was respondents who have an attitude about personal hygiene during menstruation are more likely to be found in respondents who have poor knowledge, namely 37 respondents (33.0%), meaning that the results of this study can be said that adolescent women at MTS Al-Hidayah Satron Tasikmalaya Regency mostly

**Table 2. Relationship between knowledge and attitudes about personal hygiene during menstruation**

Knowledge	Attitudes about personal hygiene during menstruation				Total		Correlation Coefficient	P-Value
	Negative		Positive		n	%		
	n	%	n	%				
Poor	37	33	14	12.5	51	45.5	0.312	0.001
Sufficient	19	17	15	13.4	34	30.4		
Good	9	8	18	16.1	27	24.1		
					112	100		

**Table 3. Relationship between socio-culture and attitudes about personal hygiene during menstruation**

Socio-culture	Attitudes about personal hygiene during menstruation				Total		Correlation Coefficient	P-value
	Negative		Positive		n	%		
	n	%	n	%				
Unsupportive	52	46.4	10	8.9	62	55.4	0.583	0.00
Supportive	13	11.6	37	33.0	50	44.6		
					112	100		

have insufficient knowledge with negative attitudes about personal hygiene during menstruation.

This study is in line with the theory of Notoatmodjo (2014) that attitudes that are not based on good knowledge will not last long in a person's life, while good knowledge is not balanced with a sustainable attitude that will not have meaningful meaning in his life. According to the theory of Wawan & Dewi (2018) knowledge is one of the factors that influence the formation of a person's attitude, the knowledge possessed will be used as information which will continue to become an attitude, so that a person's attitude depends on his knowledge.

This research is in line with research by

Amri (2022) The Relationship between Knowledge and Students' Attitudes about Personal hygiene during Menstruation in Students of Private SMK Napsiah Stabat Langkat Regency 2022. Chi-square test found a relationship between knowledge and student attitudes about personal hygiene during menstruation with a p-value of 0.002. Likewise with research by Angin (2019) on Relationship between Knowledge and Attitude of Adolescent Girls about Personal Hygiene during menstruation at SMP Negeri 6 Sijarango Village in 2019, which showed that there was a relationship between knowledge and personal hygiene attitudes during menstruation in Adolescent Girls with a p-value of 0.039. In contrast to research by

Damayanti (2021) that there is no relationship between knowledge and attitude about personal hygiene during menstruation with a p-value of 0.21.

According to Wawan & Dewi (2018), knowledge is one of the factors that influence a person's attitude. As for the theory of Lawrence Green (1980) on Notoatmodjo (2014) that knowledge has an influence on one's attitude which will be a stimulus in the formation of one's behavior. Knowledge is influenced by several factors including age, experience, and sources of information obtained. According to the theory of Rosyida (2022) ages 12-14 years are included in early adolescence, while ages 15-16 years are included in middle adolescence, most respondent's are in early adolescence so that knowledge and attitudes about personal hygiene during menstruation are still lacking. This is influenced by the ability to capture and immature mindset.

Based on the respondent's personal experience of menstruation being a new thing obtained by adolescent girls, it can be seen that the age of menarche, most adolescent girls experience menarche in the age range of 12-14 years. According to Anikwe et al. (2020) the average age of first menstruation is around 12-14 years. So that respondent's experience menstruation for about a year so that respondent's are not yet experienced in matters related to menstruation. This is in line with research by Andani (2021), that the age of menarche of respondent's ranging from 12-14 years will affect knowledge due to the

experience gained by respondent's during menstruation. In addition, line with the theory Notoatmodjo (2014) experience from oneself can be used as an effort in gaining knowledge that can influence attitude making.

Based on the source of information about menstruation, the majority of respondents received information from their parents (51.8%). According to Sychareun et al. (2020) and Shahi et al. (2022) parents as the main information for adolescent girls about menstruation, the information received by each person is different, depending on how well the respondent's parents know about menstruation, so to increase the knowledge of adolescent girls about personal hygiene during menstruation by involving their parents. This is in line with Piaget's theory on Santrock (2019) a person tends to build and develop his knowledge according to the information he gets such as sourced from parents, media, friends, and others.

Based on information from the school and adolescent girls at MTS Al-Hidayah Satron, Tasikmalaya Regency, the school and health workers have not provided counselling on reproductive health such as personal hygiene during menstruation. Supported by the absence of special material books on personal hygiene during menstruation available in the school library, respondent's' knowledge about personal hygiene during menstruation is limited. In addition, the tendency of adolescent girls who do not explore information related to reproductive health due to limitations in accessing the

internet and the use of electronic media is limited because during teaching and learning activities it is prohibited to bring or use mobile phones.

Based on the results showed that there was a significant relationship between socio-culture and attitude about personal hygiene during menstruation with a p-value of 0.000. Based on research, it was respondent's who have an attitude about personal hygiene during menstruation are a person who tends to build and develop their knowledge according to the information obtained such as sourced from parents, media, friends, and others. re likely to be found in respondent's who have unsupportive, namely 52 respondents (46,4%), meaning that the results of this research can be said that adolescent women at MTS Al-Hidayah Satron Tasikmalaya Regency mostly have unsupportive socio-culture with negative attitudes about personal hygiene during menstruation.

According to the research by Hayu et al. (2023) on the Relationship between Economic Status and Culture with Personal Hygiene during Menstruation in Adolescent Girls at SMAN 01 Lembah Melintang. The chi-square test found that there is a relationship between culture and personal hygiene during menstruation with a p-value of 0.025. Likewise with research by Maharani & Andriyani (2019) Factors Associated with Personal Hygiene during Menstruation in Adolescents. The chi-square test found that there is a cultural relationship with personal

hygiene during menstruation with a p-value of 0.002.

Social culture about personal hygiene during menstruation unsupportive, meaning that respondents have a social culture that does not support personal hygiene during menstruation. According to Maulingin-Gumbaketi et al. (2022) socio-culture is not supportive because there are beliefs caused by a lack of awareness of the environment of adolescent girls and the existence of stigma about menstruation in their environment. According to Mohammed & Larsen-Reindorf (2020) the high level of beliefs held by adolescent girls can be influenced by the role of parents in providing information about menstruation. Based on the results of the study, most respondent's received information about menstruation from their parents (51.8%) who still believed in the culture of menstruation in their environment.

According to Aziz (2020), geographical location has a significant influence in maintaining the mindset of people who hold strong cultural beliefs. Geographically, MTS Al-Hidayah Satron Tasikmalaya Regency is located in Parumasan Village which has a distance of 68 km from the city, which is mostly forests and rice fields, which is a remote village that is still thick with the beliefs of its ancestors. This is in line with the research of Maulingin-Gumbaketi et al. (2022) the rural environment has a significant impact on the ability of adolescent girls to manage menstrual management.

Based on the results of the research,



respondent's still believe in culture during menstruation such as not washing their hair, cutting their nails, and using sanitary napkins. According to the research by Maharani & Andriyani (2019) that certain socio-cultural beliefs are still widely believed in several regions in Indonesia, such as not shampooing and cutting nails during menstruation. This is a common myth in society. This myth is not true, because menstruating women must maintain personal hygiene during menstruation. According to Sinaga et al. (2017) menstruating women must maintain hair hygiene because during menstruation the scalp is more oily and sweaty, causing dandruff and other microorganisms. In addition, the culture adopted by adolescent girls, namely the use of disposable sanitary napkins that must be washed before disposal, is associated with many people believing that if they do not wash them first, they will be followed by the devil. This is according to Mohammed & Larsen-Reindorf (2020), that improper disposal of sanitary napkins will cause environmental pollution and lack of personal hygiene.

According to the researchers assumption, negative attitudes about personal hygiene during menstruation are caused by lack of knowledge and unsupportive socio-culture influenced by age, personal experience, sources of information obtained, and beliefs about culture during menstruation, the absence of counselling about reproductive health, especially about menstruation in the school and community environment. This is

based on 'Gold-watts et al. (2020) menstrual hygiene management is often influenced by knowledge, social and cultural beliefs that shape attitudes towards menstruation. The adolescent girls of MTS Al-Hidayah Satron Tasikmalaya Regency need counselling on reproductive health to improve the attitudes of adolescent girls from appropriate and reliable sources, namely health workers and involving parents of adolescent girls. This is according to Astutiningrum et al. (2021) the importance of counseling on reproductive health in adolescence, because at that age it is a golden period to form a strong foundation in adolescents as a basis for their attitudes and behaviour.

Researchers realise that this research is not perfect and there are limitations to this study. The first is the measurement of the research dependent variable, where in the measurement of the attitude scale, consecutive observations were not made to assess the personal hygiene attitudes of adolescent girls, but only questionnaires given directly by the researcher. According to Soesilo (2022), attitude assessment is carried out by observation to observe real attitudes without influencing the research subject which will manifest in daily actions, understand the subject's behaviour and reactions directly, and record unreal indications in circumstances that cannot be replicated in research, so that researchers can obtain factual and objective data.

Secondly, in the data collection process, the information provided by

respondent's on the questionnaire sometimes did not show the actual opinions of respondents, this was due to differences in thinking and understanding of each respondent. In addition, the many respondents when filling out the questionnaire were in one room, causing a lack of concentration when working on the questionnaire and the honesty factor in filling out the respondent's opinions in the questionnaire.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

There is a significant relationship between knowledge and social culture with the attitude of adolescent girls about personal hygiene during menstruation at MTS Al-Hidayah Satron Tasikmalaya Regency. It is expected for health workers to provide reproductive health counselling on personal hygiene during menstruation for adolescent girls at MTS Al-Hidayah Satron, Tasikmalaya Regency. In addition, it is expected that Islamic religious education teachers regarding fiqh about menstruation can strengthen learning about personal hygiene during menstruation such as in the thaharah chapter. It is expected to be a reference for other studies to be able to develop the scope of research on the effect of reproductive health counselling on personal hygiene during menstruation.

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