

A Self-Control Training Intervention to Reduce Risky Sexual Behavior Tendencies Among Junior High School Students

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Abstract

Adolescence is characterized by identity exploration and curiosity about sexuality. Lack of sex education and weak self-control can encourage sexual behavior that is not appropriate for their stage of development. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of self-control training interventions in reducing risky sexual behavior among adolescents. The subjects consisted of 79 students from SMPN 37 Bandung aged 12–16 years, selected using purposive sampling. The study design employed a one-group pretest-posttest approach. The measurement tool used in this study was the Adolescent Dating Sexual Behavior Scale with high reliability (CR = 0.946). Data analysis using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test revealed a Z value of -3.546 with a significance level of $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the self-control training conducted had a significant effect in reducing risky sexual behavior among adolescents. This program is recommended as a school-based preventive strategy to strengthen adolescents' psychosocial resilience in facing social pressures and sexual temptations.

Keywords: Self-control, Risky sexual behavior, Adolescents

1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a crucial developmental stage characterized by significant physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes. The World Health Organization (2002) defines adolescents as individuals aged 10 to 19 years who are undergoing a transition from childhood to adulthood. During this stage, adolescents experience sexual maturation, identity exploration, and the development of independence (Purwanza et al., 2017). From a developmental psychology perspective, adolescents face considerable challenges in adapting to rapid physical changes, particularly those related to sexual growth and development (Fakhruddiana et al., 2022). These changes can have various psychological implications across cognitive, emotional, and social domains.

According to Fitriary and Muslimin (2009), adolescents have a high level of curiosity and broad interests, including social issues and sexuality-related topics. In seeking to satisfy their curiosity, adolescents tend to be interested in five major topics related to sexuality: sexual intercourse, dating, birth control, love and marriage, and sexually transmitted diseases (Tajiri, 2010; Fitriary & Muslimin, 2009). Sexual behavior, whether heterosexual or homosexual, refers to behaviors motivated by sexual urges or desires. During adolescence, such behaviors may take various forms, ranging from holding hands, hugging, and kissing on the cheek or lips to touching sensitive body parts, such as the breasts, vagina, or penis. Sexual behavior may also include petting, involving the rubbing of sensitive body areas with a partner, and sexual intercourse involving penile-vaginal penetration (Sarwono, 2012). The increasing engagement of adolescents in sexual activities, accompanied by high levels of curiosity about sexual issues that are not adequately addressed through appropriate education, may increase their vulnerability to becoming victims or perpetrators of sexual abuse.

Adolescents' lack of readiness to manage sexual urges and relationships with the opposite sex may place them at greater risk of engaging in risky dating behaviors or sexual behaviors that are inconsistent with their developmental stage. According to the National Population and Family Planning Agency (Badan Kependudukan dan Keluarga Berencana [BKKBN]), adolescents are among the groups most vulnerable to sexual violence. BKKBN defines adolescents as individuals aged 10–24 years who are unmarried. Sexual violence against adolescents encompasses sexual activities directed toward adolescents through coercion or threats by adults or peers (Amatulah & Hastuti, 2022).

The prevalence of sexual violence among adolescents aged 12–18 years in Indonesia remains high (Suharmanto et al., 2024). Data from 2022 indicated that approximately 8% of girls, equivalent to 10 million individuals, and 0.7% of boys, equivalent to 791,000 individuals, under the age of 18 had experienced sexual violence. Experiencing sexual violence during childhood or adolescence may increase survivors' vulnerability to revictimization later in life. Nearly one-third of rape survivors reported having experienced rape between the ages of 11 and 17 (Raj et al., 2022). The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak [KPPPA]) also recorded approximately 7,000 cases of sexual violence against children in 2021, compared with 6,454 cases in 2019 and 6,980 cases in 2020. Furthermore, approximately one in 17 boys and one in 11 girls have experienced sexual violence. These figures may underestimate the actual prevalence, as they do not include cases that remain unreported or undetected (Amatulah & Hastuti, 2022).

Data from the Bandung City Office for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak [DP3A] Kota Bandung) in 2023 recorded 303 cases of violence against children, with sexual violence being the most frequently reported type of case (DP3A Kota Bandung, 2024). The high proportion of female (78.57%) and male (21.43%) child victims indicates that adolescents constitute a vulnerable population in the context of sexual violence, both as potential victims and perpetrators (Aurellia, 2024). Sexual behavior among adolescents, whether consensual or coerced, may have negative short- and long-term consequences, including psychological distress, decreased academic performance, and an increased risk of legal problems (Santrock, 2018; WHO, 2021).

Sexual violence may function as a contributing factor to risky sexual behavior. For example, individuals who have witnessed or experienced sexual violence may internalize such behaviors and subsequently reproduce them (Setiawan & Hidayati, 2020). Conversely, poorly regulated sexual urges may be associated with inadequate self-control, which can contribute to maladaptive or deviant behaviors and, in some cases, criminal acts (Baumeister et al., 2007). These findings underscore the importance of interventions that support adolescents in developing self-control over their sexual behavior, thereby reducing their risk of engaging in risky sexual behavior and sexual violence.

In West Java Province, recent data recorded 1,666 reported cases of sexual violence in 2023, involving 491 male victims and 1,399 female victims (KemenPPPA, 2024). The highest number of reported cases was recorded in Bekasi City, with 192 cases, while Bandung City ranked third, with a total of 149 cases (KemenPPPA, 2024). The Bandung City Office for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak [DP3A]) recorded 303 cases of violence against children in Bandung City in 2023. Sexual violence was the most frequently reported form of violence against children, accounting for 112 cases. Of these cases, 78.57% (88 cases) involved female victims, while 21.43% (24 cases) involved male victims (Aurellia, 2024).

Sexual violence and abuse can occur in various contexts and may be perpetrated by individuals known to or in positions of authority over the victim, particularly affecting adolescents. In February 2024, for example, a case of sexual abuse involving a female junior high school student in Baleendah, Bandung, allegedly perpetrated by a teacher, was reported (Lalana, 2024; Yusuf, 2024). A similar case was reported in August 2024 in the Bandung area, involving a neighbor as the alleged perpetrator of sexual abuse against a minor (Bandung Info, 2024). Another case occurred in 2022, when a 12-year-old adolescent reportedly engaged in sexual abuse against a peer, which was attributed to an addiction to pornography (Permadi & Arief, 2022).

Sexual behavior among adolescents, whether consensual or coerced, may have negative short- and long-term consequences, including psychological distress, decreased academic performance, and an increased risk of legal problems (Santrock, 2018; WHO, 2021; Ramadhani & Nurwati, 2023). Sexual violence may also serve as a contributing factor to risky sexual behavior. For example, adolescents who have witnessed or experienced sexual violence may internalize such behaviors and subsequently reproduce them (Khalimah, 2025). Conversely, poorly regulated sexual urges may be associated with inadequate self-control, which may contribute to maladaptive or deviant behaviors and, in some cases, criminal acts (Lobwaer & Wibowo, 2023). These findings underscore the importance of interventions that help adolescents develop self-control over their sexual behavior, thereby reducing their risk of engaging in risky sexual behavior and sexual violence.

Risky sexual behavior among adolescents may be considered an iceberg phenomenon, in which only a small proportion of cases are reported, while the actual prevalence in the community may be substantially higher. The persistence of adolescent sexuality-related problems may be influenced by multiple factors, including relatively lenient legal sanctions, hormonal changes, psychological development, advances in information technology, changing lifestyles, and societal perceptions that continue to regard sexual violence as a taboo issue. Sociocultural factors may also contribute to this phenomenon, including gender discrimination and the perception that sexual violence is a source of shame or disgrace that should be concealed (Ermaya et al., 2018).

The increasing number of reported cases of sexual violence and abuse against minors has prompted further investigation to verify information circulating on social media against factual data obtained from official institutions. Based on confirmation from the Bandung City Office for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak [DP3A]) and the Regional Technical Implementation Unit for the Protection of Women and Children (Unit Pelaksana Teknis Daerah Perlindungan Perempuan dan Anak [UPTD PPA]) in Bandung City, a recent case of sexual abuse and violence involving a female student at SMPN 37 Bandung and a male peer was confirmed and remained under investigation and handling at the time of the study. The case was officially reported by the school to the DP3A following a complaint from the victim's parents and was supported by relevant evidence.

Direct observations conducted at SMPN 37 Bandung also indicated the presence of various forms of risky sexual behavior among students. The school principal confirmed that reports of risky sexual behavior among adolescents at the school had been submitted to the DP3A, including a reported case involving two ninth-grade students who engaged in sexual intercourse on school premises and seventh-grade students who accessed pornographic videos. Interviews with ninth-grade students further revealed a concerning

pattern in which many students had entered dating relationships that were perceived to involve unhealthy sexual behaviors.

The identified cases included requests for sexually explicit photographs, intimate behaviors within the school environment, relationships with adults that may involve grooming, and the exchange of sexual content with students from other schools. These cases may reflect difficulties in students' ability to regulate sexual urges and make appropriate decisions regarding intimate behaviors. Difficulties in refusing inappropriate requests, establishing boundaries in relationships, and considering long-term consequences may indicate inadequate self-control, which is an important protective factor for adolescents. The psychological impact of these experiences was also evident in the case of a seventh-grade female student who transferred to another school after feeling ashamed when the incident became widely known, as well as in reported self-harm following relationship-related conflict. Although the school has implemented support mechanisms through counseling services at the Sekolah Siaga Kependudukan (SSK) and involved parents in the handling of these cases, the phenomenon has continued to occur.

Based on the need assessment conducted with various relevant stakeholders, a significant phenomenon of risky sexual behavior was identified among junior high school students, with difficulties in self-control over sexual behavior emerging as a prominent characteristic. Further analysis identified several key contributing factors, including adolescents' high levels of curiosity about romantic relationships and sexuality, peer pressure, and limited understanding of behavioral boundaries and long-term consequences. Adolescents' motivation to engage in romantic relationships or risky sexual behaviors may be driven by the desire for social acceptance and identity exploration, without adequate awareness of the potential risks involved. These factors are closely associated with self-control, which plays an important role in regulating adolescents' sexual behavior. This relationship is supported by Putri and Ariana (2021), who examined dating behavior among adolescents in Surabaya and found that higher levels of self-control were associated with lower levels of sexual behavior, whereas lower levels of self-control were associated with higher levels of sexual behavior.

The high prevalence of risky sexual behavior at SMPN 37 Bandung highlights the importance of addressing internal factors that influence adolescents' ability to regulate themselves in the face of sexual temptations. This condition is reflected in the occurrence of risky dating behaviors, pornography consumption, and sexual harassment among peers, indicating adolescents' vulnerability to problematic sexual behaviors. To date, the responses provided by the DP3A and UPTD PPA have primarily focused on reactive measures and have not sufficiently addressed the underlying factors contributing to these behaviors. One potential underlying factor is inadequate self-control, particularly in regulating sexual urges and making healthy decisions regarding sexuality. Although the government has developed child protection policies and implemented public awareness campaigns, preventive interventions aimed at strengthening self-control among students in public schools remain limited. The absence of a structured psychoeducational program at SMPN 37 Bandung therefore represents an important gap that needs to be addressed. In this context, psychoeducation that is contextualized, communicative, and developmentally appropriate for adolescents is needed. Interactive and relevant learning materials that are connected to students' everyday experiences, combined with participatory and non-judgmental approaches, may enhance students' engagement and understanding of the importance of self-control. These conditions provided the rationale for implementing a psychoeducational intervention at SMPN 37 Bandung, particularly given the school's recent experience with several reported cases of risky sexual behavior among students. This

situation underscores the urgency of implementing direct and contextually relevant preventive efforts that focus on strengthening self-control as a resource for adolescents in managing social pressures and navigating peer relationships within the school environment.

This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of a self-control training intervention as a preventive effort to reduce risky sexual behavior among adolescents. The intervention was designed to strengthen self-control as a key capacity for regulating sexual urges and making healthy decisions. Through a psychoeducational program tailored to the context and characteristics of the students, the intervention sought to help adolescents understand potential risks, recognize personal boundaries, and strengthen their ability to manage social pressure and sexual temptations within the school environment. As an early preventive effort, the program was expected to reduce the potential for risky sexual behavior while fostering more adaptive patterns of thinking and attitudes during adolescence. The findings of this study may serve as a reference for developing similar preventive programs in other schools and contribute to educational policies that are more responsive to adolescents' psychosocial developmental needs. Therefore, this study examined the effectiveness of a self-control training intervention in reducing risky sexual behavior among students at SMPN 37 Bandung.

2. METHOD

This study employed an experimental research design using a quantitative approach. A one-group pretest–posttest design was used, involving a single experimental group without a control group. This design is commonly used in pilot studies, particularly when the number of participants is limited (Christensen, 2004). The research design is illustrated in Figure 1.

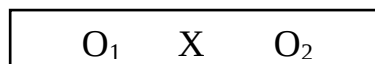


Figure 1. Research Design

Notes:

O1: First measurement (pretest)

X : Intervention

O2: Second measurement (posttest)

The experiment was conducted in a classroom-based group setting, in which all participants received the same intervention simultaneously. The one-group pretest–posttest design enabled the researchers to examine differences in participants' scores between the pretest and posttest measurements. The pretest and posttest data from the experimental group were subsequently analyzed to determine the effect of the intervention on changes in scores from pretest to posttest. The scores represented participants' levels of self-control, which were measured using a self-control scale. The intervention consisted of a psychoeducational self-control training program designed to examine changes in adolescents' risky sexual behavior. The researchers developed a training module based on the self-control theory proposed by Muraven and Baumeister (2000). The content and training module underwent a content validity assessment through expert judgment prior to implementation. The intervention was entitled "Self-Control as a Compass: To Guide Sexual Behavior Among Teenagers." The title was chosen to emphasize the role of self-control as a compass that can guide adolescents in making appropriate decisions and help them avoid risky sexual behavior.

The participants in this study were adolescents who met the predetermined inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria were as follows: (1) adolescents aged 13–15 years and (2) students enrolled at SMPN 37 Bandung. Participants were recruited using convenience sampling, which is a non-probability sampling technique in which participants are selected based on their accessibility to the researcher, perceived suitability for the study, willingness to participate, and fulfillment of the predetermined inclusion criteria (Siregar, 2017).

Data collection in this study involved psychological scales, observation, and activity evaluation. The instrument used was the Sexual Behavior Scale for Dating Adolescents developed by Yulianto (2020). The scale consists of several categories for assessing sexual behavior among adolescents, based on Walker's (2005) theoretical framework, namely touching, kissing, necking, petting, and intercourse. These categories represent a progression of behaviors based on their level of intimacy, with touching representing the lowest level of intimacy and intercourse representing the highest.

The scale consists of 11 statements (items), all of which are favorable items, meaning that each item is designed to assess the sexual behaviors being measured. An example of an item is, "Saya pernah berpegangan tangan dengan pacar". Each item was rated using a binary response format, with a score of 1 for "agree" and 0 for "disagree." The results of the analysis indicated that the scale demonstrated good validity, with a Composite Reliability (CR) coefficient of 0.946, indicating that the scale has high reliability and can be used to measure premarital sexual behavior among adolescents with adequate consistency.

The study began with the identification of the main research topic. The preparation stage involved a literature review and an exploration of current phenomena by examining relevant sources related to the research topic. Subsequently, the research team identified an appropriate setting for the intervention. The researchers visited the Department of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (DPPPA) and the Regional Technical Implementation Unit for Women and Child Protection (UPTD PPPA) to obtain information regarding current phenomena and recommendations for potential research sites that had an urgent need for the proposed intervention program.

The research team then developed a training module entitled Self-Control as a Compass: To Guide Sexual Behavior Among Teenagers, which served as the intervention protocol in the experimental study. The training module was subsequently reviewed by experts through professional judgment to establish its content validity. Following this process, the researchers obtained the necessary research permissions.

The experimental intervention was conducted with the experimental group, in which participants were divided into two groups based on gender: male adolescents and female adolescents. This separation was intended to provide participants with a comfortable and supportive environment in which they could freely express themselves and openly discuss the topics presented throughout the sessions. Each session lasted approximately one hour and was conducted over a two-week period.

During the first week, the intervention focused on "The Concept of Risky Sexual Behavior among Adolescents." The materials covered an introduction to the phenomenon, developmental tasks that adolescents are expected to accomplish, boundaries of healthy dating behavior, identification of various forms of risky sexual behavior, and the importance of self-control in managing sexual urges.

The second week focused on "The Concept of Self-Control among Adolescents." The materials addressed an understanding of the concept of self-control, awareness of the importance of self-control in everyday life, particularly in the context of romantic relationships and sexual behavior, practical strategies for developing self-control, and the application of self-control in romantic relationships and sexual behavior. The session also

strengthened participants' understanding of strategies for preventing and responding to sexual harassment and encouraged them to become agents of change in preventing sexual harassment. Changes in risky sexual behavior among adolescents were assessed by comparing pretest and posttest scores. The researchers subsequently conducted statistical analyses of the collected data to test the research hypotheses. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the results of the data analysis.

The data obtained in this study were analyzed using a paired-samples t-test when the assumption of normality was met. If the normality assumption was not met, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test was employed. These analyses were conducted to compare pretest and posttest scores within the same group of participants, specifically the pretest and posttest scores of the experimental group. A probability value or Sig. (2-tailed) < 0.05 was considered indicative of a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores, suggesting that the intervention had a significant effect on the dependent variable. Conversely, a Sig. (2-tailed) > 0.05 indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores, suggesting that the intervention did not have a significant effect on the dependent variable.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the implementation of the psychoeducational program entitled "*Self-Control for Sexual Behavior among Adolescents*," with the program title "*Self-Control as a Compass: To Guide Sexual Behavior among Teenagers*," which was conducted in October 2024, a total of 80 participants initially took part in the program. However, during the second week, one female participant was absent due to illness. Therefore, a total of 79 participants were included in the data analysis, with the following details:

Table 3. Participant Characteristics

Characteristic	Participants (N = 79)	Mean (SD)
Gender		
Male	40 (50.63%)	
Female	39 (49.37%)	
Age		14.10 (0.974)
Dating Status		
Currently dating	20 (25.32%)	
Previously dated	39 (49.37%)	
Never dated	20 (25.32%)	

Based on Table 3, the characteristics of the participants who took part in the psychoeducational program are presented comprehensively. A total of 79 participants completed the program, comprising 40 male students (50.63%) and 39 female students (49.37%). Participants ranged in age from 12 to 16 years, with a mean age of 14.10 years (SD = 0.974). The largest proportion of participants was 14 years old, comprising 31 participants (38.75%). In terms of gender, male participants constituted the larger proportion, with 40 participants (50.63%).

Then, descriptive results based on dating status indicated that 20 students (25.32%) were currently dating, 39 students (49.37%) were not currently dating but

had previously dated, and 20 students (25.32%) had never dated. These findings indicate that the majority of students (74.68%) had previous or current dating experience, whereas students who had never dated represented a smaller proportion of the sample.

This study was conducted to examine the effect of a psychoeducational intervention entitled “*Self-Control as a Compass: To Guide Sexual Behavior among Teenagers*” on reducing risky sexual behavior among adolescents. The intervention was conducted at SMPN 37 Bandung, with a sample of 79 students. A one-group pretest–posttest design was employed, with data collected through a pretest administered before the intervention and a posttest administered after the intervention. The intervention was delivered by third-semester students of the Master of Psychology Program at Universitas Padjadjaran, who served as facilitators and took turns delivering the material across sessions. The program consisted of four sessions conducted over a two-week period on Thursdays and Fridays, with male and female students placed in separate groups. During the first week, the sessions focused on “*Risky Sexual Behavior among Adolescents*,” while the second week focused on “*Self-Control among Adolescents*.”

The delivery of the intervention materials was intended to provide adolescents with a comprehensive understanding of two important and interrelated aspects of their development. During the first week, the topic of “*Risky Sexual Behavior among Adolescents*” aimed to increase adolescents’ awareness of the potential risks and consequences of irresponsible sexual behavior, while also providing knowledge on ways to protect themselves from situations that may pose risks to their physical and mental health.

During the second week, the topic of “*The Concept of Self-Control among Adolescents*” aimed to equip adolescents with self-regulation skills, which are essential for managing various temptations and social pressures, particularly in the context of sexual behavior. The materials were delivered through lectures and discussions. This instructional approach enables information to be conveyed efficiently to a large audience simultaneously (Tambak, 2014).

Table 4. Results of the Normality Test

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Sig.*
Pretest - Posttest	0.371	0.000

The statistical analysis began with a test of the normality assumption using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test to determine the distribution of the data. Table 4 presents the results of the normality test, which yielded a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the data did not meet the assumption of normality. Therefore, the analysis proceeded using a non-parametric statistical approach.

The hypothesis was tested using the *Wilcoxon signed-rank test* to examine differences in scores before and after the intervention (Table 5). The results showed a Z value of -3.546 with a significance value of $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$), indicating a statistically significant difference between pretest and posttest scores. These findings suggest that the psychoeducational intervention was associated with a significant reduction in risky sexual behavior among adolescents.

Tabel 5. Results of the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test

	N	Mean	Z	Sig.*
<i>Pre-test</i>	79	12.71	-3.546	0.000
<i>Post-test</i>	79	11.95		

A further examination of changes in risky sexual behavior by gender revealed several notable findings. As shown in Figure 5, both gender groups demonstrated changes following the psychoeducational intervention. Among male adolescents, the mean score for risky sexual behavior decreased from 12.97 at pretest to 12.17 at posttest, representing a decrease of 0.80 points. A similar pattern was observed among female adolescents, whose mean score decreased from 12.45 at pretest to 11.725 at posttest, representing a decrease of 0.72 points. These findings indicate that the psychoeducational program was associated with a reduction in risky sexual behavior among both male and female adolescents. The reduction in scores was slightly greater among male adolescents than among female adolescents, with a difference of 0.08 points in the magnitude of the decrease. Despite this difference in the magnitude of change, both gender groups showed a positive response to the intervention.



Gambar 5. Rerata Nilai *Pretest-Posttest* Berdasarkan Jenis Kelamin

Based on the analysis of adolescents' dating behavior presented in Table 6, several predominant forms of behavior were identified among adolescents in romantic relationships. The most frequently reported behavior was holding hands with a partner in public, which had the highest mean score of 1.71, followed by holding hands with a boyfriend or girlfriend while walking, with a mean score of 1.62. These findings suggest that mild physical contact, such as holding hands, represents one of the most common forms of expressing intimacy among adolescents in romantic relationships.

Meanwhile, behaviors involving more intimate forms of physical contact, such as hugging a partner and touching a partner's chest, had the same mean score of 1.14, whereas kissing a partner's chest had the lowest mean score of 1.03. This pattern indicates a gradation in adolescents' dating behaviors, whereby the

frequency of behavior tends to decrease as the level of physical intimacy increases. These findings suggest that although adolescents engage in various forms of dating behavior, they tend to engage more frequently in forms of physical contact that remain within socially accepted norms. Although these dating behaviors were relatively low in intensity, the observed pattern warrants serious attention as a preventive measure, as less intimate forms of physical contact may represent an early stage in the progression toward more intimate sexual behavior.

More specifically, Table 6 presents the results of the analysis following the psychoeducational intervention and indicates meaningful changes in adolescents' dating behavior. A consistent decrease was observed across all measured behavioral aspects, although the magnitude of change varied by behavior. Holding hands while walking showed the largest decrease of 0.25 points, from 1.62 at pretest to 1.37 at posttest, followed by holding a partner's hand, which decreased by 0.19 points, from 1.71 to 1.52. Hugging a partner also decreased by 0.06 points, from 1.14 to 1.08.

Positive changes were also observed in behaviors involving higher levels of intimacy. Touching a partner's chest decreased by 0.11 points, from 1.14 to 1.03, whereas kissing a partner's chest decreased by 0.02 points, from 1.03 to 1.00. These findings suggest that the psychoeducational program was associated with changes in adolescents' dating behavior in a more desirable direction.

Table 6. Adolescent Dating Behavior

No.	Statement	Pretest	Posttest	Change Score	Description
1	"Saya memegang tangan pacar saya"	1.71	1.52	0.19	Decreased
2	"Saya memeluk pacar saya"	1.14	1.08	0.06	Decreased
3	"Saya bergandengan tangan dengan pacar saya Ketika sedang berjalan"	1.62	1.37	0.25	Decreased
4	"Saya meraba dada pacar saya Ketika ia berpakaian lengkap"	1.14	1.03	0.11	Decreased
5	"Saya mencium dada pacar saya Ketika ia masih berpakaian lengkap"	1.03	1.00	0.02	Decreased

The observed reductions in scores across several risky sexual behaviors that were frequently reported by adolescents provide empirical support for the potential effectiveness of the intervention in increasing adolescents' awareness of the

importance of maintaining appropriate physical boundaries in relationships with the opposite sex. The psychoeducational program demonstrated potential as a preventive intervention for reducing or preventing risky sexual behavior among adolescents. Its effectiveness was reflected in decreased engagement across various forms of dating behavior, ranging from mild physical contact to more intimate behaviors. These findings provide an empirical basis for the development of more comprehensive intervention programs aimed at preventing the escalation of risky sexual behavior among adolescents.

DISCUSSION

The intervention entitled “*Self-Control over Sexual Behavior among Adolescents*” aimed to provide psychological education regarding sexual behavior during adolescence and to help adolescents protect themselves by strengthening their self-control over sexual impulses. Based on the findings presented in the Results section, the majority of students at SMPN 37 Bandung had experienced romantic relationships. A total of 59 students reported having been in a romantic relationship, while 39 students reported that they were not currently in a relationship at the time of data collection but had previous experience with romantic relationships. During adolescence, individuals undergo substantial physical, emotional, and social changes that may significantly influence their sexual behavior, particularly with the onset of puberty (Hurlock, 1999).

Puberty is characterized by breast development in females, maturation of the reproductive organs, and hormonal changes that contribute to the emergence of sexual urges. Emotionally, adolescents are in a developmental stage characterized by identity exploration and may experience sexual urges that influence their attitudes toward romantic relationships and sexual exploration. Socially, interactions with peers and exposure to sexual content through mass media also contribute to shaping their perceptions and behaviors. Sexuality education and knowledge of reproductive health are therefore crucial, while cultural and religious values further influence adolescents’ perspectives on sexual morality (Ramdhani & Asfari, 2023). Accordingly, it is developmentally normative for adolescents to become increasingly curious about and explore their sexuality, including through initiating romantic relationships with individuals of the opposite sex.

Within the context of romantic relationships, adolescent sexual behavior encompasses various stages, ranging from kissing and light petting to more intensive forms of physical intimacy and sexual intercourse (Yulianto, 2020). However, it is important to prevent adolescents from exploring their sexuality in ways that may lead to risky sexual behaviors, particularly when parents, schools, and mass media often provide limited information on these topics due to the perception that sexuality remains a taboo subject for discussion. Consequently, adolescents may seek information from sources outside their immediate environment, including electronic media, peers, and social media (Retania, Hasfi, & Luqman, 2023). This issue was also reflected in interviews conducted with several students regarding whether they had previously received information or education on the topics addressed in the intervention. The students reported that they had never discussed these topics in depth, particularly with their parents, due

to feelings of embarrassment and the perception that sexuality was a taboo subject to discuss. Therefore, appropriate sexuality education and open communication are essential in supporting adolescents to make more informed decisions and develop greater self-control in regulating their sexual behavior.

The psychoeducational intervention focusing on self-control demonstrated an impact on reducing the intensity of sexual behavior among adolescents, as indicated by the significant results of the *Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test*. A reduction in the intensity of sexual behavior was observed among both male and female students following the intervention. This finding was further supported by observations and notes from the question-and-answer discussions conducted during the intervention. Several students actively raised questions, including how to avoid becoming addicted to pornography, how to respond to friends who make sexually inappropriate jokes, how to refuse invitations from friends or romantic partners to engage in physical intimacy, such as holding hands, hugging, or kissing, without offending the other person, and what constitutes a healthy romantic relationship. These questions may reflect changes in participants' perceptions and an emerging willingness to modify their behavior toward more positive and adaptive patterns. This finding is consistent with Rahayu et al. (2021), who reported that sexuality education for adolescents can effectively improve their knowledge and understanding of sexuality-related issues. Similarly, a recent study by Afifi and Alfian (2023) found that self-control training among adolescents increased participants' knowledge and understanding, as reflected in changes in their perceptions of risky sexual behavior toward more adaptive perspectives.

Overall, the adolescent participants in this study had not extensively engaged in sexual behaviors. As indicated in the results table, all participants reported that they had never engaged in high-risk sexual behaviors involving removing a partner's clothing or engaging in sexual intercourse. Nevertheless, a small number of adolescents may have engaged in such behaviors. This is supported by the needs assessment conducted with the school principal, who identified several recent cases at the school involving students who had engaged in risky sexual behavior. Specifically, two student couples were involved in cases of risky sexual behavior and subsequently faced disciplinary action resulting in their removal from the school. In addition, one student was reportedly found watching pornographic videos. These findings suggest that although such behaviors may have been reported by only a small proportion of students, they may warrant attention because continued exposure and engagement could contribute to the normalization of risky sexual behaviors among other adolescents. Repeated exposure to pornographic content may be associated with the progression of sexual behaviors among adolescents, beginning with physical contact such as holding hands and kissing, followed by touching or fondling, and potentially progressing toward more intimate sexual activities, including oral sex and sexual intercourse (Syafitriani et al., 2022; Mariani & Arsy, 2017).

Based on the gender comparison, only slight differences were observed in the pretest and posttest scores for the intensity of sexual behavior between male and female students. The scores were slightly higher among male students, decreasing from 12.975 at pretest to 12.175 at posttest, whereas the scores among female

students decreased from 12.450 to 11.725. This finding is consistent with previous reports indicating that, across countries, adolescent males tend to have higher levels of involvement in premarital sexual behavior than adolescent females (Sarlito, 2016). These findings further suggest that the intervention contributed to a reduction in the intensity of risky sexual behavior among adolescents by enhancing their knowledge and understanding of sexual behavior and providing them with strategies to exercise self-control over their sexual impulses.

Self-control refers to an individual's ability to take action or employ alternative responses to prevent or reduce the impact of undesirable stimuli or events. It also reflects an individual's capacity to regulate behavior in accordance with moral values and to contribute positively to society (Baumeister, 2007). Self-control plays an important role in preventing sexual behavior that may place adolescents at risk. Individuals with good self-control are better able to suppress maladaptive impulses, including sexual urges and behaviors, whether these impulses originate internally or are influenced by external factors (Putri & Ariana, 2021). Therefore, following the provision of knowledge about sexuality, the changes experienced during puberty, and strategies for protecting oneself through self-control, participants who received the intervention were expected to become better able to regulate their behavior in response to sexual impulses.

This study has several limitations. First, the study population was limited to students from SMPN 37 Bandung, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to the broader adolescent population in Indonesia or to adolescents from other regions with different social and cultural contexts. Second, the relatively short duration of the intervention limits the extent to which its long-term effects can be determined, and the behavioral changes observed may be temporary. Third, the interview data obtained from students may be subject to response bias, particularly because participants may have been reluctant to disclose behaviors perceived as sensitive, taboo, or embarrassing. This may have affected the accuracy of the findings regarding adolescents' sexual behavior.

To broaden the impact of this intervention, schools are encouraged to provide comprehensive sexuality education covering sexuality, reproductive health, and self-control, and to integrate these topics into the school curriculum through an approach that addresses biological, social, and psychological aspects. The role of parents at home should also be strengthened by fostering open communication regarding sexuality and self-control, supported by training that enables parents to serve as effective sources of accurate and appropriate information. Strengthening communication among students, parents, counselors, and relevant professionals is also important. In addition, schools should provide psychological support and counseling services to help mitigate the potential negative psychological consequences associated with students' difficulties and psychosocial concerns.

Thus, the intervention program is expected to be implemented sustainably, with long-term evaluations conducted to assess its effectiveness over time. Further research is needed to examine the influence of social media and peer relationships on adolescents' sexual behavior, as well as to develop more accurate measurement approaches, such as direct behavioral observation, to obtain more objective data on behavioral changes following the intervention

6. CONCLUSION

The implementation of the intervention entitled “*Self-Control as a Compass: To Guide Sexual Behavior among Teenagers*” demonstrated significant results in reducing the intensity of risky sexual behavior and provided psychological education aimed at strengthening adolescents’ self-control over sexual urges emerging during puberty among students at SMPN 37 Bandung. Based on the findings, the majority of participants, including both male and female students, demonstrated a significant reduction in risky sexual behavior following the psychoeducational and self-control training sessions. This finding was supported by statistical analysis using the *Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test*, which indicated a significant difference between pretest and posttest scores in the intensity of risky sexual behavior.

Overall, although the adolescents in this study were still in the early stages of sexual exploration, the intervention enhanced their understanding of the importance of self-control in managing sexual urges and the risks associated with unhealthy sexual behavior. In addition, observational findings indicated positive changes in participants’ attitudes and perceptions toward risky sexual behavior. Participants demonstrated greater awareness of the importance of avoiding behaviors that may have negative consequences for themselves and their partners, including problematic pornography use and engagement in sexual behaviors that are inconsistent with their personal moral values.

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