

Opinion Leader Strategies in Preventing HIV/AIDS Transmission among Commercial Sex Workers in Bongsuwung Red-Light Area in Yogyakarta

<http://dx.doi.org/10.25008/jkiski.v8i2.901>

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Submitted: October 22, 2023, **Revised:** November 19, 2023, **Accepted:** December 20, 2023

Accredited by Kemristekdikti No. 28/E/KPT/2019

Abstract

This research was conducted in response to the increasing cases of HIV/AIDS in Yogyakarta, particularly those caused by heterosexual groups, by focusing on the Bong Suwung red-light area. The objective of this research is to understand the strategies employed by opinion leaders in suppressing the transmission of HIV/AIDS among commercial sex workers in that area. This research uses a qualitative method covering observation, interviews, and documentation. This research reveals two types of strategies - general and specific – involving such steps as routine health check-ups, affordable condom distribution, regular meetings, socialization, and the establishment of specialized associations. Throughout this research, the researcher faced challenges, including low education, difficult economic conditions, age factors, and social stigma. Intensive approach strategies that are relevant to the theory of social penetration proved successful in building close relationships with sex workers, enabling them to receive more effective information and care. This research underscores the importance of collaborating with various stakeholders in HIV/AIDS prevention efforts, addressing social stigma, and establishing deeper relationships with people living with HIV/AIDS. These actions are essential to tackle the complexity of this issue and minimize the spread of HIV/AIDS in red-light areas like Bong Suwung.

Keywords: Preventing HIV/AIDS, prostitution, opinion leader, red-light area, heterosexual groups

Introduction

In Indonesia, HIV/AIDS cases are a serious issue that needs to be addressed by both the government and the society. The Ministry of Health (Kemenkes) has reported that the spread of HIV/AIDS in Indonesia continues to increase. As of June 2022, there were a total of 519,158 individuals living with HIV/AIDS across the country (Fachri, 2023). This spread

is particularly prominent in certain regions, where it is still dominated by the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) community and heterosexual individuals with multiple partners (Lukihardianti & Kurnia, 2022). For example, Yogyakarta province is one of such regions.

Yogyakarta is one of the regions in Indonesia that has reported a significant

increase in the number of HIV/AIDS cases. From January to June 2022, there was an addition of 260 cases. This figure has continued to rise, and is mostly attributed to heterosexual groups (Pangaribowo, 2022). This prompts the local government to continue screening activities in the prostitution sector, including in the Bong Suwung red-light area.

The Bong Suwung area is a popular red-light district in Yogyakarta. It is as popular as Sarkem (*Pasar Kembang*) red-light area, which is also located in the center of the city. However, Bong Suwung is primarily known as a red-light area catering to the lower middle class. This is due to its less strategic geographical location, situated approximately 200 meters west of *Tugu* Train Station along the railway tracks. Consequently, many from the lower middle-class segment can easily access "entertainment" facilities in this area (Rofiyandi, 2012). This has led to the stigma that Bong Suwung is the area which is most vulnerable to the spread of HIV/AIDS (Sucahyo, 2022).

In response, the local government has undertaken various efforts to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. These efforts include conducting public awareness campaigns, optimizing the role of media, strengthening legal measures, and collaborating with various individuals and organizations concerned about HIV/AIDS transmission in Yogyakarta (Warto & Rusmiyati, 2015). One of these efforts involves the Bong Suwung Yogyakarta Association.

In Bong Suwung red-light area, there are three informal organizations that provide support and a sort of community services for sex workers. They are *Bong Suwung Association*, *Arum Dalu Sehat Community*, and *PPPS (Association of Female Sex Workers)*. Among these, *Bong Suwung Association* plays a role in protecting and assisting both *Arum Dalu Community* and *PPPS* (Izzati, 2016). *Arum Dalu Community* has a specific focus on sexual health, while *PPPS* specializes in managing the operational aspects of prostitution, including safety, recording data on sex workers, and various other aspects. Despite the complexity of the situation, these three organizations strive to provide social networks and protection for individuals involved in the world of prostitution in the area.

Additionally, *Bong Suwung Association* also serves as a bridge between external parties and internal stakeholders. In this context, all

activities related to *Arum Dalu Community* and *PPPS* are subject to close supervision by the *Bong Suwung Association*. This applies especially when addressing serious issues like the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Bong Suwung. The presence of the association helps to ensure that the HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment efforts are carried out in an effective and coordinated way, by focusing on the safety and well-being of vulnerable sex workers. As a result, the *Bong Suwung Association* becomes a crucial center in maintaining stability and safety within the prostitution ecosystem in the area.

Moreover, despite playing a crucial role in HIV/AIDS prevention efforts, *Bong Suwung Association* has found that this task is far from easy. Indeed, the spread of HIV/AIDS has the potential to affect red-light areas, and many of the sex workers (PSK) who lack sufficient awareness of the importance of health. Additionally, their low level of education presents a significant challenge for *Bong Suwung Association* in raising awareness about the dangers of HIV/AIDS. Nevertheless, they continue to strive to overcome these obstacles to protect the health and well-being of sex workers and prevent the spread of this life-threatening disease in the red-light area.

In regard to the challenges faced by the *Bong Suwung Association*, which plays a crucial role in preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Bong Suwung red-light area, the researcher is interested in delving deeper into the *Bong Suwung Association* and efforts to raise awareness among sex workers in that area. Therefore, this research aims to discover how opinion leader strategies work to curb the transmission of HIV/AIDS in the Bong Suwung area, Yogyakarta.

The objective of this research is to comprehensively explain and elucidate the concrete efforts undertaken by opinion leaders in enhancing awareness about the dangers of HIV/AIDS transmission, especially within the prostitution environment that is their primary concern. Through this research, it is expected that a deeper understanding of the practical strategies employed by opinion leaders in HIV/AIDS prevention efforts in the Bong Suwung red-light area will be revealed.

In this research, the term "opinion leaders" refers to the core leadership members within the *Bong Suwung Association* in Yogyakarta. The selection of this association is

based on its significant authority in overseeing the surroundings, including sex workers (PSK), the *Arum Dalu Sehat community*, and *PPPS*.

Furthermore, in order to support the data analysis process and see the urgency of this research, the researcher refers to two relevant studies conducted earlier. The first study was conducted by Setyawati (2016) with the title "Community-based Parenting Model to Stop HIV/AIDS Dissemination Due to Premarital Sexual Behavior of Adolescents." The study discusses how premarital sexual activity serves as an indicator for the spread of HIV/AIDS. This is due to a lack of sex education, thereby highlighting the need for the involvement of various stakeholders, including parents, communities, and others in HIV/AIDS prevention.

The second study conducted by Titik Haryanti and Wartini (2019) carries the title of "Perception of People Living with HIV/AIDS on Social Stigma of HIV/AIDS in Sukoharjo District." This research analyzes the negative stigma towards individuals living with HIV/AIDS, which indirectly hinders the education about the dangers of HIV/AIDS. This fear and stigma can complicate the screening process for HIV/AIDS patients and may also impact their immune system.

The references to these two studies are expected to support the data analysis process and contribute to a deeper understanding of aspects related to HIV/AIDS, both in terms of prevention and the associated social stigma. By referring to these studies, the researcher can further assess the impact and effectiveness of the efforts made by the *Bong Suwung Association* in raising awareness of HIV/AIDS in Bong Suwung red-light area. A more detailed discussion of these aspects can be found in the discussion section of this research.

Theoretical Framework

In this research, the researcher adopts the Social Penetration Theory, which was first developed by Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor in 1973. This theory encapsulates important aspects of interpersonal relationships, describing how individuals move from shallow and surface-level communication towards deeper and more complex communication. Altman and Taylor explained that intimacy in this context doesn't just refer to physical aspects but also encompasses deeper intellectual and emotional aspects where individuals feel

interdependent with each other (West & Turner, 2008).

Furthermore, the Social Penetration Theory also provides insights into how social communication evolves through the formation of relationship patterns. This theory emphasizes that interpersonal closeness doesn't happen instantly but rather takes time as individuals who are just getting to know each other go through initial stages, often beginning with formal communication. Although these stages may seem simple, the "small talk" phase is an important initial step in building a strong foundation for achieving deeper and more intimate communication in subsequent stages.

The theory of social penetration has four basic assumptions that serve as the foundation for understanding the development of relationships among individuals (Sa'idah, 2023): (1) Relationships Progress from Non-Closeness to Intimacy: The first assumption of the social penetration theory is that relationships between individuals develop from a state of non-closeness towards greater intimacy. This means that individuals in a relationship initially engage in shallow communication and gradually open up by sharing deeper information about themselves;

(2) Systematic Relationship Development Is Predictable: The second assumption is that the development of a relationship follows a predictable pattern. In this theory, the process of social penetration is illustrated as peeling back layers within an individual, and each stage of development has its own characteristics. Therefore, this pattern can be used to predict how a relationship will evolve;

(3) Relationship Development Involves Depenetration and Dissolution: The third assumption is that the development of a relationship encompasses two important aspects, namely depenetration and dissolution. Depenetration is the process of withdrawal or reduced self-disclosure in a relationship. Dissolution is the stage where the relationship undergoes termination or ends. In the social penetration theory, both of these aspects are considered natural parts of relationship development;

(4) Self-Disclosure is at the Core of Relationship Development: The final assumption is that self-disclosure is at the core of relationship development. In this theory, self-disclosure refers to the process in which

individuals in a relationship share deeper, both emotionally and personally, with each other. This self-disclosure helps build closeness and intimacy within the relationship.

Based on these four basic assumptions, the social penetration theory provides a useful framework for understanding how relationships between individuals progress from initial levels to deeper ones, and why some relationships can reach higher levels of intimacy than others.

Therefore, in the Social Penetration Theory, also known as the 'onion theory,' there are four stages that describe the development of interpersonal relationships. The first stage, called the "Orientation Stage," is often likened to the outermost layer of an onion. This is the initial stage where individuals first open the door for information exchange. In this stage, the process of introduction takes place, and individuals share general information such as names, origins, genders, and topics that are widely known (Sa'idah, 2023).

The second stage is the "Affective Exploration Stage," which can be likened to the second layer of the onion. In this stage, there is an expansion of information and a move towards deeper levels of disclosure compared to the previous stage. Individuals begin to open up more and explore the interests and preferences of the other party, such as hobbies and likes. At this stage, individuals can decide whether they want to progress from a shallow to a more intimate relationship or end the relationship if they do not find comfort or compatibility with each other (Nurdin, 2020).

The third stage is the "Affective Exchange Stage," where individuals begin sharing more personal and private information that not everyone knows. This is the stage where individuals choose to exchange information with others they trust, and the relationship becomes closer and more intimate. There is a greater commitment and a greater sense of comfort towards the other party, and expressions, words, or behaviors that are personal or unique often emerge in this stage (Sa'idah, 2023).

The fourth stage is the "Stable Exchange Stage," which is the final stage in the development of a relationship. This stage can be likened to the innermost core of an onion. In this stage, the exchange of information occurs in a highly intimate manner, including values, beliefs, and perspectives on various matters. Individuals have gotten to know each other on

a very deep level, enabling them to predict each other's actions and responses very accurately. This stage reflects the highest level of closeness and intimacy in interpersonal relationships (Morissan, 2021).

Based on the explanation of the Social Penetration Theory, the researcher has identified a strong relevance to the focus of this research. The assumption that emerges is that efforts to socialize HIV/AIDS prevention initiatives in the Bong Suwung red-light area in Yogyakarta require a very high level of intimacy. This is because people living with HIV/AIDS tend to isolate themselves from the broader community. Moreover, as commercial sex workers (CSWs), they tend to be emotionally and psychologically closed-off individuals. These constraints significantly impact the process of socialization and education about the dangers of HIV/AIDS among them.

In this context, the use of the Social Penetration Theory in analyzing the findings of the data becomes highly relevant. This theory provides an appropriate framework for understanding how individuals who may initially be emotionally and informationally closed-off can gradually open up and receive crucial information about HIV/AIDS prevention. By understanding the stages in this theory, the researcher can identify key points in the communication process that can help open the door for commercial sex workers in the Bong Suwung red-light area, Yogyakarta, to increase their awareness and participation in the HIV/AIDS prevention movement.

Material and Methodology

This research uses a qualitative method as the research approach. Qualitative research is descriptive in nature and tends to use analysis with an inductive approach (Rukin, 2019). The choice of qualitative method is based on the research objective, which is to delve into and explain the concrete efforts undertaken by opinion leaders, in this case, the Bong Suwung Association, in raising awareness about the dangers of HIV/AIDS transmission, especially within the prostitution environment that is their primary concern.

The data sources of this research are divided into two categories: primary data sources and secondary data sources. Primary data sources are the main sources of data obtained through various data collection

techniques. The primary technique used is interviews with several informants who have in-depth understanding of the research issue. Additionally, secondary data sources are used to support and strengthen the findings in the research (Sugiyono, 2012). These secondary data sources fall into the category of supporting references, which include archives, news articles, and journal articles published within the last 10 years.

Based on the explanation provided, the research subjects were selected based on criteria that are relevant to the research focus, which are: 1) residing in the Bong Suwung red-light area for a sufficient period of time, 2) having a knowledge of the history of the Bong Suwung red-light area in Yogyakarta, and 3) being actively involved as leaders in *Bong Suwung Association*, *Arum Dalu Sehat Community*, or *PPPS*. Based on these criteria, the primary informants in this research are Damar Natapraja, who is the spokesperson for the *Bong Suwung Association*, and Tini, who is also the spokesperson for the *Arum Dalu Sehat Community*. In addition to the primary informants, the researcher also involved supporting informants, such as Mawar (not the real name), one of the CSWs in Bong Suwung, to strengthen and validate the data obtained through observations and interviews with the primary informants. With this approach, the research aims to provide a deeper understanding of the HIV/AIDS prevention efforts undertaken by the Bong Suwung Association within the Bong Suwung prostitution environment in Yogyakarta.

In addition to this, the objects of this research are also divided into two categories: material objects and formal objects. The material object of this research is the Bong Suwung Association, which serves as the opinion leader in this context. The formal object of the research is the strategies used by the opinion leader to mitigate the transmission of HIV/AIDS in the Bong Suwung red-light area.

Based on the aforementioned research subjects and objects, the data collection method involves three stages. *First*, non-participant observation, where the researcher observes participants without becoming a member of the group under study (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018). *Second*, semi-structured interviews are conducted, allowing the researcher to ask open-ended, flexible, yet measurable questions. This

enables the researcher to gain deeper insights. The *third* stage is documentation, where the researcher collects various supporting documents such as books, archives, and relevant reports to support data analysis.

Furthermore, the data analysis process consists of several stages. *First*, data collection, where the researcher gathers data through various methods such as observation, interviews, and documentation. *Second*, data reduction, which involves sorting and organizing data according to the research focus. *Third*, data presentation, where the analysis results are presented in the form of analytical descriptions using the Social Penetration Theory to illustrate the findings. The final stage is drawing conclusions, which is a summary of the final results based on the data analysis conducted. These conclusions are preliminary and will be further tested to arrive at a final conclusion.

To ensure the credibility of the data, the researcher conducted data validation tests through source data triangulation. Data source triangulation involves seeking the truth of information through various sources obtained (Mamik, 2015). This means that the researcher tested the validity of the data by comparing the answers from the primary informants with those from the supporting informants. Consistency in the answers indicates valid data, while inconsistencies in the answers may signify invalid data.

Result and Discussion

The discussion on the red-light area and HIV/AIDS prevention efforts is a highly complex matter. Therefore, in this discussion section, the researcher will present it through two different sub-chapters. The first sub-chapter will discuss the "Profile and Reality of the Lower-Class Red-Light Area." In this section, in-depth information will be provided regarding the characteristics, dynamics, and factors influencing life in the Bong Suwung red-light area. This sub-chapter is expected to help understand the background of the existing issues.

Furthermore, in the second sub-chapter, the discussion will be focused on the "Struggles of *Bong Suwung Association* in Raising Awareness of HIV/AIDS." Here, the researcher will outline the efforts and steps taken by *Bong Suwung Association* in spreading awareness about the dangers of HIV/AIDS in this

prostitution environment. This sub-chapter will provide an overview of how *Bong Suwung Association* acts as a change agent in confronting this complex challenge. By dividing the discussion into two sub-chapters, this research will elaborate on various relevant aspects in a more detailed manner, providing a deeper understanding of the reality of the red-light area and the HIV/AIDS prevention efforts carried out by *Bong Suwung Association*.

The Profile and Reality of the Lower-Class Red-Light Area

Bong Suwung, as a red-light area, has characteristics that distinguish it from some other red-light areas, such as Sarkem (Pasar Kembang). One of the differences is the level of popularity and operational structure. In its context, Bong Suwung tends to be more hidden and not known to everyone. Here, commercial sex workers (CSWs) have a higher level of autonomy in managing their work, including determining their working hours and the rates they charge to their clients (Sa'idah et al., 2023).

This differs from some other places that are more structured and have owners or intermediaries which often referred to as "*Mucikari*" or pimps. In Bong Suwung, CSWs are only charged a room rental fee, around Rp. 25,000 and a security fee, around Rp. 10,000, while visitors pay an additional Rp. 5,000 as a contribution for security. The operation of this area typically runs from 10 PM to 4 AM, and the management system relies entirely on the CSWs themselves (Interview with Mawar, August 31, 2023).

Bong Suwung area also has the characteristic of hosting a majority of the CSWs who live in the vicinity of it and their average age ranges from 30 to 50 years old. Although the estimated number of CSWs in Bong Suwung is around 100, including transgender CSWs, this figure is difficult to ascertain due to the flexible and transient nature of their work in this area. However, those involved in this profession are expected to report themselves to the PPPS (Association of Female Sex Workers) as a step to avoid potential conflicts and provide protection in case of issues with external parties. This reporting is one of the efforts to ensure the safety and rights of CSWs in the Bong Suwung area.

Additionally, in the Bong Suwung area, the rates set by commercial sex workers

(CSWs) range from Rp. 75,000 to Rp. 200,000, including room rental fees as well as security fees. In addition to being a red-light area, Bong Suwung also provides services such as food, beverages, cigarettes, and condoms. Despite being in a prostitution environment, the area has rules that prohibit the sale of hard liquor or alcohol. This rule is enforced with the aim of preventing disturbances or conflicts that may arise due to alcohol consumption (Interview with Mawar, August 31, 2023). Here is the condition of the Bong Suwung red-light area in Yogyakarta:



Picture 1: The condition of Bong Suwung Red-Light Area

Source: Private Archive

The *Arum Dalu Sehat Community* in Bong Suwung has taken the initiative to sell condoms at more affordable prices compared to other stores. Profit from the condom sales is redirected to the cash fund of the *Arum Dalu Sehat Community*. All transactions and profit circulation from the condom sales receive approval from the *Bong Suwung Association* (Interview with Tini, August 31, 2023).

This indicates that all activities carried out by the *Arum Dalu Sehat Community* and PPPS must be communicated with the Bong Suwung Association. This is to ensure oversight of these activities and prevent potential misuse or conflicts in the red-light area. Thus, collaboration between various entities in Bong Suwung plays a crucial role in maintaining balance and security in the environment.

The Struggle of the Bong Suwung Association in Raising Awareness about HIV/AIDS

Bong Suwung, known as a lower-middle-class red-light area, is often considered a high-risk area for the spread of HIV/AIDS. To address this stigma, the *Bong Suwung*

Association has taken significant prevention measures. They have granted special authority to the *Arum Dalu Sehat Community*, which was established by the Bong Suwung Association to address issues related to sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS.

In this regard, Damar Natapraja understands the importance of an intimate approach, especially with commercial sex workers (CSWs), to encourage them to be more open. Through this openness, he hopes that they can identify and detect the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Bong Suwung area. Additionally, Tini, spokesperson for the *Arum Dalu Sehat Community*, also plays an active role in preventing the transmission of the disease.

The efforts made by the *Arum Dalu Sehat Community* include holding regular meetings once every 40 days specifically attended by CSWs in Bong Suwung (Rasyid, 2018). These meetings aim to build closeness with CSWs and provide socialization about the importance of maintaining genital hygiene, as well as educating them about the dangers of HIV/AIDS, prevention methods, and actions to take if someone is detected to have HIV (Results of Interview with Tini, August 31, 2023).

During the socialization activities, the *Arum Dalu Sehat Community* also collaborates with the Yogyakarta City Health Office. Realizing that to explain HIV/AIDS effectively, they need speakers who know much about the subject. In addition to providing education, this community also offers care services for CSWs, funded by the profit from condom sales. However, these services are limited due to fund constraints.

Furthermore, as part of efforts to meet the need for better care services, the *Bong Suwung Association* generally collaborates with external organizations, such as NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) or higher education institutions in Yogyakarta. This collaboration is an important step in providing more effective care for CSWs in the Bong Suwung area (Results of the Interview with Damar Natapraja, August 31, 2023).

Although various efforts have been made by the Bong Suwung Association to minimize the spread of HIV/AIDS, the challenges faced remain complex. There are several factors that hinder awareness of effective HIV/AIDS prevention in Bong Suwung. Some of these inhibiting factors include:

(1) Low Education Level: The majority of sex workers (PSK) in Bong Suwung have a low level of education, with most being elementary school graduates. Some have completed junior high school, and only a few have received high school education. This low level of education makes it difficult for them to grasp awareness of effective HIV/AIDS prevention. Therefore, it is necessary to deliver information in a simpler and more concise manner to ensure their understanding;

(2) Low Economic Status: The income of sex workers (PSK) in Bong Suwung tends to be low, with an estimated maximum of Rp 500,000 per month. This amount can even decrease if a PSK is unwell, tired, or experiencing menstruation. These challenging economic conditions lead many PSK to become apathetic about HIV/AIDS cases. They perceive that HIV/AIDS prevention will cost them a lot of money, both for vital organ care and maintaining their environmental hygiene. This contradicts their financial situation, which falls below the Regional Minimum Wage (UMR) of Yogyakarta;

(3) Age Factor: The average age of PSK in Bong Suwung ranges from 30 to 50 years, with the majority of them being over 40 years old. Due to their age factor, many of them become apathetic about maintaining their health, as they consider their age to be beyond the productive years;

(4) Environmental Factor: The working environment in the red-light areas makes some PSK neglect the risks of HIV/AIDS. They are aware that these areas are vulnerable to the spread of HIV/AIDS, but it's difficult for them to avoid it because they work within these areas. This situation exacerbates the issue of the spreading HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Fundamentally, the discussions on the HIV/AIDS are considered highly sensitive in various communities, including Bong Suwung. Mawar, a sex worker in Bong Suwung, acknowledges that many people still lack a proper understanding of what HIV/AIDS actually is, and there is often a negative stigma associated with people living with HIV/AIDS. The impact of this stigma is that many PSK tend to be indifferent to the risk of HIV/AIDS transmission. This situation poses a serious challenge for the *Bong Suwung Association* in their prevention efforts because the required strategies need to not only be general but also accommodate the existing sensitivities and

stigma (Interview with Mawar, August 31, 2023).

The strategies employed by the *Bong Suwung Association* include holding regular meetings once every 40 days, selling affordable condoms, conducting awareness campaigns, and providing routine health check-up services for sex workers in collaboration with the Yogyakarta City Health Office. They also offer financial assistance for people living with HIV/AIDS, funded through the profit from condom sales. However, the crucial aspect is a specific strategy involving an intensive approach to sex workers, including holding regular meetings, conducting periodic data collection, and involving sex workers in all activities related to external partners and more (Interview with Damar Natapraja, August 31, 2023).

This specific strategy closely correlates with the concept of social penetration theory. In this theory, it is essential to understand the stages regarding the process of self-disclosure and deeper communication (Wiryanto, 2004). The *Bong Suwung Association* has successfully built more intimate relationships with sex workers, enabling them to provide more effective information, education, and care. Through this intensive approach and special strategy, they aim to reduce stigma, increase awareness, and minimize the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Bong Suwung red-light area.

In the context of the special strategy employed by the *Bong Suwung Association*, it can be correlated with the stages of relationships as outlined in the social penetration theory.

Here is the explanation: (1) Orientation Stage: This stage represents the initial step where there is self-disclosure by providing preliminary information. In this research, this stage describes the initial introduction to sex workers through data collection. The initial data collected includes full names, aliases, origins, age, education, and other basic information. This approach aims to initiate the communication opening process between the organizers and sex workers;

(2) Active Exploration Exchange Stage: In this stage, there is an expansion of information and deeper disclosure. In this research, this stage reflects the organizers of the *Bong Suwung Association* who have a deep understanding of the identity of each sex worker working there. Although sex workers in

Bong Suwung are not bound by a pimp, the organizers maintain a close relationship with them to ensure their safety while they are on duty. This stage represents the development of information related to the types of clients or customers that need to be avoided and other information that impacts the safety of sex workers;

(3) Affective Exchange Stage: This stage involves sharing more personal information, creating commitments, and deepening the relationship's closeness. In this research, this stage encompasses more intimate communication regarding condom usage. The *Bong Suwung Association* organizers communicate with sex workers about the importance of using condoms as a measure to prevent HIV/AIDS. The information shared at this stage is more explicit and aims to build a commitment to maintaining health;

(4) Stable Exchange Stage: This stage reaches a level of closeness, trust, and intimacy in the relationship. In the context of the research findings, there is evidence of closeness between sex workers and the *Bong Suwung Association*. This closeness facilitates the process of data collection, care, and assistance for sex workers living with HIV/AIDS. The presence of the *Bong Suwung Association* as a support system provides a sense of security and the needed support for sex workers in such conditions."

The results of this analysis have indicated a relevant correlation with the research conducted by Setyawati (2016) titled *Community-based Parenting Model to Stop HIV/AIDS Dissemination Due to Premarital Sexual Behavior of Adolescents*. Setyawati's research addresses the same issue, which is the spread of HIV/AIDS caused by premarital sexual behavior among adolescents. The study emphasizes the importance of education and the roles of parents and the community in preventing HIV/AIDS transmission (Setyawati, 2016). The analysis results from this research reflect similarities with the challenges faced by the *Bong Suwung Association* in educating commercial sex workers (PSK) in Bong Suwung about the dangers of HIV/AIDS.

One of the similarities that emerges is the challenge in disseminating information about HIV/AIDS. In this research, it was found that the low level of education among PSK in Bong Suwung, most of whom are elementary school graduates, is a major barrier. This makes it difficult for them to understand health

terminology and complex information about HIV/AIDS. This condition creates a need for a continuous education approach and the use of simple language to make information more easily understood. Additionally, Setyawati also highlights the importance of education and a sustainable approach to addressing similar challenges faced by adolescents in the context of premarital sexual behavior.

In both studies, it can be concluded that education and awareness regarding HIV/AIDS cannot be a one-time effort. Prevention efforts need to be continuous and focused on behavioral change. The *Bong Suwung Association*, as described in this research, adopts a specific strategy with an intimate approach to sex workers in Bong Suwung. This reflects the assumptions in social penetration theory that relationships evolve from non-close to intimate ones.

Furthermore, both of these studies highlight the importance of the community's role in HIV/AIDS prevention efforts. In Setyawati's research, the community is identified as one of the factors that can influence premarital sexual behavior among adolescents. On the other hand, the *Bong Suwung Association* is an active community that plays a significant role in raising awareness about HIV/AIDS in the Bong Suwung Yogyakarta prostitution environment. They engage in efforts such as regular meetings, awareness campaigns, health check-ups, and education.

In the context of social penetration theory, the relationship between the *Bong Suwung Association* and sex workers in Bong Suwung can be interpreted as the developmental stages of the relationship from orientation to affective exchange. The more intimate and continuous approach to HIV/AIDS education reflects the stages of exploration and deep exchange. Thus, the findings of this research provide a deeper understanding of how the Bong Suwung Association uses strategies and approaches based on social penetration theory to address the challenges of HIV/AIDS prevention in the Bong Suwung red-light area in Yogyakarta.

This research can also be linked to the study by Haryanti and Wartini (2019) titled 'Perception of People Living with

HIV/AIDS on Social Stigma of HIV/AIDS in Sukoharjo District.' Their research illustrates how social stigma against individuals living with HIV/AIDS can hinder efforts to educate about the dangers of HIV/AIDS. This negative stigma creates fear that can complicate the screening and examination process for people living with HIV/AIDS and can also affect their immune system conditions (Haryanti & Wartini, 2019). These findings are relevant to what the researchers have discovered in the context of Bong Suwung, especially in addressing the challenges faced by the *Bong Suwung Association* in raising awareness about HIV/AIDS among sex workers.

During the research process, the researchers found that environmental factors play a crucial role in hindering the education process about HIV/AIDS among sex workers in Bong Suwung. Sex workers there are aware that the area is vulnerable to the spread of HIV/AIDS, but they find it difficult to avoid it because they live and work within it. This reflects two important meanings. *First*, there is a sense of apathy about the living and working environment. The environmental conditions that are susceptible to HIV/AIDS transmission have become commonplace for them, which, in turn, can affect their awareness of the dangers.

Second, the negative stigma attached to sex workers also plays a role in making them more inclined to accept their circumstances rather than trying to change them. This negative stigma can originate from the broader society that looks down upon the profession of sex work, and it can create feelings of shame or low self-esteem among sex workers themselves. Consequently, sex workers are more inclined to hide their identities or are not very open about their profession, even to those attempting to provide education about the dangers of HIV/AIDS. In this case, social stigma becomes the primary barrier in efforts to educate and raise awareness among sex workers.

The two meanings mentioned above contribute to the challenges faced by the *Bong Suwung Association* in conducting data collection among sex workers in Bong Suwung. Sex workers' apathy about their environment and the social stigma surrounding them make them less cooperative in providing the information needed by the community. Data collection is a crucial initial step in efforts to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. However, these constraints create significant barriers

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that efforts to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and educate sex workers about the danger of HIV/AIDS are not solely related to medical factors or health information. Social stigma, fear, and the social environment also play a crucial role in determining the level of awareness and participation in HIV/AIDS prevention. Therefore, more holistic and sustainable efforts need to be undertaken to address these challenges.

The *Bong Suwung Association* should continue to work towards reducing social stigma against sex workers and creating a safer and more open environment for HIV/AIDS education. A more intimate and sensitive approach to the conditions of sex workers in Bong Suwung can help overcome these barriers. Additionally, collaboration with external parties, including authorities and health organizations, can enhance the effectiveness of prevention efforts.

Conclusions

Based on the results of the analysis, the researcher concludes that the *Bong Suwung Association* faces challenges in educating sex workers about HIV/AIDS. Constraints such as low education levels, economic difficulties, age factors, and social stigma pose barriers to prevention efforts. Strategies involving an intimate and sustained approach, adapted from social penetration theory, are crucial in building closer relationships with sex workers and providing more effective information and

care. Furthermore, this research underscores the importance of involving various stakeholders in HIV/AIDS prevention efforts and the collaborative role with external parties.

Furthermore, this research also concludes that HIV/AIDS prevention is not just about delivering health information but also about addressing social stigma, understanding the social environment, and building deeper relationships with at-risk individuals. Sustained efforts that are sensitive to the local context and involve various stakeholders can help address the complexity of this issue and minimize the spread of HIV/AIDS in red-light areas like Bong Suwung.

Acknowledgements

This research was funded through the Directorate General of Higher Education research grant scheme for junior lecturers in the 2023-2 implementation year. Additionally, the researchers would like to express their gratitude to Amikom University Yogyakarta for their support throughout the research process. Special thanks are also extended to the partner organization, the Bong Suwung Community, for their involvement and collaboration during the research

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