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# Argorejo ‘red-light district’ student perceptions on sexual behavior

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**Abstract.** Argorejo ‘Red-light District’ environment (Sunan Kuning), prostitution area in Semarang, Indonesia support the highly sexual behaviors among Junior High School (JHS) students. The aim of this study was to describe the perceptions of JHS students on sexual behaviors. The method used was that of a qualitative and descriptive phenomenological approaches. The data were collected, from four JHS students as key informants, and their neighbours as the supporting informants, by observation, interviews, and documentation study, then analyzed with the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. The findings showed that (1) JHS students from ‘Red-light District’ of Argorejo showed they had more negative views of sexual behavior (behavioral beliefs), (2) they believed that other reference parties did not agree with this sexual behaviors, and consequently they would prohibit them to do sexual behavior (normative beliefs), and (3) assumed there were equal conditions that would facilitate or hinder them to do sexual behavior (control beliefs).

## 1. Introduction

‘Red-light District’ of Argorejo or Sunan Kuning (SK) Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia, was built in 1963, and now it is so popular as a place with high permissiveness of illegal sexual behavior (prostitution) in Semarang. The phenomenon of highly sexual behavior from ‘Red-light District’ of Argorejo supports the highly sexual activities of the people, including Junior High School (JHS) students. According to recent data from Griya ASA Clinic PKBI Semarang, during 2013-2015 there were two recorded cases of sexual transferred infection (STI) among teenager patients and one case of sexual abuse by the teenager.

This phenomenon is a critical incident to be addressed by the education systems, including all JHS natural science teachers who can play their role in providing better sex education, particularly the Sexual and Reproductive Health Education (SRHE). A natural science teacher is a good implementer of natural science curriculum that underlines the importance of better education to their learners. SRHE in the school is so important that students will better understand some key concepts and actions used to protect their health even sex is still considered ‘taboo’ making students feel uncomfortable when discussing their reproductive health and sexuality problems with their family [1,2].

Unfortunately, natural science education in Indonesia focus only on cognitive development. Other aspects such as affective and moral value have been given less attention [3]. Some impacts of this gap could be seen from the Indonesian Survey of Demographic and Health 2012 (SDKI 2012) revealed



that about 85% adolescents (15-24 years old) had date, 40% had ever kissed, and 5% were not virgin anymore [4]. Another study by Australian National University and Health Research Center of University of Indonesia at 2010 in Jakarta, Tangerang and Bekasi concluded that 20.9% adolescent sample had pregnant and birth before marriage [5]. The behavior of human including students is influenced by many factors, one of the most important factor is perception [6-11]. In line with that, the freedom of sexual behavior of JHS students is caused by the positive perception on sexual behavior. The perception can be a stimulus for behavior.

Studies about JHS student perception on sexual behavior are still limited. The majority of the studies used quantitative approach so the illustration of students perception were not intact, detailed, and comprehensive. So were not given yet the JHS student perception illustration intact, detail, and comprehensive. By knowing the perception of JHS students around 'Red-light District' of Argorejo, so that a preventive action can be done to reduce the number of sexual behavior on JHS students by science teachers through SRHE. The problem of this study was as follows: how can the perception of JHS students from "Red-light District" of Argorejo on sexual activities be described? The purpose of this study was to describe the JHS students' perceptions of sexual behavior, from a place with high permissiveness of sexual behavior.

## 2. Methods

This study used a qualitative research method because the author mainly concerned with meaning as well as the quality of experience [12]. The author tried to understand how the JHS students experience and catch their perception on sexual behavior. The author collected the data as natural as possible in naturalistic setting.

This study aimed to reveal the perceptions of JHS students on sexual behavior. The perceptions refer to the Theory of Planned Behavior which consist of behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs and control beliefs [13]. Meanwhile, the sexual behavior in this study refers to the opinion of London [14] which consists of awakening and exploration stage (watching pornographic videos), autosexuality (masturbating) and heterosexuality (having a sexual intercourse). Therefore, this study used a descriptive phenomenology approach. In this study, the researcher tried to enter into the conceptual world of the research subjects. How JHS students around 'Red-light District' of Argorejo gain experiences related to sexual behavior, and after that from the obtained perception of the selected JHS students on sexual behavior, a description about the results was constructed. Researcher tried to understand the perceptions held JHS students on sexual behavior.

The data for this study was obtained from main and supporting informants. The main informants were four JHS male students with certain criteria, while the supporting informants were the neighbors of the main informants. Four main informants was claimed by author could compare single cases [12]. In this study, the data was collected using the method of observation, interviews, and documentation.

In qualitative research, findings or data can be declared valid if there is no difference between the report of researchers with reality of the objects that had been studied. The "member checking" concept or invited all informants to review the findings also encourage for enhance validity. On the other hand, reliability refers to the extent to which the result has ability to repeat. If another researcher else repeated that research, would they achieve the same result? The researcher should have ability to understand what happened and why happened by reading the interview or observation transcript [15].

The data was obtained by in-depth interview and was analyzed using the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis [16,17]. The stages of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis carry out as follows: (1) Reading and re-reading and initial noting. (2) Developing notes into emergent themes. (3) Searching for relationships (4) Clustering Themes. (5) Inference [12].

### 3. Results and discussion

#### 3.1. Informants Description

**Table 1.** Description of Main Informants

Initial	Sex	Parent's occupation	JHS Year	Home location
RP	Male	Sex worker's baby sitter	3 <sup>rd</sup> year	Around Argorejo
IP	Male	Masseus	3 <sup>rd</sup> year	Around Argorejo
RJ	Male	Karaoke operator	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	In Argorejo
BD	Male	Ticket officer of Argorejo	3 <sup>rd</sup> year	In Argorejo

Parent's occupation of main informants to represent the variation of population which have variation interest to the 'Red-light District' of Argorejo existency.

**Table 2.** Description of Supporting Informants

Initial	Sex	Status
WS	Female	The neighbour of RP and IP
AW	Male	The neighbour of RJ and BD

**Table 3.** Perception of Sexual behavior

Aspects of perception	Findings
Behavioral beliefs	They disagree with sexual activities, such as watching pornographic video, masturbations, and having sexual intercourse.
Normative Beliefs	They understood that there were reference people around them who agree or disagree with their sexual behaviors.
Control Belief	They were still aware about the supportive or conditions for the sexual activites, such as friendships, cool areas, and partner refusals.

#### 3.2. Discussion

The results were obtained from the observation of the data related to the informants, interview with the informants regarding personal data, as well as an interview to find out the informant's perception in July 2015. The results are presented in the following descriptions:

Firstly, the perception of sexual behavior: awakening and exploration stage (watching pornographic videos). From the aspect of behavioral beliefs, the positive beliefs of JHS students around 'Red-light District' of Argorejo from watching pornographic videos included: derive satisfaction and pleasure, sexual education, and is considered as an ordinary action. Meanwhile, the negative beliefs from watching pornographic videos were: be considered as bad behavior, immoral, disgusting, trigger more immoral action, sinful, and triggers the desire to be unchaste. From the aspect of normative beliefs, the parties considered to support the JHS students around 'Red-light District' of Argorejo watching pornographic videos included: friends at home and school. In contrast, the parties considered to forbid the JHS students around 'Red-light District' of Argorejo from watching pornographic videos included: friends at home and school, the girlfriend, the family, the teachers and religion teachers. On the aspect

of control beliefs, the conditions that were considered easier for JHS students around 'Red-light District' of Argorejo to watch porn videos included: the availability of pornographic material, a lonely place, an offer from a friend, and friends who watch together. On the other hand, conditions that were considered to prevent the JHS students around 'Red-light District' of Argorejo watch pornographic videos were: fasting during Ramadhan, since there are no available pornographic videos and a crowded place.

Secondly, the perception of sexual behavior: autosexuality stage (masturbation). To begin with, from the aspect of behavioral beliefs, the positive beliefs of masturbating on JHS students around 'Red-light District' of Argorejo included: gain pleasure, decrease libido, and be considered as ordinary action. On the contrary, negative beliefs from masturbating were: be considered as bad behavior, disgusting, sinful, at risk of STI, and is highly addictive. On the aspect of normative beliefs, parties that were considered to support the JHS students around 'Red-light District' of Argorejo masturbate included: friends at home and school. Meanwhile, the parties considered to forbid the JHS students around 'Red-light District' of Argorejo masturbating included: friends at home and school, the family, the teachers and religion teachers. On the aspect of control beliefs, the conditions that were considered easier for JHS students around 'Red-light District' of Argorejo masturbating included: the availability of pornographic material as well as in a deserted place. In contrast, conditions that were considered to prevent the JHS students around 'Red-light District' of Argorejo do masturbation included: fear of sin, there were no available pornographic videos, and the place was bustling.

Lastly, the perception of sexual behavior: heterosexuality stage (having a sexual intercourse). To begin with, from the aspect of behavioral beliefs, the positive beliefs of from having sexual intercourse on JHS students around 'Red-light District' of Argorejo included: gain pleasure and be considered as ordinary action. Meanwhile, the negative beliefs from having sexual intercourse were: big sin, be considered disgusting, can lead to premarriage pregnancy, forced to marry, loss of virginity, at risk infected by Human Immunodeficiency Virus, makes the mind always dirty, and trigger the desire to be multipartnered sexual. On the aspect of normative beliefs, the parties were considered to support the JHS students around 'Red-light District' of Argorejo having sexual intercourse included: friends at home and school. "Friend" is in line with finding of studies in United States which have similar characteristic with 'Red-light District' of Argorejo (high permissiveness of sexual intercourse) [18]. In contrast, the party was considered to forbid JHS students around 'Red-light District' of Argorejo had sexual intercourse was family. "Family" were also believed would against sexual intercourse of JHS students in United States [19]. On the aspect of control beliefs, the conditions that were considered easier for JHS students around 'Red-light District' of Argorejo had sexual intercourse included: a quiet place and the partner also wanted. On the contrary, conditions that were considered to prevent the JHS students around The 'Red-light District' of Argorejo do sexual intercourse included: a crowded place and the partner refused.

#### **4. Conclusion**

JHS students from the 'Red-light Districts' of Argorejo, one of prostitution area in Semarang, indicated their negative perceptions of sexual behavior, they disagreed with such activities as watching pornographic video, doing masturbations, and having sexual intercourse. They believed that some other parties would prohibit them from watching pornographic videos, but they also believed there were particular conditions that supported the sexual behaviors. They showed their negative opinions toward masturbation. They understood that some parties disagree with these activities, but they also understood that some other factors were contributing to the masturbation practices. In terms of sexual intercourse, they believed that sexual activities would brought a negative effect on their life. Many parties would disagree with this activities, but they also believed there were still factors responsible for the easy access to having sexual intercourses.

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