# INTEGRATION OF SEX EDUCATION AND SELF AWARENESS TO STRENGTHEN CROSS-SEX FRIENDSHIP AMONG ALPHA GENERATION

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## Abstract

As social beings, humans need other people in living life. In this case, it's a friend. The friend in question is someone who is always there when things are hard/happy, or when needed, a friend like that is called a friendship. Establishing interpersonal relationships (friendships) is important. The existence of interpersonal relationships can provide support, assistance, and comfort. There are times when a human has friends of different genders. Especially for the alpha generation who are more open-minded in terms of choosing friends, which means they are not limited to gender. However, in reality, there are still many friend zone phenomena that can damage friendships. Even worse, there are many cases of sexual violence against their friends. Therefore an understanding of sex education and self-awareness is needed to strengthen cross-sex friendships in the alpha generation. This article aims to provide a deeper understanding of how to strengthen cross-sex friendships. Based on the results of a literature study, sex education that is integrated with self-awareness can strengthen cross-sex friendships.

**Keywords:** sex education, self-awareness, cross-sex friendship.

## 1. Introduction

As social creatures, humans need other humans to survive in the world. The forms of human needs for other humans are very diverse. One of them is that humans need a friend. Friendship is a form of relationship that will not be separated from human life. Establishing interpersonal relationships is important (Santrock et al., 2008). Friendship is important to support various needs. Starting from just a friend to tell stories, to be a place to get happiness.

Generation Alpha (2010-2025) was born after Generation Z (1995-2009). The characteristics possessed by the alpha generation are almost the same as generation Z because the alpha generation was also born from the character of generation Z's parents, namely generations X and Y, which passed down to their offspring (Assingkily et al., 2020). One of the characteristics of this generation is digital literacy from a very early age, this generation has been exposed to technology continuously since childhood. Because it is easy to get various kinds of information very easily, the alpha generation has a more open mind. Open minded can mean an attitude of acceptance towards diversity, such as ideas, arguments, information, and so on. Being open-minded can be said to be a positive self-quality person. In terms of friendship, alpha generations who are more open-minded as described earlier, will easily become friends with anyone without thinking about race, ethnicity, religion, or gender. Nowadays, there are many phenomena of friendship between men and women (cross-sex friendship). These friendships exist between just two people, in small groups, and even friendships in large circles.

There are times when humans, in this case, the alpha generation, who establish friendships of the opposite sex (cross-sex friendship) experience divisions. Such as friendzone and sexual violence. Opposite-sex friendships are different from same-sex friendships and are more complex. There are challenges in opposite-sex friendships, which can be seen in the phenomenon that has occurred among the alpha generation who have established opposite-sex friendships

between two people, namely friendzone (Lidyawati & Lestari, 2018). In addition, sexual violence is also widely reported to have occurred between two close friends. Reporting to (jawapos.com), Ilham (2022) that perpetrators of sexual violence in children and adolescents are dominated by peers. At that age is the alpha generation. Furthermore, Ilham (2022) wrote that the main perpetrators of sexual violence are those closest to the victim (by peers). Specifically, in 2021 violence was committed by peers, namely male friends in boys reaching 90 percent, and male friends in girls reaching 40 percent.

Most people consider that sex education is a taboo subject to be conveyed to children/adolescents who are still immature. Rasyid (2007) in his book entitled Sex Education notes that especially among adolescents who do not understand sex in the correct sense results in various cases of sexual deviations that are very complex. This raises problems that can harm the perpetrator, and the family, and can even be a disaster for the nation. With the rapid development of information technology, children/adolescents (alpha generation) need sex education, because only with their cell phones can children easily access various sex content/information. Therefore, the alpha generation needs to increase self-awareness in understanding sex education. Sex education can be in the form of (1) telling body parts and their functions, teaching children which body parts can be held and which cannot. A also tells children that certain parts of the body should not be held or shown to ot (2) puberty that will be experienced, (3) violence and sexual harassment (Khusna, 2021). Meanwhile, self-awareness is a person's second that can understand, accept, and manage all potential for future life development (Goleman in Putri et al., 2019). Self-awareness is the ability to realize one's thoughts, feelings, and mental state (Bivona et al., 2019).

Referring to the previous explanation, it appears that sex education and self-awareness can prevent problems while strengfriendshipsoss-sex friendship in the alpha generation. Thus, this article aims to provide a deeper understanding of how to strengthen cross-sex friendships, especially in the alpha generation.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Research design

The type of research used in the article is library research. According to (Azizah, 2017) literature study is all efforts made by researchers by collecting information that is by the topic to be or being researched. All information needed in literature studies can be obtained from scientific books, research reports, scientific articles, regulations, encyclopedias, and other printed and electronic written sources.

What characterizes the literature study (Zed, 2004) is as follows:

1. Researchers deal directly with text or numerical data and not with knowledge from the field or eyewitnesses in the form of events, people, or other objects.
2. Library data is ready to use, meaning that researchers do not go anywhere except directly dealing with sources that are already available in the library.
3. Library data is generally a secondary source, meaning that researchers get materials second-hand and not original data from the first hand in the field.

### 2.2. Research procedure

In preparing this article, there are stages of literature study according to Zed (2008), namely as follows:

1. Have a general idea related to the research topic.
2. Search for information that supports the topic.
3. Reinforcing the focus of the research.
4. Search and find the necessary reading materials and classify the reading materials.
5. Reading and making research notes.
6. Review and enrich the reading material again.
7. Classify the reading material again and start writing.

### 2.3. Data resources

Data sources in this study were obtained from various relevant literature such as books and journals. In detail, the literature used includes 4 books and 7 articles that contain information on the focus of the study.

### 2.4. Instrument and technique of data collection

The data collection technique in this article is documentation. According to (Arikunto, 2013) documentation data collection techniques are looking for data about things or variables in the form of notes, books, papers or articles, journals, and so on. Meanwhile, the instruments used in this research are a checklist of research material classification, writing schemes/maps, and research note formats.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1. Finding

1. In general, sexual education means teaching physiological, psychological, and sociological issues of sexual response and reproduction. This education can be done formally by educational institutions as well as non-formally by parents and other stakeholders.
2. Sex education is an integral part of educational efforts in general. Through sex education, a healthy and responsible emotional attitude towards sex is sought. Therefore, sex education should not be considered as something dirty, or taboo, but an important and noble function in human life.
3. Sex education is more than just a study of human sexuality in biology or social science lessons. In essence, sex education is an educational effort that not only encourages someone to know and be skilled at doing something. But more than that, sex education is an effort that encourages a person to have a critical attitude and behavior toward sexuality issues. Therefore, sex education becomes more valuable.
4. Sex education is an important thing to give to children from early childhood to adolescence. Providing sex education to children can produce many benefits, such as being able to equip children with clear information so that children will not be curious and then find out for themselves, sex education can also prevent children from promiscuity, and make children understand reproductive health.
5. Research proves that sex education reduces the number of free sex, abortions, HIV/AIDS sufferers, and the like. The results of a fairly accurate study were also made by Reiss. Although the research was not conducted in Indonesia, the results of the study are also an important note that correct and appropriate sex education has minimized the negative impact of sexual deviations.

6. The impact of the lack of sex education given to the alpha generation can lead to promiscuity. Children who are teenagers also have a high curiosity, which is feared will lead to unwanted things. The lack of sex education also has an impact on the high rate of transmission of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) such as HIV/AIDS. Increased data on out-of-wedlock pregnancies, as well as many cases of rape, harassment, etc. There are also psychological impacts of engaging in casual sex, such as guilt and regret, fear of getting pregnant first, and depression.

7. Sexual harassment is any form of behavior with sexual connotations that is done unilaterally and unexpectedly by someone who then causes a negative reaction of shame, anger, or offense in the person who is the victim of harassment.

8. Self-awareness is a person's self-awareness that can understand, accept, and manage all potential for future life development.

9. For an individual, self-awareness serves to control all emotions so that they can be utilized in establishing social relations with others. He must be able to control himself from negative emotional traits and emphasize positive things, so as not to disturb social relationships with others.

10. Self-awareness is understanding who we are, how to be ourselves, what potential we have, what style we have, what steps we take, what we feel, what values we have and believe in, and where our development is heading.

11. Self-awareness has levels within an individual's psychological developmental stage, namely:
    a. Self-consciousness in development, at birth the individual is in this stage until he or she is two years old.
    b. In the case of mirror reflection, after the age of three to five years, individuals are in the stage of interpreting themselves by seeing the shape of themselves from what others say about them.
    c. Identification, occurs at the age of five to twelve years, at this stage, individuals can manifest existing recognition based on their understanding (without the help of others). Individuals begin to learn to understand their expressions and emotions.
    d. Permanence, occurs at the age of twelve to eighteen years, at this stage individuals can feel the changes that occur in themselves quickly, can recognize the expressions they feel, and place them appropriately.
    e. Self-consciousness "meta" self-awareness is the highest level in the development of individual self-awareness, which can manage and balance emotions properly and appropriately, able to realize his state in any situation, and always rely on the reality that exists in his life.

12. Self-awareness is not a goal, but rather an emergent process in which one continuously understands one's unique talents, strengths, goals, core values, beliefs, and desires.

13. Self-awareness has several types:
    a. Subjective self-awareness is the ability to distinguish oneself from one's physical and social environment. It is how she should behave that makes people judge her as different from others.
    b. Subjective self-awareness is one's capacity to be the object of one's attention, to be aware of one's state of mind, and to know that one knows and to remember that one remembers. It is where the individual is aware of his/her duties and responsibilities.
    c. Symbolic self-awareness is one's ability to form an abstract concept of the self through language one's ability to communicate, establish relationships, determine goals evaluate

       results and build attitudes related to the self and defend it against threatening communication.

14. Humans are born as social beings who cannot live alone and need other people. Therefore, humans need to establish relationships with other people, one of which is friendship.

15. Friendly relationships or friendships are formed because of mutual love, mutual acceptance, trust, and respect, most friendships are built "without conditions" that are strict and freely chosen.

16. Friendship is divided into two types, namely friendship consisting of same-sex and opposite-sex individuals.

17. The characteristics of same-sex and opposite-sex friendships are different. Friendship in men relies on joint activities and doing good. In contrast, female friendships are characterized by sharing thoughts and feelings. In addition to same-sex friendship, there is cross-sex friendship.

18. Opposite-sex friendships are non-romantic relationships shared by individuals of the opposite sex. Men tend to be closer to their female friends than their male friends and view sexuality in their relationships. In contrast, female familiarity is based on talking and affection, both to female and male friends.

19. Friendzone is popularly defined as a condition where a person has unrequited romantic or sexual feelings towards their friend.

20. Friendzone describes a situation that no one wants to be in which is an unpleasant situation.

21. Buchler introduced three general ideological principles of the friendzone:

22. Either an overt or an implied expression of the feelings that one party has for the object of unrequited love.
    a. A clear general indication that the friend zone is a condition that no one wants to experience.
    b. An interlocking division that is structured in such a way that the only reasonable option for the romantic or sexual interest of the desiring party is to end the relationship altogether.

23. There are factors for the emergence of the friend zone, including:
    a. Lack of qualities to be attractive enough for one's friend, the friend zone person needs to be physically attractive, confident, and competent to attract their friend.
    b. Friendzone also occurs due to the lack of finding the ideal match between the two because to be in a relationship, two people need to be compatible with each other.
    c. Only one person is committed to their relationship while the other friend is not.

24. The alpha generation (2010-2025) is the generation born after Generation Z (1995-2009). The characteristics possessed by the alpha generation are not much different from Generation Z, because the alpha generation was also born from the character of Generation Z's parents, generations X and Y, which passed down to their children.

25. One of the characteristics of the alpha generation is digital literacy from a very early age, this generation has been exposed to technology continuously since childhood. It is stated that technology can access thousands of information with one finger, resulting in the alpha generation being accustomed to instant things and not recognizing the process. In addition, the alpha generation has more critical thinking because they get various kinds of information in their time very easily.

26. The alpha generation tends to be more pragmatic and materialistic, having grown up in an era of technological advancement. They also think very practically, pay less attention to

values, and are generally more self-centered than previous generations. This rapid advancement in technology will inevitably affect them in the future: from their learning style to the material they study at school, to their daily interactions.

27. The characteristics of the alpha generation include:

    a. Tend to be practical and behave instantly. Alpha-generation kids love practical problem-solving. They are reluctant to take the long process of looking into a problem. This is because these children were born into an instant world. Starting from waking up, eating, going to school, studying, everything is instant. Parents should educate their children about the concept of the endurance process, and commitment to completing tasks.

    b. Love of freedom and changing behavior. The passage of time from then to now certainly brings many differences, one of which is the behavior of children who experience changes in each generation. We often hear conversations around us that say that the current generation is different from the previous generation.

    c. Self-confidence. Children of this generation are also born with high self-confidence. This is a very positive attitude. But these children must also know that if they want to succeed, self-confidence must also be balanced with self-competence. As parents, provide a conducive environment for children so that their confidence and competence can flourish.

    d. Great desire for recognition. Everyone needs recognition for their hard work. Moreover, this generation tends to want to get rewards, such as praise, gifts, or awards.

    e. Familiarity with digital and information technology. This generation is proficient in using all kinds of gadgets and uses technology in all aspects of daily functions. These children prefer to communicate through cyberspace, and social media rather than spend time face-to-face with others.

## 3.2. Discussion

Looking at the interrelated description of sex education and self-awareness, it shows that both can help the alpha generation to strengthen cross-sex friendships. On the understanding of sex education that can make children have critical attitudes and behaviors, and have correct information about sexuality. With that children will not be curious and then find out for themselves, sex education can also prevent children from promiscuity, and make children understand reproductive health.

Meanwhile, when viewed from a self-awareness, an alpha generation that has a high level of self-awareness can function to control all emotions so that they can be utilized in establishing social relationships with others, able to control themselves from negative emotional traits and accentuate positive things, so as not to interfere with social relationships with others.

From the above review of sex education and self-awareness, both can strengthen cross-sex friendships. With the alpha generation's understanding of sex education coupled with high self-awareness, it will certainly have a positive effect on improving the quality of interpersonal relationships, which in this case is opposite-sex friendships.

## 4. Conclusion

Sex education is a very important thing to give to the alpha generation. Without proper sex education, there can be negative impacts such as promiscuity, and psychological impacts when

engaging in casual sex, such as guilt and regret, fear of getting pregnant first, and depression. These impacts will greatly damage cross-sex friendships.

In addition, self-awareness also plays an important role in building children's self-awareness. With high self-awareness, children become more sensitive to differences in sexuality and can understand these differences as a limitation in doing an act in a friendship relationship of the opposite sex.

Based on library research, it is concluded that when sex education and self-awareness are integrated and become an internal part of the individual, it can have a positive impact on various problems in opposite-sex friendship relationships in the alpha generation. In addition, it can also prevent friendzone and sexual violence.

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