HOMEROOM GROUP GUIDANCE AND STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF THE RISKS OF PREMARITAL SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT
Premarital sexual behavior among adolescents is associated with serious health and psychosocial risks, while school-based sexual health education in Indonesia remains constrained by cultural taboos and limited structured programs. This study examined whether participation in homeroom group guidance was associated with changes in students' understanding of the risks of premarital sexual behavior. The study employed a pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design involving 15 ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri 41 Semarang, Indonesia. The intervention consisted of five homeroom group guidance sessions designed to provide structured information, guided discussion, and reflective learning on the risks and consequences of premarital sexual behavior. Descriptively, students' mean scores increased from 17.2 on the pretest to 33.9 on the posttest, with a mean difference of 16.73. The available paired-samples output indicated a statistically significant pre-post difference, $t(14) = 17.83$, $p < .001$, with an estimated large paired effect size ($dz = 4.60$). However, because the posttest distribution was non-normal and the study used a one-group design without a comparison group, the finding should be interpreted as preliminary rather than as conclusive causal evidence. Overall, the results suggest that homeroom group guidance shows promise as a school-based approach for improving adolescents' understanding of sexual health risks. Future studies should employ larger samples, comparison groups, and appropriate non-parametric or robust reanalysis using raw paired data to strengthen inference.

Keywords: Adolescents, Homeroom group guidance, One-group pretest-posttest, Premarital sexual behavior, Sexual health understanding

INTRODUCTION

Premarital sexual behavior among adolescents remains an important educational and public health concern, including in Indonesia, because it is associated with risks such as sexually transmitted diseases, unintended pregnancy, and psychosocial distress (Mundhiro et al., 2021; Ali et al., 2024; Kågesten & van Reeuwijk, 2021). Adolescence is a developmental period characterized by increasing curiosity, identity exploration, and susceptibility to peer influence. In this context, access to accurate, developmentally appropriate sexual health information becomes essential for helping students understand risk, reflect on consequences, and make responsible decisions.

In this study, understanding of the risks of premarital sexual behavior refers to students' capacity to recognize relevant sexual health information, interpret its implications, and apply that understanding to judgments about risky behavior. This notion is consistent with broader views of sexual health literacy that extend beyond factual knowledge to include reflective understanding and responsible awareness (Herat et al., 2018). For school-aged adolescents, this type of understanding is especially important in contexts where discussion of sexuality may be limited, delayed, or socially sensitive.

Although sexual health education is widely acknowledged as important, its implementation in Indonesian schools remains uneven. Prior studies have shown that cultural discomfort, limited teacher-parent communication, and the absence of structured school programs often constrain open and accurate discussion of sexual health topics (Lahope & Fathurrahman, 2024a; Shibuya et al., 2023; Susanti & Doni, 2021). As a result, many students may enter adolescence with fragmented knowledge and few opportunities to discuss sensitive issues in a safe educational setting.

One potentially relevant approach is homeroom group guidance, a group-based guidance format that emphasizes a familiar, supportive, and non-judgmental atmosphere. In such a setting, students are not only exposed to information but are also encouraged to ask questions, exchange views, and reflect on sensitive issues collectively. Previous studies have suggested that group guidance can support sexual health learning and anti-risk attitudes, yet the use of homeroom group guidance specifically for strengthening students'

understanding of premarital sexual behavior in Indonesian junior high schools remains underexplored (Anjani et al., 2023; Hidayat et al., 2019; Kusumawardani et al., 2022).

The gap in the literature, therefore, is not merely the general need for sexual health education, but the limited evidence on whether a homeroom-based group guidance format can function as a feasible school intervention for improving students' understanding of premarital sexual behavior risks in this context. This study contributes by examining pre-post changes in students' understanding after participation in a homeroom group guidance program at SMP Negeri 41 Semarang.

Accordingly, this study addressed the following research question: To what extent was participation in a one-group homeroom group guidance program associated with changes in ninth-grade students' understanding of the risks of premarital sexual behavior?

Method

This study employed a pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design. The design involved two measurements of the same group of participants: one before the intervention and one after the intervention. This design was selected to examine whether students' understanding scores changed following participation in homeroom group guidance sessions. Because the study did not include a control or comparison group, the design does not permit strong causal inference and should be interpreted as preliminary evidence of change over time rather than definitive proof of intervention effectiveness.

The participants were 15 ninth-grade students from SMP Negeri 41 Semarang, Indonesia. Participants were selected purposively based on their willingness to participate and their relatively low baseline scores on the pretest. This procedure was intended to identify students who were most likely to benefit from the program; however, it also introduces important methodological limitations, including possible selection bias and regression to the mean. Therefore, the findings should not be generalized beyond the study sample without caution.

Tabel 1. Blueprint of the Premarital Sexual Behavior Understanding Test Instrument

Variable	Indicator	Description
Understanding the dangers of premarital sexual behavior	Knowledge about the dangers of premarital sexual behavior	Students are able to explain the definition, causes, and negative impacts of premarital sex, as well as understand the importance of protecting themselves from engaging in such behavior.
	Attitude towards the dangers of premarital sexual behavior	Students show an attitude of rejecting premarital sex by instilling moral values, responsibility, and self-awareness according to religious and social norms.
	Preventive behaviors regarding the dangers of premarital sexual behavior	Students are able to protect themselves from risky behaviors by limiting social interactions, using social media wisely, rejecting negative invitations, and actively participating in positive activities that shape character.

The primary instrument was a 36-item pretest-posttest questionnaire designed to assess students' understanding of the dangers of premarital sexual behavior. The instrument covered three domains: (1) knowledge of the meaning, causes, and negative consequences of premarital sexual behavior; (2) attitudes toward the dangers of premarital sexual behavior; and (3) preventive understanding related to self-protection, social interaction, and avoidance of risky invitations. In the present revision, the construct is referred to consistently as students' understanding, because that is the most defensible interpretation of the reported total score.

Content validity was established through expert judgment involving a Guidance and Counseling teacher and personnel from the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN), particularly the Division of Family Welfare and Family Empowerment (KSPK). The experts evaluated content relevance, clarity of wording, and suitability for the respondents. Internal consistency reliability was assessed using

Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.85, indicating good reliability for the instrument used in this study.

The intervention consisted of five homeroom group guidance sessions. Across these meetings, students received structured information about the risks of premarital sexual behavior, including sexually transmitted diseases, unintended pregnancy, and emotional consequences, while also engaging in guided discussion, question-and-answer exchanges, and reflective interaction in a supportive classroom atmosphere (Himma, 2022). The homeroom format was intended to reduce discomfort and encourage active participation when discussing a culturally sensitive topic.

Data collection was conducted in two stages. First, students completed the pretest before the intervention to establish their baseline level of understanding. Second, after the five-session intervention, students completed the same instrument as a posttest. Because the participants were minors and the topic was sensitive, the final submitted manuscript should explicitly report the approval process, school permission, parental or guardian consent, student assent, and confidentiality safeguards. These details were not sufficiently documented in the archived version available for this revision and therefore should be completed by the authors using the original study records.

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics and inferential comparison of pretest and posttest scores. The archived manuscript reported a paired-samples output and normality testing. Because the posttest scores showed non-normality in the Shapiro-Wilk test, inferential interpretation should be made cautiously. If the raw paired scores are available, the final manuscript should reanalyze the pre-post difference using a non-parametric paired procedure, such as the Wilcoxon signed-rank test, or provide a stronger justification for retaining a parametric paired analysis based on the distribution of the difference scores. In the present revision, the available paired output is reported more completely and interpreted conservatively.

Results and Discussions

The study revealed significant changes in students' understanding of premarital sexual behavior and its associated risks. The analysis of the pretest and posttest results demonstrated a clear improvement in students' awareness of sexual health risks after participating in the homeroom group guidance sessions. Initially, most of the students exhibited low levels of understanding regarding the dangers of premarital sexual behavior, as reflected in their pretest scores, indicating a general lack of awareness and knowledge about sexual health risks before the intervention. However, after completing the homeroom group guidance sessions, there was a noticeable increase in their knowledge. All students showed significant improvement, with their posttest scores indicating high levels of awareness about sexual health risks. This highlights the effectiveness of the intervention in addressing the knowledge gap regarding the dangers of premarital sex.

A comparison of the pretest and posttest scores further reinforces the positive impact of the homeroom group guidance technique. The mean pretest score was 17.2, indicating a relatively low level of understanding among students at the beginning of the intervention. After participating in the homeroom sessions, the mean posttest score increased substantially to 33.9, reflecting a marked improvement in students' comprehension of the risks associated with premarital sexual behavior.

This considerable increase in scores demonstrates the success of the intervention in improving students' knowledge and highlights the value of homeroom group guidance as a strategy for promoting sexual health awareness among adolescents. These findings suggest that structured guidance services can serve as an effective means of strengthening students' understanding and encouraging more responsible attitudes toward sexual behavior.

At the individual level, a consistent pattern of improvement between pretest and posttest scores was observed across the 15 students who participated in the study. The analysis indicates that posttest scores were higher than pretest scores for nearly all participants, signifying that the intervention, in the form of homeroom group guidance sessions, effectively enhanced students' understanding of the dangers of premarital sexual behavior.

For example, Student 5 (S-5), initially with a lower pretest score, showed a notable improvement in their posttest result, indicating that the intervention was particularly beneficial for students with initial gaps in their knowledge. On the other hand, Student 10 (S-10), who scored relatively higher on the pretest, also experienced an improvement, though the difference was smaller compared to others. This suggests that the

intervention was effective across different baseline levels of knowledge, helping students increase their understanding of the risks associated with premarital sexual behavior.

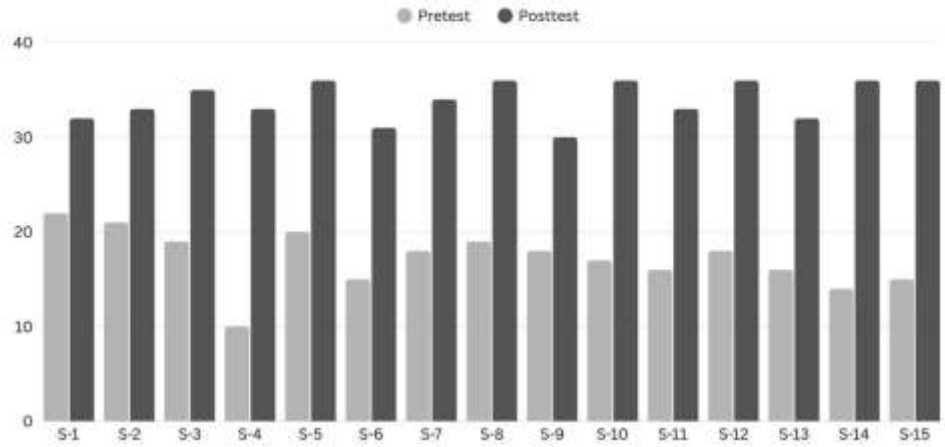

Figure 1. Pretest - Posttest Comparison Graph

In particular, Student 4 (S-4) had one of the most significant jumps in scores, reflecting the positive impact of the intervention in reshaping their understanding of sexual health. Similarly, Student 7 (S-7) displayed a substantial increase, highlighting that even students with moderate initial knowledge benefited from the intervention.

However, while the overall trend indicates an increase, the degree of improvement varied slightly among students, which can be attributed to factors such as level of prior understanding, student participation, and engagement during the sessions. Student 12 (S-12), for instance, showed an improvement, but it was more modest compared to other students, potentially due to lower engagement during the sessions. Conversely, Student 15 (S-15) demonstrated significant improvement, suggesting that their active participation and willingness to learn played a role in their greater gain in knowledge.

The overall pattern supports the effectiveness of the homeroom group guidance as an educational intervention for increasing adolescents' awareness of premarital sexual behavior risks. This approach not only contributed to knowledge improvement but also fostered an environment where students felt comfortable engaging in discussions and reflecting on their own behaviors, ultimately enhancing their awareness and understanding.

Table 2. Test of Normality

Tests of Normality	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Before intervention	0.138	15	0.200*	0.963	15	0.741
After intervention	0.239	15	0.021	0.863	15	0.026

*This is a lower bound of the true significance.

The normality test results, based on the Shapiro-Wilk test, show that the pretest data have a significance value of 0.741, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that the pretest data are normally distributed. In contrast, the posttest data have a significance value of 0.026, which is less than 0.05, indicating that the posttest data are not normally distributed. These findings suggest that the pretest data are normally distributed, while the posttest data are not, thus fulfilling the requirements for conducting hypothesis testing using non-parametric statistical methods due to the non-normal distribution of the posttest data.

Table 3. Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Test of Homogeneity of Variances	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Based on Mean	0.934	1	28	0.342
Based on Median	0.624	1	28	0.436
Based on Median and with adjusted df	0.624	1	19.471	0.439
Based on trimmed mean	0.892	1	28	0.353

Based on the data in the table, the significance values for the pretest and posttest results, as assessed using the Levene's Test for Homogeneity of Variances, are as follows: for the Based on Mean test, the significance value is 0.342, which is greater than 0.05. This indicates that the variances for the pretest and posttest are homogeneous, meaning there is no significant difference in variability between the two sets of data. This suggests that the assumption of homogeneity of variances is met for the analysis, allowing for the use of parametric tests in further hypothesis testing.

Table 4. Paired Samples Test

Paired Samples Test	Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
Pair 1	Before and After Intervention	-16.733	3.634	0.938	-18.746	-14.721	

Based on the data in the table, the t-test results show that the significance value (2-tailed) is 0.000, which is less than 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05). This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores. Therefore, we can conclude that the homeroom group guidance intervention had a significant impact on the students' understanding of the dangers of premarital sexual behavior. Specifically, the results suggest that after receiving the intervention, the ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri 41 Semarang showed a notable improvement in their awareness of the risks associated with premarital sexual behavior.

In conclusion, the homeroom group guidance intervention significantly improved students' understanding of premarital sexual behavior, with all participants showing notable gains in their posttest scores. The intervention was particularly effective for students with lower initial knowledge, highlighting its value in addressing knowledge gaps and promoting healthier decision-making behaviors. While the degree of improvement varied due to personal factors such as prior knowledge and engagement, the intervention was successful across the group. Statistical analysis confirmed the significant impact of the intervention, with a t-test result of 0.000, indicating a strong improvement in students' awareness of sexual health risks. These findings suggest that homeroom group guidance is an effective tool for sexual health education, particularly in fostering informed and responsible sexual behaviors among adolescents. (Anjani et al., 2023; Himma, 2022).

The results of this study align with existing research emphasizing the critical role of group guidance techniques in addressing sensitive issues such as sexual health. The homeroom group guidance technique, by creating a comfortable and non-judgmental environment, facilitated open discussions on sexual health. This environment enabled students to develop a deeper understanding of the risks associated with premarital sexual behavior, which contributed to a significant improvement in their knowledge and attitudes after the intervention.

The effectiveness of homeroom group guidance in enhancing students' understanding of the risks of premarital sexual behavior can first be explained from a general educational perspective. Sexual health education is more effective when it is delivered in a structured, supportive, and developmentally appropriate learning environment. Schools serve as one of the most strategic settings for this purpose because they provide continuity, legitimacy, and direct access to adolescents during a critical stage of personal and social development. In this context, the positive results of this study indicate that homeroom group guidance

functions not merely as an additional counseling activity, but as an educational strategy that helps students engage with sensitive health-related issues in a guided and meaningful way.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings can be understood through constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes that students actively construct knowledge through interaction, reflection, and interpretation of experience (Arega & Hunde, 2025; Doolittle et al., 2023). In homeroom group guidance sessions, students were not positioned as passive recipients of information; rather, they were encouraged to discuss, question, and reflect on issues related to premarital sexual behavior. This process allowed them to connect new information with their prior understanding and social realities. As a result, learning became more meaningful, and students were better able to internalize the risks and consequences of unsafe sexual behavior. This supports the view that discussion-based and reflective learning environments can strengthen comprehension of sensitive topics more effectively than one-way information delivery alone (Adigun et al., 2025; Grijpma et al., 2024).

The influence of the intervention may also be explained through social learning theory, which suggests that learning occurs not only through direct instruction but also through observation, interaction, and modeling within a social environment (Bandura, 2001; Kytle & Bandura, 1978; Thompson, 2008). In the homeroom group setting, students were exposed to peer perspectives, shared concerns, and collective reflection (Lin et al., 2022; Zubiri-Esnaola et al., 2020). These social interactions likely reinforced responsible attitudes toward sexual health, as students learned from each other's questions, responses, and viewpoints. In this way, the group guidance process became a form of peer-supported learning that strengthened both cognitive understanding and social awareness. This shows that the effectiveness of homeroom guidance lies not only in the content delivered, but also in the relational and interactive context in which the learning takes place.

In addition, the findings may be interpreted through the Theory of Planned Behavior, which explains that individuals are more likely to make responsible decisions when they possess adequate knowledge, develop appropriate attitudes, and perceive supportive social norms (Ajzen, 2020; Ajzen & Schmidt, 2020). The homeroom group guidance sessions appear to have influenced these components simultaneously. Students gained clearer information about the dangers of premarital sexual behavior, reflected on the possible consequences of such behavior, and participated in a group climate that encouraged responsible thinking. Therefore, the intervention likely affected not only students' knowledge, but also their evaluation of risk and their readiness to adopt healthier behavioral orientations.

More specifically, the effect of the homeroom group guidance technique in this study can be attributed to the combination of three key elements: a safe learning atmosphere, guided peer interaction, and structured reflection on a culturally sensitive issue. Discussions of sexuality in adolescent contexts are often constrained by shame, silence, or fear of judgment. The homeroom approach helped reduce these barriers by providing a respectful and supportive space in which students could ask questions, clarify misconceptions, and discuss difficult topics more openly. Because of this, students were more likely to participate actively and process the information in a deeper way. This helps explain why the intervention was effective in enhancing students' understanding of the risks of premarital sexual behavior.

The findings also have important theoretical implications, particularly in the context of educational practices related to sexual health (Ma et al., 2022; Ogul & Sahin, 2024). The homeroom group guidance technique reinforces the idea that creating a supportive environment for discussing sensitive topics can enhance adolescents' understanding and decision-making abilities. By engaging in discussion, reflection, and knowledge application, students developed a more comprehensive understanding of sexual health risks. This suggests that the homeroom technique may serve as a valuable tool in broader educational practices, especially those aimed at promoting holistic learning that integrates both cognitive and emotional dimensions of education.

Moreover, the study supports the idea that adolescents' learning is strongly influenced by social environments. Through peer interaction in a group setting, students were able to model responsible attitudes toward sexual health and benefit from mutual support. This approach goes beyond individual learning by showing that school-based social settings such as homeroom group guidance can positively influence adolescents' perspectives and potential behavioral choices. Thus, the intervention demonstrates how structured group processes can foster both individual understanding and shared responsibility (Akuiyibo et al., 2021; Putri et al., 2025).

The results of this study also have strong connections to the existing literature. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of group-based guidance in sexual health education, showing that group discussions foster openness, increase self-confidence, and allow students to explore and internalize sexual health concepts in a non-threatening environment (Handayani et al., 2024; Shorey & Chua, 2023). The effectiveness of group guidance has also been supported by studies showing that such techniques help adolescents develop healthier attitudes toward sensitive topics like sexuality. The present study extends this literature by showing that homeroom group guidance can function as an accessible and contextually relevant form of school-based intervention (Anjani et al., 2023; Vincent & Krishnakumar, 2022).

However, it is also important to compare the homeroom guidance approach with other sexual health interventions. Peer counseling, for example, has been found effective in some contexts because it provides relatable experiences and support among students. Media campaigns have also been widely used in sexual health education, although their effects are often limited by passive engagement and lack of personal interaction. Compared with these methods, homeroom group guidance offers a more interactive and personalized approach, enabling students to engage directly in discussion, ask questions, and reflect on their own attitudes and understanding. This level of interaction likely contributes to deeper learning and more sustainable educational outcomes (Handayani et al., 2024; Khotimah, 2023; Ma et al., 2022; Shorey & Chua, 2023).

The findings further highlight the importance of integrating both cognitive knowledge and affective attitudes in sexual health education. Cognitive understanding, such as knowing the risks of premarital sexual behavior, is essential for informed decision-making. However, affective attitudes, including the development of responsibility and self-awareness, are equally important in determining whether students apply that knowledge in real-life situations. The homeroom group guidance sessions appeared to strengthen both of these aspects by combining factual information with reflective dialogue and value-oriented discussion. This contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of how sexual health education can be delivered effectively among adolescents.

In the Indonesian context, this issue is particularly relevant because discussions about sexuality are often culturally sensitive and sometimes surrounded by embarrassment or silence (Lahope & Fathurrahman, 2024a; Situmorang, 2024). As a result, many adolescents may have limited access to accurate information and few opportunities to discuss sexual health in a safe and constructive setting. The homeroom group guidance technique addresses this challenge by creating a respectful space for discussion within the school environment. The success of this approach in improving students' understanding and attitudes suggests that similar methods could be implemented more widely in Indonesian schools to help bridge persistent gaps in adolescent sexual health education.

Overall, this study contributes to the broader field of sexual health education by showing that homeroom group guidance can be a valuable intervention for promoting sexual health awareness among adolescents. The findings suggest that such interventions should be integrated into the regular school program as part of a continuous and supportive framework for student development. Given the positive outcomes observed in this study, further research is needed to examine the long-term impact of homeroom group guidance on students' behavior, values, and decision-making, as well as its potential scalability across larger and more diverse educational settings.

Conclusion

This study indicates that participation in homeroom group guidance was associated with improved posttest understanding of the risks of premarital sexual behavior among the ninth-grade students who took part in the program. The descriptive increase from pretest to posttest was substantial, and the available paired-samples output also suggested a strong pre-post difference. However, because the study used a one-group pretest-posttest design, a small purposive sample, and analysis that requires cautious interpretation, the findings should be regarded as preliminary rather than definitive evidence of effectiveness. Even so, the study suggests that homeroom group guidance has potential as a school-based strategy for strengthening adolescents' understanding of sexual health risk in contexts where direct discussion remains sensitive. Further research with stronger designs, raw-score reanalysis, and broader samples is needed before wider generalization can be made.

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