

**THE MEANINGS OF GIFTS AND FAVORS FOR SEXUAL
BEHAVIOR AMONG YOUTH IN DATING RELATIONSHIPS
IN SLEMAN, DAERAH ISTIMEWA YOGYAKARTA,
INDONESIA**

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the issues of gifts and favors and its social construction through language and gender in the setting of dating relationships among youth. Particularly, this research deals with young females' dating relationships that shape their sexual behavior and sexual subjectivity. In addition, since gifts and favors play important roles in social interaction, this research also paints complete picture about young people's problems regarding their sexual behavior. Data was collected through focus group discussions and in-dept interviews employing a qualitative study with a feminist approach. The research was conducted between August and December of 2007 among university students, both female and male in Yogyakarta were recruited purposively.

The findings highlight the fact that accepting gifts and favors leads to consequences which are likely to be associated with sexual behavior. At this point, a so-called exchange occurs when a feeling of being obligated to a partner arises when one is asked sexual to engaged in sexual behavior. In this case, power imbalance in the dating relationships takes effect. This study also illustrates how young women's agency in gives meanings to their sexual behavior in dating experiences concerning gifts and favors. They are creating a space to make autonomous decisions about their sexual behavior through negotiating or resisting the power through gifts and favors and its social construction through language and gender.

The opportunity to discuss sexuality has offered young people engaged in this study a chance to develop a sense of entitlement and to question the gifts giving and favors in their dating experience. Also, they managed to develop a self-reflexive attitude toward the gifts and favors as a tool to exercise power through language (discourse) and gender that is constructed socially. Therefore, the issue of gender should be integrated to sexual reproductive health programs for youth campaign. Further research on specific issues -- like how gifts and favors change the platform to coercive sex particularly for those who are economically disadvantaged and for marginal groups who are at great risk of trading sexual -- could be benefit for sexual and reproductive program.

KEY WORDS: GIFTS/ FAVORS/ SEXUALITY/ SEXUAL BEHAVIOR/ SUBJECTIVITY/ DATING RELATIONSHIP/ FEMINISM

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