

An Intervention to Improve Self-regulation in Preventing Premarital Sexual Behavior among Students in Lhokseumawe

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Abstract: This study aims to provide a clearer picture of self-regulation in preventing premarital sexual behavior. After getting a picture of self-regulation in preventing premarital sexual behavior, an intervention design was drafted in order to improve junior high school students' self-regulation in Lhokseumawe. A quantitative method with descriptive analysis was used in this research. A total of 290 students were obtained as participants using cluster random sampling method. The results showed that the majority of junior high school students in Lhokseumawe had low self-regulation (58%), meaning that most of them still do not have the ability to regulate themselves to achieve their goals, in this case, to prevent premarital sexual behavior. Among the possible reasons for such circumstance are the students' incapability to set goals and strategies, to motivate and control themselves, as well as to conduct monitoring, assessments and evaluations in preventing premarital sexual behavior. Based on the results of the study, intervention programs that can improve self-regulation in preventing premarital sexual behavior are in the form of training by applying the experiential learning principle, the role play and discussion method. The interventions were divided into three phases as suggested by Zimmerman (2000) in his theoretical concepts. The phases are forethought, performance, and reflection.

1 INTRODUCTION

The way teenagers get along with one another may cause concerns for the community as they tend to violate the moral and religious values, leading to juvenile delinquency. Among the juvenile delinquency found are pornography, drugs, crime, and premarital sexual behavior (Susanti & Setyowaty, 2013).

According to Sarwono (2010), sexual behavior is all behavior that is driven by sexual desire both with the same or the opposite sex. Premarital sexual behavior can be solitary or socio-sexual that includes two or more individuals. This research, however, focused on socio-sexual research due to risks resulted from sexual behavior with partners such as unwanted pregnancy, HIV / AIDS and venereal disease. Socio-sexual consists of touching, kissing, petting, and sexual intercourse. Touching is an activity of physical contact such as holding hands or hugging. Kissing starts from kissing lips to lips (dry kissing) to wet kissing. Petting is defined as physical contact aiming to release sexual desire such as palpating breasts, touching thighs and genitals, and attaching the

genitals without penetrating male genitalia into female genitalia. Meanwhile, sexual intercourse is a physical contact made by men and women in the form of penetrating male genitals into female genitalia.

The data from regional health officer shows that as many as 70 % of students in Lhokseumawe and 50 % students in Banda Aceh were found to engage in premarital sexual behavior (Dinkesprov, 2012). Premarital sexual behavior has several negative effects such as unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, social stigma, HIV / AIDS and so on. In addition to obtaining statistical data, the researchers also conducted interviews with several respondents who said that they had no desire to engage in premarital sexual behavior because of their awareness towards the negative effects and the values and norms in Acehese society.

If someone violates the prevailing norms in Aceh, she/he will be subject to sanctions such as flogging, being bathed in a mosque or being paraded around. Therefore, to prevent premarital sexual behavior, the respondents should reduce time for meeting their partners, avoid meeting them in a quiet place and avoid discussions related to premarital sexual

behavior. However, the respondents have not been able to do so because whenever the respondents meet their partners, the pre-marital sexual behavior is unavoidable. This occurs because the partner is afraid of being left or cheated if she refuses to do so. Yet, most respondents acknowledged feeling guilty for their incapability to refuse the sexual behavior invitation. This happens because respondents have not been able to regulate themselves in preventing premarital sexual behavior. Therefore, the problem experienced by respondents in premarital sexual behavior is an indication related to self-regulation.

According to Zimmerman (as cited in Boekaerts, 2000), self-regulation refers to thoughts, feelings, actions planned and adapted continuously to achieve personal goals. The structure of the process of self-regulation is described in three cyclical phases. The forethought phase relates to the processes and beliefs that emerge before the effort to act and determine the steps to achieve the goals. The performance/volitional control phase covers the processes that occur during the effort and impacts on the attention and actions taken. The self-reflection phase entails the process that occurs after an attempt is made and affects the individual's response to the experience. This reflection phase will then affect the forethought phase (Zimmerman as cited in Boekaerts, 2000).

In this study, self-regulation is associated with premarital sexual behavior, where individuals or adolescents who engage in premarital sexual behavior can direct themselves to prevent premarital sexual behavior with their partners. Based on the data obtained by the researcher, respondents said that they had no desire to engage in premarital sexual behavior, but they were unable to regulate it because when they met with their partners. Besides, the feeling of worry for the consequence of refusing the behavior leads the goal of avoiding it could not be achieved.

An effective self-regulation will enable an individual to achieve their goals for not being engaged in premarital sexual behavior. Gailliot (2007) argues that individuals who have ineffective self-regulation are more likely to fail in controlling themselves in preventing premarital sexual behavior while those having effective self-regulation will be able to regulate themselves in preventing premarital sexual behavior.

Furthermore, research conducted by Dwi (2015) also showed that an ineffective self-regulation leads to premarital sexual behavior, in which individuals who are unable to regulate themselves fail in preventing premarital sexual behavior. On the other hand, individuals who have effective self-regulation will avoid premarital sexual behavior because they

are able to regulate themselves to avoid premarital sexual behavior.

Based on the data, the number of cases of premarital sexual behavior continues to increase. This case often occurs in teenagers who are in high school and college. For this reason, prevention of premarital sexual behavior by increasing self-regulation is necessary. Nowadays, many teenagers are dating before the normative age (under the age of 15 years, usually called as early starter) which highly prone to premarital sexual behavior. This is supported by the statement of Conolly & McIsaac (2009) as cited in Steinberg, 2014) mentioning that adolescents experiencing a relationship in a very young age (also known as early starter) will easily be affected by negative impacts such as socially immature (when establishing interpersonal relationships), lack of imagination, low orientation towards achievement, unhappy and often depressed, and conducting premarital sexual behavior. Based on the explanation, the focus of this study is to increase the effectiveness of self-regulation in junior high school students in Lhokseumawe as one of the factors that can prevent premarital sexual behavior.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Self-regulation is defined as thoughts, feelings, and planned actions as well as adapting continuously to achieve personal goals (Zimmerman, 2000 as cited in Boekaerts, 2000). The purpose of self-regulation is to explain how individuals adjust to changes in the environment as a result of personal feedback (Zimmerman as cited in Boekaerts, 2007).

Each individual definitely attempts to regulate themselves using their own ways in order to achieve goals in life. Thus, it becomes inaccurate if there is a statement saying that there are individuals who do not employ self-regulation (Winne, 1997 in Zimmerman; Boekaerts, 2000). The structure of self-regulation process is described in three cyclic phases as follow:

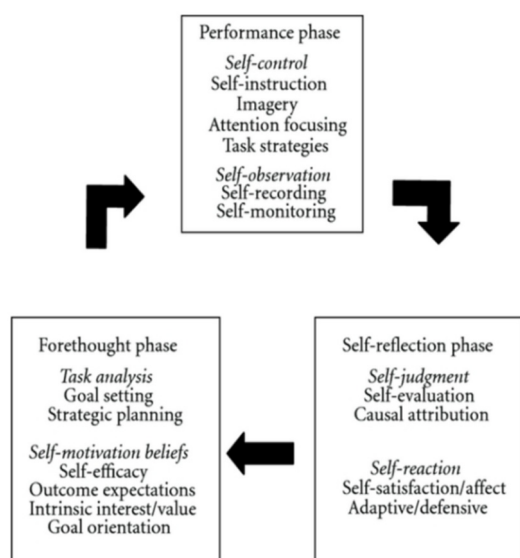


Figure 1. The Structure of Self-Regulation Process

3 RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted by using a quantitative research approach. Data analysis was performed by grouping data based on variables and types of respondents as well as tabulating data based on variables from all respondents (Sugiyono, 2014). The research method used was descriptive research conducted on independent variables (Sugiyono, 2014). In this study, descriptive method was used to find a picture of self-regulation in preventing premarital sexual behavior in junior high school students in Lhokseumawe.

The sampling technique used was cluster random sampling with 290 respondents. Data collection techniques using measurement tools in the form of a questionnaire was utilized based on self-regulation theory from Zimmerman (2000) which consists of three phases of self-regulation (i.e., forethought, performance and self-reflection), each of which consists of categories and sub-categories (Zimmerman as cited in Boekaerts, 2000).

4 RESULT

4.1 Overview of Effective Self-regulation

The results of the study are divided into two categories: effective and ineffective based on the theoretical concepts used in this study. According to

Zimmerman (2000 as cited in Boekaerts, 2000), effective self-regulation must have three phases of self-regulation (i.e., effective forethought, performance, and self-reflection). Ineffective self-regulation is when one of the three phases mentioned is not effective.

To describe an effective self-regulation, researchers compile profiling by looking at each total score of each phase of self-regulation in each respondent as follows:

Table 1: Overview of Self-Regulation Profile in Preventing Premarital Sexual Behavior

	Self-Regulation Phase			Number of Respondent
	Forethought	Performance	Self-Reflection	
Profile	Effective	Effective	Effective	123 persons (42%)

Based on the above profiling results, there were 123 respondents (42%) who had all the three phases effective. It can be inferred that the respondents had an effective level of self-regulation in preventing premarital sexual behavior. In other words, respondents can set goals, control and monitor themselves in preventing premarital sexual behavior, and can make an assessment and evaluation of their own behavior. The evaluation conducted provides respondents with new knowledge and information about strategies and actions that can be taken in preventing premarital sexual behavior. Therefore, the results of the evaluation help individuals to plan alternatives and new strategies adaptively in developing their self-regulation in preventing premarital sexual behavior.

4.2 Overview of Ineffective Self-regulation

In describing ineffective self-regulation, researchers did the profiling by looking at each total score of each phase of self-regulation on each respondent which can be seen in the following table:

Table 2: Overview of Ineffective Self-Regulation Profile in Preventing Premarital Sexual Behavior

	Self-Regulation Phase			Number of Respondents
	Forethought	Performance	Self-Reflection	
Profile R1	Effective	Effective	Ineffective	49
Profile R2	Effective	Ineffective	Ineffective	56
Profile R3	Ineffective	Ineffective	Effective	25
Profile R4	Ineffective	Ineffective	Ineffective	37
Ineffective Self-Regulation				167 persons (58%)

Based on the above description, researchers obtained four profiles that illustrate ineffective self-regulation in preventing premarital sexual behavior. When viewed from the three phases, self-regulation will eventually become a unity that describes one's self-regulation level. The descriptions of the four profiles are as follows:

Profile R1: Respondents who have an effective forethought and performance phase but ineffective in the self-reflection phase are 49 respondents (17%). This illustrates that respondents can set specific goals, in this case, to prevent premarital sexual behavior, can control and monitor the actions taken, but have not been able to make an evaluation of the effort and the results obtained from the actions they did.

Profile R2: Respondents who have an effective forethought phase but ineffective performance and self-reflection phase are 56 respondents (19%). This suggests that respondents can set specific goals (i.e., preventing premarital sexual behavior) but unable to control and monitor the actions taken as well as to do a self-judgment and evaluation of the effort that was done.

R3 Profile: Respondents who have ineffective forethought phase, ineffective performance phase, but effective self-reflection are 25 respondents (9%). This indicates that respondents have not been able to set goals, control and monitor themselves, but are able to evaluate and assess the actions taken.

R4 Profile: Respondents who have an ineffective forethought but ineffective performance and self-reflection phase are 37 respondents (13%). This illustrates that respondents have not been able to set goals, control and monitoring as well as was unable to make an assessment and evaluation of efforts preventing premarital sexual behavior.

5 DISCUSSION

Adolescence is a period of biological, psychological, and social transition of a person. In this phase, individuals begin to be attracted to sex and are biologically productive. Furthermore, they also begin to be wise, more experienced, and are able to make decisions better during this period (Steinberg, 2014).

Physical and psychological changes make adolescents begin to learn more on abstract concepts such as heterosexual relation, which is known as dating. When adolescents are sexually matured, both men and women start to develop new attitudes and interests toward the opposite sex in various activities that involve both genders. When the sexual maturity has been reached, romantic feelings accompanied by a strong desire to get support from the opposite sex begin to appear (Hurlock, 1980).

Gathering information about sex is also done by starting a relationship with the opposite gender. When teenagers are in a relationship with the opposite sex, they begin to engage in sexual behaviors with their partner. The behavior may start from holding hands, hugging, kissing, and touching the genitals. In preventing these behaviors, self-regulation is needed through three phases of self-regulation (i.e., forethought phase, performance phase, and self-reflection phase) as one of the factors that can prevent premarital sexual behavior among junior high school students in Lhokseumawe.

In preventing premarital sexual behavior among junior high school students in Lhokseumawe, the self-regulation in this study is divided into two categories; effective self-regulation and ineffective self-regulation. The effectiveness or ineffectiveness of self-regulation owned by someone depends on the process or phase of self-regulation itself.

Based on the results of this study, there were 123 people (42%) had an effective level of regulation in preventing premarital sexual behavior. Individuals who have an effective level of regulation in preventing premarital sexual behavior showed an effective forethought phase, an effective performance phase and an effective self-reflection phase. This illustrates that individuals can regulate themselves in achieving their goals. The goal set is to prevent premarital sexual behavior, or long-term goals (goal distal).

In achieving long-term goals, individuals determine short-term goals (proximal goals) such as setting the limits in a relationship as an effort to prevent premarital sexual behavior. In achieving these goals, the individual develops strategies in achieving the stated goals (strategic planning),

namely preventing premarital sexual behavior. Strategies designed to prevent premarital sexual behavior such as avoiding meeting in a quiet place will determine what are the permitted and forbidden behaviors in a relationship.

After setting goals and developing strategies in achieving the goals, then individuals who have effective self-regulation can also motivate themselves in implementing strategies that have been prepared in achieving their goals (self-motivation belief) (i.e., preventing premarital sexual behavior). Individuals can motivate themselves when individuals believe in their abilities, also called self-efficacy, where they can implement strategies to prevent premarital sexual behavior. Therefore, individuals who believe in their abilities may differentiate the things that can and cannot be done in a relationship. Besides, they will be able to refuse their partner's invitation to meet in a quiet place.

When individuals believe in their abilities to implement strategies to prevent premarital sexual behavior, they will be confident in obtaining the expected results, in this case, preventing premarital sexual behavior when meeting a partner. As a result, individuals will then feel more valuable. It is considered as beneficial to them as it makes them motivated in implementing strategies that have been prepared in achieving the goals which can prevent premarital sexual behavior.

After individuals formulate strategies in achieving their goals, the next thing is to implement the strategy (performance phase). When they implement strategies to regulate themselves to prevent premarital sexual behavior, individuals control themselves by focusing on the strategy in achieving the goal of preventing premarital sexual behavior. As in the forethought phase, the individual has devised a strategy for not meeting in a quiet place. Thus, in this case, when invited to meet in a quiet place, the individuals still able to refuse the invitation from their partner even though the partner is angry. This is because the individual controls themselves by focusing on strategies that have been developed in achieving his goals, namely preventing premarital sexual behavior.

After individuals conducted their actions in preventing premarital sexual behavior, individuals who have an effective self-regulation in preventing premarital sexual behavior will monitor (self-observation) the process of strategy implementation. For example, an individual realizes that when meeting with a partner in a crowded place, she or he will avoid the invitation of his partner to engage in premarital sexual behavior.

Based on the monitoring or observations, individuals who have effective self-regulation will conduct an evaluation of the achievements (self-evaluation), strategies and actions that they do in preventing premarital sexual behavior. For example, individuals evaluate that not meeting their partner in a quiet place is the right way to avoid premarital sexual behavior.

This evaluation involves information obtained from conducting monitoring that is associated with certain standards. In addition to that, individuals also evaluate the results obtained in preventing premarital sexual behavior such as failure or success because of their ability or because the effort they did was not optimal (causal attribution). Based on the results of the evaluation, individuals obtain new information related to the process carried out in preventing premarital sexual behavior. This then directs individuals to recompile various alternative strategies in an adaptive manner in developing self-regulation to prevent premarital sexual behavior.

In addition, some individuals were found to have effective self-regulation in preventing premarital sexual behavior while others were not. As seen in table 4.2 which explains the picture of self-regulation is not effective in preventing premarital sexual behavior.

It can be seen from the table that even if one of the phases of self-regulation is ineffective, these individuals fall into the ineffective self-regulation category. This can be seen, first, the forethought and performance phase are effective but self-reflection phase is not effective. This illustrates that individuals can determine a long-term goal specifically to prevent premarital sexual behavior.

Individuals will not only able to determine long-term goals but also the short-term ones such as determining the limitations in a relationship. These short-term goals are set up (proximal goals) to obtain long-term goals that have been set by individuals. Besides, these short-term goals are set because they are more easily to be achieved by individuals. When individuals can achieve short-term goals, they will be excited to obtain the goals set (Zimmerman, 2000).

Furthermore, after setting the goals, to achieve these goals, individuals may develop strategies that they can be used in order to achieve these goals (strategic planning). For instance, strategies designed to prevent premarital sexual behavior is to choose a crowded place to meet their partner. This suggests that individuals can analyze the tasks that they can do in preventing premarital sexual behavior. When individuals can set goals and develop strategies in achieving them, they will be more motivated in

achieving goals that have been set (self-motivation belief).

Individuals can motivate themselves because individuals believe in their abilities to achieve the planned goals. For example, when an individual believes in his/her ability to reject the partner's invitation to engage in premarital sexual behavior, based on this belief, individuals may have confident to do avoid the occurrence of premarital sexual behavior (self-efficacy).

After setting goals and formulating strategies, individuals' self-belief will motivate themselves to prevent premarital sexual behavior. Hence, in performance phase, individuals may implement strategies that have been prepared in the forethought phase. In carrying out these strategies, individuals can control themselves (self-control) by staying focused in implementing strategies that have been prepared in preventing premarital sexual behavior. For example, individuals still refuse partners to engage in premarital sexual behavior even though their partners threaten to break their relationship.

After implementing a strategy in an effort to prevent premarital sexual behavior, individuals can monitor their actions in an effort to prevent premarital sexual behavior. An example of this monitoring process is that individuals realize when they meet with their partner in a crowded place; they can avoid the invitation of their partner to engage in a premarital sexual behavior.

Although individuals can set goals, develop strategies, motivate and control themselves and can monitor efforts to prevent premarital sexual behavior, individuals may fail in self-reflection to do an assessment and evaluation of the results, strategies, and actions in an effort to prevent premarital sexual behavior. This happens because individuals do not relate the information obtained from the monitoring to certain standards.

Additionally, individuals who have ineffective self-reflection are also not able to assess their actions and the results they have obtained, such as assessing the results obtained in preventing premarital sexual behavior due to the effort owned by the individuals or due to the ability they have. Hence, individuals who do not possess effective self-regulation will judge (causal attribution) on their success or failure in achieving goals that they cannot control such as their abilities. Individuals' inability to do an evaluation on the efforts made in preventing premarital sexual behavior is due to defensive individuals. Based on the evaluation results, the individual will re-set the goals to be achieved in the next process.

Ineffective self-regulation does not only stem from one ineffective phase but also occurs when an individual has two ineffective self-regulation phases as seen in the table 4.2, explaining the ineffective picture of self-regulation in preventing premarital sexual behavior. First, the description of ineffective self-regulation with effective forethought phase yet ineffective performance and self-reflection will be described. Such circumstance illustrates that individuals can set goals, both long-term goals that prevent premarital sexual behavior, and short-term goals such as determining the limit in a relationship. After the individuals set their goals, the next process is to develop strategies that they can achieve (strategic planning). The strategies developed as an effort to prevent premarital sexual behavior are to avoid partner's video calls at night with and not to meet their partner in a quiet place.

When individuals can set goals and develop strategies in an effort to achieve their goals to prevent premarital sexual behavior, they will be motivated in implementing the strategies that have been developed in achieving their goals to prevent premarital sexual behavior (self-motivation belief). This is because individuals believe in their ability to achieve the goals and implement strategies that have been prepared in an effort to prevent premarital sexual behavior. Although individuals can set goals, develop strategies and motivate themselves in achieving these goals, they may fail in the performance phase as they are not able to control themselves and monitor the performance as an effort to prevent premarital sexual behavior.

One possible reason for an ineffective self-control in implementing the strategy is the absence of self-instruction when carrying out a strategy. For example, individuals may tell themselves to refuse a partner's invitation to meet in a quiet place, then avoid to make a phone call if the partner suggest a video call at night. The ineffectiveness of self-control is also due to individuals inability to use imagery techniques to prevent premarital sexual behavior

Moreover, individuals also are not able to focus on what they are doing as an effort to prevent premarital sexual behavior because individuals are unable to ignore the external processes or events which can affect self-control. For example, individuals may be able to refuse their partners to engage in premarital sexual behavior even though the couple threatens to break up or fight in public places.

Next, individuals are also unable to monitor the results and consequences from the performance that they did as an effort to prevent premarital sexual behavior. When individuals are unable to carry out monitoring, then they are not able to provide

information that will be used to carry out an evaluation of the performance displayed; it will affect the results.

Thus, in self-reflection phase, individuals cannot perform self-judgment and self-reaction to the results, strategies, and implementation processes in preventing premarital sexual behavior by evaluating their own observations. For instance, individuals conduct an assessment of their own actions by avoiding meeting their partner in a quiet place to prevent premarital sexual behavior. Another way that can be done is to refuse the partners' invitation to meet at night as it is viewed as a bad thing.

When individuals are not able to conduct an evaluation, it will affect the causal attribution or the process related to the results; whether the performance is related to their limitations or non-optimal efforts. Individuals who have ineffective self-regulation will attribute the success or failure in achieving their goals to things they cannot control such as their capacity. For example, individuals may conclude that their failure to prevent premarital sexual behavior is influenced by their ability. Hence, individuals feel dissatisfied with the results achieved as an effort to prevent premarital sexual behavior that affects the results. When the individuals feel dissatisfied with the results, they will reorganize their objectives adaptively or can be defensive.

6 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the majority of secondary school students in Lhokseumawe have an ineffective level of self-regulation in the prevention of premarital sexual behavior. Therefore, there is a need for interventions designed to improve the effectiveness of self-regulation as a way to prevent premarital sexual behavior. The intervention program used in the study was a training using role play technique which is aimed at increasing the effectiveness of self-regulation as an effort to prevent premarital sexual behavior in junior high school students in Lhokseumawe.

It is also can be conclude from the result of the study that an intervention to increase self-regulation to prevent premarital sexual behavior indeed is needed. While improving self-regulation would not be enough by improving only one phase, it is important to give equal attention to each phase (Zimmerman as cited in Boekaerts, 2000). This is because each phase or process that forms self-regulation is interconnected and influences each

other. Therefore, to improve self-regulation in preventing premarital sexual behavior is conducted by providing an intervention in forethought, performance, and self-reflection phase.

The intervention can be done in form of training in which self-regulation is thought to prevent premarital sexual behavior. However, the training should also include other methods such as lectures, discussions and simulations. In general, the approach used in the intervention is experimental learning with role play techniques that aims to provide participants insights based on prior knowledge. This intervention was designed based on the learning taxonomy proposed by Bloom (as cited in Krathwohl, 2002) in order to facilitate the provision of material. Bloom (as cited in Krathwohl, 2002) identified three domains of learning which are cognitive domain, effective domain and psychomotor domain.

The intervention designed in this study is aimed for junior high school students in Lhokseumawe. The purpose of this program is to improve the self-regulation of junior high school students in Lhokseumawe to prevent premarital sexual behavior. The training is carried out in 3 phases that are Phase I, to increase the forethought phase; Phase 2, to improve performance, and Phase 3, to increase the self-reflection.

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