

Sexual learning across the border between online and offline in Japan

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1. Introduction

In 1992, sex education in Japanese public school gained momentum because the reformed version of the government course guideline(学習指導要領) in 1989, which included conducting sex education, was put into practice. In 1998, however, the provisions restricting such the education in public school was added to the government course guideline (Murasue 2023). In early 2000's, anti-gender backlash movements rose targeting the feminist political achievements including sex education in public school (Japan Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology. (online). *HUMAN+ otoko to onna no dictionary [Human+ the dictionary of women and men]*. (日本産婦人科学会 『HUMAN+ 女と男のディクショナリー』) https://www.jsog.or.jp/modules/humanplus/index.php?content_id=1 (access: 2023/11/29)

Kawasaka 2023, Shimizu 2020). Since then, many of sex education in public schools have kept away from many different important topics of Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) such as the different ways of contraception including pills, sexual consent, testing for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), the right to have and not to

have children, the right of abortion and ways of the communication with partners to prevent the dating abuse or the domestic violence.

On the other hand, youngsters in Japan have the possibility of making contact with the information of sexual health online. Ministry of public health and labor has the website of providing especially women with the sex education contents in Japanese (Japan Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology. (online). *HUMAN+ otoko to onna no dictionary [Human+ the dictionary of women and men]*. (日本産婦人科学会 『HUMAN+ 女と男のディクショナリー』) https://www.jsog.or.jp/modules/humanplus/index.php?content_id=1 (access: 2023/11/29)

Kawasaka, Kazuyoshi. (2023) *Queers and National Anxiety: Discourses on Gender and Sexuality from Anti-Gender Backlash Movements in Japan since the 2000s*. In *Global Perspectives on Anti-Feminism: Far-Right and Religious Attacks on Equality and Diversity*: 182-201. Edinburgh University Press.

エラー! ブックマークが自己参照を行っています。 2023). Japan Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology provides the online book dealing with the diseases and the knowledges of obstetrics and gynecology from adolescence to old age through the web site (Japan Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology 2023). Plus, the influencers from diverse professions post the videos on YouTube of sexual health such as TV

personality¹, midwife², porn stars³ and so on. Youth may gain the knowledges of sexual matters from the various sources in the degrees of reliability and accuracy.

In this project, I conducted the qualitative research of semi-structured interview with 10 informants in order to clarify how they acquire the knowledge of sexual health and what their information environment is like. I thus ask; (Q1) How do heterosexual youth in Japan utilize the Internet and social media sites for sexual learning after the “gender backlash” in 2000’s? (Q2) In daily conversation of the sexual matters with friends, how does gender role play into the way of their conversation? (Q3) Whether do youth think of the information gained by sexual learning online as accurate and reliable or not? (Q4) In sexual learning, how do youth get in touch with “professional knowledge” produced by doctors and medical scientists and “daily knowledge” produced through daily conversation or communication mainly with their friends? Prior to answer these questions, I review previous researches and propose the theoretical framework through this project: “specialized knowledge” and “everyday knowledge” (Shimizu, Akiko. (2020) "Imported" feminism and "indigenous" queerness: from backlash to transphobic feminism in transnational Japanese context. *Gender kenkyu: Ochanomizu joshi daigaku gender kenkyuzyo nenpou*[The annual report of institute for gender studies in Ochanomizu women university]23: 89-104. (『ジェンダー研究 : お茶の水女子大学ジェンダー研究所年報』23: 89-104.)

エラー! ブックマークが自己参照を行っています。 2005).

1.1 Gender Backlash, Public Health and Sexual Learning

¹ Source: https://www.youtube.com/@SHELLY_SexEd/videos (Access: 2023-11-02)

² Source: <https://www.youtube.com/@shiorine> (Access: 2023-11-02)

³ Source: https://www.youtube.com/@miyamuno_ohaya/videos (Last Access: 2023-11-02)

In this section, I review the following three types of previous research; (1) the research of the history of the gender backlash from 1990's to early 2000's in Japan; (2) the quantitative research aiming at improving public health in Japan; and (3) the qualitative research on sexual learning.

I begin by explaining the social phenomenon called gender backlash, and considering the previous research of the phenomenon. As I mentioned above, in late 1990's, the government course guideline(学習指導要領) was changed to restrict sex education in public school in Japan. In early 2000's, LDP politicians such as Shinzo Abe and Eriko Yamatani set up “Extreme sex education and gender-free education truth investigation team” 「過激な性教育・ジェンダーフリー教育実態調査プロジェクトチーム」 and considered the situation of “extreme sex education” in some schools as problematic. Especially, Yamatani criticized the situation in Upper House for the following two reasons; such the sex education classes were conducted without the parent's consent; and their contents included the deviations from the guideline (エラー! ブックマークが自己参照を行っています。 2022). These conservative MPs are also opposed to the gender equality policies (Yamaguchi et al. 2012, Japan Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology. (online). *HUMAN+ otoko to onna no dictionary [Human+ the dictionary of women and men]*. (日本産婦人科学会 『HUMAN+ 女と男のデイクシヨナリー』) https://www.jsog.or.jp/modules/humanplus/index.php?content_id=1 (access: 2023/11/29)

Kawasaka 2023).

Previous research of this theme mainly focuses on what the process of gender backlash was like. Tomomi Yamaguchi and Masami Saitou conducted the participation observation and the interviews with the conservative members of the local congress and

conservative activists in order to make it clear the different aspects of the anti-gender-equality movement in various regions in Japan (Yamaguchi et al. 2012). They also pointed out the fact that the religious right groups actively participated in the gender backlash in Japan and had influence on the right-wing members of Congress (Yamaguchi and Saitou 2023). In addition, there is a study paying particular attention to how the frontline teachers in a public school and the education professionals deal with the protest campaign by the conservative activists (Soku 2014: 140-169). In this study, the teacher who conducted sex education classes in a school was pressured to discontinue not only by the activists but by the principal of the school and the members of the school board (id: 151-159).

These studies as I showed above succeed in describing the overall picture of gender backlash or the criticism of sex education from 1990's to 2000's. In this project, taking over the findings of these studies, I will try to point out how youth in Japan shape the knowledges of SRHR with inadequate formal sex education after gender backlash(Q1).

Then, I examine the quantitative research on the knowledge of STDs and sexual intercourse in Japan. The studies I present below have the common purpose of improving public health through reducing the number of abortions, preventing the spread of STDs, and so forth. One of these studies give us the findings that even if young students in the nurses' college have the accurate knowledge of HIV/AIDs, some of them are not able to have safer sex (Hashimoto 2011). Another study on high school

students and the university students shows that even though in case of male students, there is the correlation between the accurate knowledge and utilizing some forms of contraception, there is no such the correlation in case of female students (Tsuchida 2019: 142). Plus, some researchers find that “friends” are considered as more influencing source of information in sexual behavior and sexual consciousness than any other sources like “books”, “TVs”, “videos”, “web” (Tadatsu et al. 2009). Based on the results of these studies, some women have the possibility to associate with men having less information of sexuality and to have the trouble with such men. I will, hence, tackle the question of how the gender role has the influence on daily conversation of sexual matters (Q2).

Finally, I check the trend of the qualitative researches on sexual learning of youth, which is similar to my project in terms of being interested in the process of building the knowledge, ways of collecting data and the assumption that youth often acquire the knowledge without the adequate support from the formal education. In a qualitative survey of heterosexual and LGBTQ+ youth in the USA, the formal sex education in the USA is thought to have the three characteristics: “(1) governed largely at the local and state level, it varies widely from place to place; (2) it is usually both narrow in scope and short in duration; and (3) it is almost exclusively heteronormative” (Gamson 2023: 462). The insufficient sex education in school and the difficulty in talking about sexual activity encouraged the interviewees in this study to explore online for sexual learning

(id.:481). In this kind of the search online for the sex matters, they have “been uncertain about the accuracy and reliability of information sources, and looked for ways to triangulate and substantiate online sources” (id: 482). Also, “Information learned online was often shared with peers, and tested out practically in relationships” (id: 482).

The qualitative research of compensated dating (援助交際) of female junior high and high school students in Japan shows us another pattern of online learning(Nakano 2010). In learning the techniques of the compensated dating, the respondents of this study get in touch with the online sources written by anonymous others and share the information with a few friends through e-mail, not through face-to-face conversation (id. :20-21). They are afraid to be discovered by parents or other friends, so they engage with the experienced groups of compensated dating online and substitute such the contact of information for the conversation difficult to conduct in person (id.: 20-21).

From the findings of these qualitative studies from sexual learning, I will deal with the questions of what the relation of online sexual learning by youth with offline one is like (Q1), of how do the youngsters perceive the information gained by online sexual learning(Q3).

1.2 Knowledge production process by combining “specialized knowledge” and “everyday knowledge”

The knowledge of sexual health seems to have the different nature from the ordinary knowledge based on the academic exploration because not only the researcher of the public health and doctors dealing with patients of STDs, but non-professional people practice the knowledge in daily life. We can assume that non-professional people acquire the knowledge not only from the contents the professionals provide but from daily conversation with friends. In actual, according to a quantitative survey of university students in Japan, “friends” is more influential source on the sexual awareness and the sexual behavior than any other items consisted of “parents”, “TV and radio”, “articles of the newspapers and the magazines” and so forth (Tadatsu et al. 2008). In this situation, non-professional people are likely to acquire and exchange the knowledge in a different way than the experts assume.

When analyzing such kind of information, the concepts of “specialized knowledge” and “daily knowledge” proposed by Dorothy E. Smith is suitable. According to her work, feminist movement has dealt not only with men centered system but with how to make the discrimination in daily life a political issue (Shimizu, Akiko. (2020) "Imported" feminism and "indigenous" queerness: from backlash to transphobic feminism in transnational Japanese context. *Gender kenkyu: Ochanomizu joshi daigaku gender kenkyuzyo nenpou*[The annual report of institute for gender studies in Ochanomizu women university]23: 89-104. (『ジェンダー研究 : お茶の水女子大学ジェンダー研

究所年報』 23: 89-104.)

エラー! ブックマークが自己参照を行っています。 2005: 7). Women had difficulty in making it a political problem because in the process of the knowledge production, which was dominated by men and experts, there was no terminology used to describe the women's experience of the discrimination in everyday life. Thus, she points out, they have to generate the different terms to accuse of victimization experience such as "rape", "harassment", "sexism", "violence" and so on (ibid).

Also in this project, I pay attention both to "specialized knowledge" produced by the professionals in medical sphere and to "daily knowledge" produced through daily interaction of people. I, thereby, deal with the question of how do youth connect the former and the latter in sexual learning (Q4).

2. Method

I recruited the college students between age 20 and 23 years, and their friends between age 24 and 44 years. I executed the interviews with 10 people to clarify how they acquire, collect, exchange and utilize the information acquired by online and offline sexual learning. They were all semi-structured face-to-face expert interviews, recorded, transcribed and coded after the interview. All the respondents are Japanese. The background information of the informants is as shown on the Table 1.

Before all the interviews, I explained purpose of the research and I have them sign a

Table 1. Background Information

Fictitious name	gender	Age (at the time of survey)	Academic background (Occupation)
Miho	Women	23	Undergraduate student
Rika	Women	44	Graduate of technical school (Nurse)
Wakana	Women	28	University graduate (Painter)
Aki	Women	20	Undergraduate student
Kayo	Women	22	Undergraduate student
Naru	Men	24	University graduate
Tatsu	Men	22	Undergraduate student
Sara	Women	32	University graduate (Childcare worker)
Yu	Men	23	Master student
Tetsu	Men	22	Undergraduate student

consent form about recording and transcription of the interview and usage of it for research purposes. I signed a personal information protection pledge and gave it to them. All the interviews consist of two parts: asking the informants the questions and asked the questions in return by the informants. Each part takes about an hour on average, so whole the interview takes about two hours on average.

After the interviews, when I created the transcription of the interview, I changed the proper nouns to other nouns or to fictitious ones that can lead the identification of the individuals such as the respondent's name, name of places, organization name and so on.

3. Data

3.1 Daily Conversation with Friends and Postings on SNS by Friends as Gateway to Expert Knowledge: Testing for STDs and Abortion

Some respondents thought of the daily conversation with their friends and the postings on SNS by them as a chance to explore more information in detail. Sara mentioned that hearing about the people she knew, she had accessed the web site of the public medical health care center and went to one of the centers for the STDs test⁴. Kayo said after reading the article on “note⁵” written by a friend of her, she had accessed the web site like Sara’s case. Naru remarked that watching the posts on Instagram and Twitter⁶ made him check more abortion. In all the cases to be discussed in this section, the respondents implied they accessed to new knowledges out of the reliable and medical public information.

⁴ In Japan, people can get tested for STDs for free and anonymously. (Source: https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/kenkou_iryuu/kenkou/kekaku-kansenshou/seikansenshou/index.html Last access: 2023-12-15.)

⁵ A kind of SNS in Japan, in which they can post the articles.

⁶ Name at the time of survey. It is currently “X.”

I heard that an acquaintance went to the public medical health care center with three friends for the HIV test and three people of them were positive. I was surprised that there were so many, looked up the information on the web site of the public medical health care center and went there for the test. Before the test, the doctor asked me whether or not there was a day that came to mind. “No, there wasn’t,” I said because I had come there somehow. Everyone seems to ask if they (the risk behaviors they can think of)⁷ are reflected in the day’s results (Sara, age 32)⁸.

Sara mentioned that after knowing the fact some of her acquaintance turned out to be HIV positive, she accessed the web site of the public medical health care center for more detail of the different types of STDs and the inspection system of STDs there and went there for the test. The conversation in the pre-test medical interview with a doctor reminded, she implied, her of the following two facts she had been not aware of; (1) STDs have the incubation periods; (2) Many of people to be inspected care about whether they are currently in the incubation period or not.

⁷ The letters in parentheses () are added by the author.

⁸ 「知り合いが、友達4人で保健所に HIV 検診を受けに行って、4人中3人が陽性だったって聞きました。そんなに多いんだって驚いて、保健所のサイトを調べて、検査を受けに行きました。検査の前に思い当たる日を医師にきかれて、漠然と来ていた私は、ありません、と答えました。(思い当たるリスク行動が) その日の検査の結果に反映されるかどうか皆さん尋ねるそうです」

I heard from a friend that my college junior wrote an article on “note” that he went to the public health care center in order to being tested for STDs. Reading it made me interested in STDs. I was thinking of going there, and looked up information of the health care center (Kayo, age 22)⁹.

Kayo’s content of the initiator of gathering information on the public web sites is different from Sara’s. Surely, as Sara got in touch with the public information on the web site, so Kayo did. Judging from the statements of them, they also obtained the similar information with each other such as the different types of STDs and the inspection system in the center. In this case, however, Kayo has the opportunity to gather information thanks to at least two friends and at least two types of communication with friends: face-to-face conversation and the posts on SNS written by friends. It is important to pay attention to the fact that even though, in this story, Kayo and friends use “note”, one of SNS, which can be seen by everyone, it is spoken of as communication between mutual friends, with no strangers in between.

⁹ 「大学の後輩が、保健所に性感染症の検査を受けに行ったって内容の note を書いたということを友人づてに聞きました。それを読んで、性感染症に興味を持った。行こうかなと思って保健所の情報について調べました」

We sometimes connected with female students from the same university on Instagram. I watched the posts on their Stories where they reposted a post against the abortion ban. I also watched the posts of friends in Japan about abortion. They made me check the abortion issue in the U.S. and types of abortion (Naru, age 24)¹⁰.

Naru has the high possibility of contacting public and medical information after watching and reading these posts. That is because he said, outside of this quoted section, “I have accessed the web site of Japan Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology and the web site of Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare when gathering such the medical information” as STDs, abortion and so on. In Naru’s case, the content of the initiator of gathering information may be only to watch and read the posts on two SNS: Instagram and Twitter. Similar to Kayo’s case, however, the communication through SNS is spoken of as that with mutual friends.

In this way, I considered the three cases in which daily conversation with friends and the posts on SNS by friends were thought of as the chance to gather information. Especially, in the second case and the third case, the communication through SNS was described as that only with mutual friends.

¹⁰ 「同じ大学の学生と Instagram で繋がることがあった。彼女らがストーリーズで、中絶禁止に反対する投稿をリポストしたのを見た。また日本の友人の、Twitter 上での中絶についての投稿を見て、アメリカの中絶問題や中絶の種類について調べた」

The results from these cases have the following two significant implications: (1) Daily communication through direct conversation and SNS function as the gateway to expert knowledges consisted of the medical and public information. (2) The boundary between the two categories of friends and SNS cannot be so clear as assumed in some quantitative surveys. As I considered in chapter 1, some previous quantitative surveys show “friends” is the most influencing source of information in the sexual behavior and sexual consciousness (Tadatsu et al. 2009). If the boundary between the two categories, though, is ambiguous, it creates the room for multiple interpretations of the results. Sexual behavior and sexual consciousness of many youngsters in Japan affected mainly by (1) the posts on SNS by friends, (2) the daily face-to-face conversation, (3) the mixture of both, and (4) so forth. Anyway, interaction between SNS and friends could be an issue for future consideration.

3.2 Gender Roles in Conversation: Menstruation and the Pill

Some respondents mentioned men’s sexual learning from women and, on the contrary, the sexual teaching of women to men in particular about the following: menstruation and the pill. Yu realized his ignorance of menstruation through the communication with his partner and watched the video of women talking of menstrual hardship. Tetsu changed his perception of the pills by listening to his Japanese teacher.

Wakana told her partner what the period is like. Kayo also told her friend the similar things. All the four cases share the same information flow from women to men.

After I became sexually active with my girlfriend, I had been said to by her that she could not have sex with me today because she was menstruating. It was only when I was in that situation that I realized it was bad enough that I didn't know anything about menstruation (Yu, age 23)¹¹.

Yu noticed the lack of knowledge and he was troubled. After this quotation part, he said that he watched the influencer's post of menstrual pain instead of asking her directly about the period.

Even if I input the knowledges of sexual matters, I often forget them. It is the movie that reaffirmed to me that menstruation can be a very painful thing. I easily forget what I've looked up on SNS like YouTube, but I remember seeing the video on Ms. Hatta's channel. I was impressed with the video, in which she speaks sincerely about menstruation to men (Yu)¹².

¹¹ 「彼女と性行為をするようになった後、今日は生理だから無理と言われることがあって。そういう状況になって初めて、生理について何も知らないのはやばいなって」

¹² 「性の知識をインプットしても忘れちゃうことが多くて。生理ってすごい大変なことなんだなっていうの再認識させてくれたのがその動画。YouTubeとかで調べたことは、す

Yu didn't mention clearly mention why he did not inquire of her about the pain of menstruation but he repeated references to the difficulty in talking with others of sexual matters. Certainly, with videos on YouTube, it is possible to hear about the pain of menstruation without conversing about sexual matters with others.

Once, my Japanese teacher in our high school told us the story The pill, generally, does not have a very good impression, right? Although she had a heavy period and went to OB/GYN to get the medicine, the pill, she was regarded as a bitch by people around her. She was talking about how she didn't like that situation. Her story was much more impressive the sex education class. I remember it so well (Tetsu, age 22)¹³.

Tetsu suggests that he changed the view on the pills after listening to the story of her. Before Tetsu got into the story, he relied on me to agree with the socially accepted belief that the pill was viewed negatively. In telling the story, he implies that the notion

ぐ忘れちゃうけれど八田さんのチャンネルの動画を見たのは覚えている。男性に向けて、生理について真摯に語る人の動画見るのは印象に残った」

¹³ 「高校の時の、国語の先生が言っとった。ピルっていうものがあんまり印象良くないじゃんか、一般的には。その女の先生は、生理が重くて産婦人科にピルをもらいに行った。なのに周りから、あいつあばずれた、みたいな目で見られる。それが嫌だったって話を、しとった。性教育の授業よりよっぽど。めっちゃ覚えてる」

is that the pill is a medicine taken by people who have sexual activity with an unspecified number of partners by saying “she was regarded as a bitch.” Thus, it is reasonable to assume that he realized that he had been unaware of people taking the pill for menstrual pain relief.

When I was, I got a male partner. I was very surprised to know that he did not know anything about menstruation when I talked to him about it. He had heard the word, “period,” but didn’t have no idea of what it was. He asked me, “Does it take a day?” and “No”, I said. Then, I taught him about menstruation. He hadn’t lived with his parents since he was very young, so he could, I thought, only get that kind of information from the women he dated (Wakana, age 28)¹⁴.

We can read that the streamlining is taking place in Wakana’s conversation. In the first sentence of this quotation, she said that she had gotten surprised to know her partner had been ignorant of the period. This is spoken as an unexpected thing. In the final sentence, however, she suddenly started to infer that he has no other source of

¹⁴ 「大学二年生の時に、男性のパートナーができた。そのときびっくりしたのが、彼が生理の話をした時に、何も知らなくて。生理という単語は聞いたことあるけど、全然どんなものか知らなかった。『一日で終わるもんなん？』って訊いてきて、『違う』って。それで生理について教えた。彼は、幼いころから両親と暮らしていなくて、付き合った女性からしかそういう情報を得られなかったんだろうなって思った」

information other than her. Here, by attributing his ignorance to his family environment, she succeeded in converting the shocking into the reasonable. She seems to rationalize his ignorance and her decision to teach him of the period.

I was so disappointed in his lack of knowledge that I told him about menstruation. We were going on a trip with some men and me, a woman, alone. We were allowed to stay at his parent's house. As the plan neared execution, he told me that his mother sent him to say that the three of us should go to a hot spring. I thought to myself at that time, "I bet you didn't tell her I was a woman." I didn't think much of it because I didn't have my period at that time, but sure enough, when I met his mother, she looked surprised and told us that we didn't have to go to the hot springs. I said to him, "Women have their periods and it might happen during the events, so it would be awkward for both of us if she suddenly came on the line and said, 'No, I have my period that day, so I can't go to the hot spring.'" So, I told him that such a thing could happen (Kayo)¹⁵.

¹⁵ 「相手に知識がなさ過ぎて呆れたので生理の話をしたんです。男性何人かと女性私一人で旅行に行くことになったんです。その男性の実家に泊まらせてもらえることになった。計画が進んで行くと、お母さんが、3人で温泉に行ってきたら、って言っているって言ってきて。『絶対お前私が女だって言ってねえだろ』ってその時思っ。その時は生理かぶってなかったからあまり気にしなかったんだけど、案の定お母さんと会ったらびっくりした顔して、温泉行かなくてもいいのよ、って。『女性は、生理があつて、被るかもしれないから。LINEでいきなり、いやその日生理だから温泉行けんわって来たらお互いが気まずいでしょ』って。だからそういうことがあるんだよと伝えた」

Kayo also tries to rationalize in the quotation part, but the scope of rationalization only extends to the fact that she has to tell him and he should hear of what the period is like and not to the fact that they are ignorant of it. In the first sentence of this quotation, she said “I was so disappointed” and it was spoken of as the reason why she tried to explain the menstruation. Plus, in the latter part of the quotation, she implied to him that having the knowledge of the period and considering the possibility that a woman is menstruating can lead no disappointment on either side. Thus, also in Kayo’s case, the references to the rationalization can be found in a different way than in former.

Like this, in this section, I considered the example of men’s sexual learning from women and women’s sexual learning from men. These cases show the fact that in case of the acquiring the knowledges of menstruation and the pill, there is a division of gender roles, with women teaching and men being taught. How gender and gender role division of labor operate in other areas is a subject for future study.

3.3 The Influencer’s Posts: STDs and Sexual Intercourse Pain

Two informants, Aki, and Yu said that they got the knowledge of STDs or sexual intercourse pain mainly from the influencer’s post on SNS. Aki and Yu mentioned that they often watched the influencer’s posts on YouTube. They watched the contents of STDs and sexual intercourse respectively. Aki did not mention the reliability of

information in the contents and Yu considered such the contents as reliable sources for sexual learning. Despite the difference of the ways of telling, both of them thought of the influencer's posts on YouTube as a major source of sexual learning.

I am unwilling to gather information of STDs by myself. I sometimes watch the YouTube contents of STDs and cancers with a sense of duty, "I have to know them." Once, The YouTube channel, which I subscribed to and which is my favorite, addressed STDs. By watching the content, I got to know what STDs are like (Aki, age 20)¹⁶.

Aki said "I am unwilling to gather information of STDs by myself", but judging from Aki's word before and after the citation section, she seemed to acquire many different kinds of knowledge of STDs by watching the YouTube contents. She gets in touch mainly with the medical knowledges of STDs and with how to prevent STDs. When talking of STDs in the interview, on the one hand, she did not mention the reliability of the contents and on the other hand, "By watching the content, I got to

¹⁶ 「性感染症について自分で調べるのは気が進まない。性感染症もがんも、『知っておかないとな』という義務感で見ることにはあるんですけど。自分の登録しているチャンネル、好きなチャンネルで性感染症について取り上げている回があって。その中で、なんとなく（性感染症について）知った。梅毒ってこんな病気なんだ。しかも今流行っているんだって」

know what STDs are like” she said. Whether she considered such the contents on YouTube as based on the scientific findings is uncertain but, given these facts, she thought of the contents as major source of sexual learning.

At the time of sexual intercourse, it is important not to hurt sexual partners. I guess I watch most of such the contents through YouTube. There are many channels of female porn stars trying to give us the knowledge properly. They tell us that the porn is different from the actual sexual intercourse and how to enjoy sexual acts without hurting the partners. I got to know what the disease of syphilis is. Plus, there is an epidemic of syphilis (Yu)¹⁷.

Yu regarded some porn stars as the professional people of sexual intercourse who “give us the knowledge properly.” As I examined in the section just before, Yu also mentioned the influencer’s movie on YouTube dealing with menstrual pain. Unlike in the previous section Yu looked on the influencer as the person who were at the same level of knowledge as his partner, he regarded some porn stars as the specialists who knew more about sexual activity than his partner.

¹⁷ 「性行為の時には、相手が痛くないようにすることが重要だから。まあそういうのは、YouTube で見ることが多いかな。AV 女優の方たちが、ちゃんと知識を与えようとするチャンネルが結構あって。AV と現実が違うことをちゃんと教えるし、痛くない（性行為の）しかたも教える」

As seen above, some informants saw the influencer's posts on SNS as one of the major sources for sexual learning. Although it was not sure if there was a scientific basis for these contents, they did not feel uncertain about the accuracy and the reliability of the source.

4. Conclusion

In this project, I conducted and analyzed the semi-structured interviews with 10 respondents in order to answer these questions below:

(Q1) How do heterosexual youth in Japan utilize the Internet and social media sites for sexual learning after the "gender backlash" in 2000's?

(Q2) In daily conversation of the sexual matters with friends, how does gender role play into the way of their conversation?

(Q3) Whether do youth think of the information gained by sexual learning online as accurate and reliable or not?

(Q4) In sexual learning, how do youth get in touch with "professional knowledge" produced by doctors and medical scientists and "daily knowledge" produced through daily conversation or communication mainly with their friends?

The answers to these questions as follow:

- The boundary between the two categories of friends and SNS cannot be so clear as assumed in some previous quantitative surveys. Youth often regards not only the face-to-face conversation but watching and reading the friend's posts on SNS as the communication with friends.
- There are no informants who express the anxiety of the uncertainty about the accuracy and the reliability of the sources on the web. Some respondents gain the information mainly from the public web sites. Others saw the influencer's posts on SNS as one of the major sources for sexual learning which sometimes have uncertain scientific basis. There may be differences in the quality of information even among those who are willing to actively research information.
- In case of the acquiring the knowledges of menstruation and the pill, there is a division of gender roles, with women teaching and men being taught.
- Daily communication through direct conversation and SNS function as the gateway to expert knowledges consisted of the medical and public information. Acquiring the evidence-based knowledges of sexual matters is based on the daily knowledges.

In addition, the following two issues were raised for future consideration:

- How do gender and gender role division of labor operate in sexual learning of other topics than menstruation and the pill?

- When considering the impact on sexual behavior and perception of sexuality, how do we view the interaction between social networking sites and friends?

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