How is the Prospective Physical Education Teachers' Strategy to Maintain Academic Performance using Self-Control?

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Abstract. The increasingly open social interactions make students easily trapped in various destructive practices that impact their academic performance. On the other hand, there are self-control strategies that students have succeeded in doing so that they still have stable academic performance. This study aims to investigate student self-control strategies in maintaining academic performance by using a qualitative-exploratory approach so that students are more free and expressive when conveying self-control strategies through subjective experiences. Data were collected using observation, interview, and documentation techniques. There were 11 students involved, both those with a good reputation and vice versa. The taxonomic analysis found that students used behavioral control strategies to complete tasks on time and free time and used cognitive control to prioritize learning experiences, prioritizing academic priorities, and maximize decisional control to be critical before making decisions and assertive destructive behavior.

1. Introduction

In learning activities, students need preparation to avoid various obstacles. The reason is that when students live outside the campus area, the place is not conducive to learning [1], students tend to maintain and build poor social relationships [2], do not have enough time to study [3] and indiscipline in learning [4]. When students can control themselves, the obstacles mentioned can be overcome because they can control themselves from various unproductive activities [5]–[6]. Self-control also contributes to students' time management to prepare for study [7]. As a result, students are not easily expelled from campus because they have poor performance appraisals [8].

Self-control helps students control their emotions and self-direction in channeling energy and allows them to guide their lives for the better [9]–[10] by learning from the experiences around them. Those with high self-control can also be "tempted" because they do not have an impulsive tendency; instead, they succeed in resisting desires that act aimlessly [11]–[12] and focus on self-efficacy [13]. In addition, self-control is also effective in preventing students from engaging in destructive behaviors, such as seeking temporary gratification, being shortsighted, impulsive, and insensitive, not having a preference for purely physical tasks, and having an easy mentality [14]. With a high level of control, students can distinguish and decide on various social and academic activities that support academic performance.

In a new perspective, self-control is not a matter of knowing what to do but doing what we know [15]. As a result, self-control can prevent students from academic dishonesty [14], can prevent smoking behavior

[16], and help students overcome academic procrastination [17], [18], [19], [20], [21]. Self-control can also help students reduce their anger and reduce retaliatory behavior [22] and help students in productive behavior. As a result, self-control can regulate stimuli and adjust student behavior to things that support the learning process [19], including using time according to primary needs [18].

When student interaction increases, it will impact socialization activities and self-control [23]. Self-control does not happen spontaneously and quickly [24] but happens because of long interaction between individuals and other individuals in their social environment. Self-control plays a role in predicting areas of student life or socialization, including academic performance and effective time management [7]. For example, students can control the time to study, control the place to socialize, and control strategic steps to have good learning performance or even control their desires beyond their capacity. As a result, self-control contributes to students' academic performance [6], [25] and avoids them from counterproductive behavior [5].

We have noted empirical evidence on the determination of self-control on student academic performance in the previous studies above. However, the evidence above shows more "quantitative hegemony," such as research by [5], [6], [25], and [26]. They have not answered strategic forms of exploration about student self-control in maintaining their academic performance. Therefore, this study investigates students' self-control strategies in maintaining academic performance through their subjective experiences.

2. Methodology

This study used an exploratory-comparative qualitative approach to find strategies for students to use self-control when maintaining their academic performance. This qualitative exploration and comparison are shaded on students' self-control strategies to have good and stable academic performance. This approach is more responsive to research problems because researchers can explore student experiences in depth through direct observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies to find the meaning behind the good academic performance of students.

We determined 11 students of the Physical Education, Health and Recreation Study Program, Artha Wacana Christian University, as research subjects. They were divided into two groups. The group of students with a history and reputation of high and stable academic performance (6 people); UR (24 years), LK (24 years), OL (26 years), KMMN (27 years), WHHSP (27 years), and MNM (27 years) (M = 25.8333; SD = 1.47196). The rest were students with a history and reputation for low academic performance (5 people); EGM (24 years), ET (26 years), MT (27 years), MK (25 years), and MKA (23 years).) (M = 25; SD = 1.58114).

The interview data were confirmed with direct observation data and a study of student learning performance documentation. The in-depth interviews focused on the concept of self-control developed by [27], including behavioral control (e.g., *when do you spend time on homework and hobbies*), cognitive control (e.g., *what strategies do you use to improve academic performance*), and decision control (for example, *what if a friend asks you to skip college*). Furthermore, all data were analyzed using a taxonomic model developed by [28], which focused on the cause-and-effect domains and the way-to-goal domain.

3. Result and Discussion
3.1. Behavioural control: Based opportunity

Self-control helps a person to change the direction of stimuli, such as dreams, values, morals, and social expectations, to support the achievement of long-term goals [29] so that each student has the opportunity to modify his behavior as a result of a number of stimuli. Do they exhibit constructive behavior or vice versa? For example, students do not want to do their assignments while other colleagues are working on them. Instead, he was busy hanging out with his boarding housemates, so he did not finish his assignments because the proportions of time spent hanging out overlapped. With short and urgent time conditions, they are easily trapped in various deviant practices, such as cheating, committing acts of plagiarism, and many more. It shows that students worry about themselves because of low self-control [11]. The case described is a form of student destructive behavior because of poor behavioral control. If students have good self-control, they can resist various stimuli that are not goal-oriented [11]–[12].

Some self-control behavioral responses can be identified from both types of student groups in maintaining their academic performance. Students with a reputation for good academic performance are more likely to use behavioral control to fill their free time so that all activities can be carried out properly. Like the experience of UR (Male, 24 years old) that *"When I do my homework, it is after I come home from college and if it is given in the morning, in the evening I immediately do the assignment because I do not want the assignment to pile up. Because I have other things to do.*" Meanwhile, students with poor academic performance place more on behavioral control as a form of carrying out their obligations. For example, what was stated by EGM (Woman, 24 years old) *that "I do the task because the task is an obligation that I have to do to train and increase my abilities."* Although the behavior of both is active and aware of the task, the two views above are very different in placing behavioral control. UR uses more behavioral control to respond to learning behavior based on the opportunity (time). Meanwhile, EGM emphasizes behavioral control on its obligations as students.

Self-control helps students do what they know [15] by completing time and opportunity-oriented tasks. It shows that they have the high discipline [30]. When they get an invitation to "play" excessively, they can control it not to disturb their academic performance [13]. If they do not have assignments, the time is used to carry out performance simulations/tests as stated in the Semester Learning Plan because they understand the critical areas to start a productive action [15]. For example, students complete the assignments in the Semester Lesson Plan without waiting for the teacher's instructions. By working in advance, they have plenty of time to prepare, review work results, and make critical repairs in contrast to students who do assignments because of obligations. They complete assignments when they get assignments from their lecturers or colleagues. So as long as they do not get assignments, they do not do anything, so there is a potential for students to use their free time and opportunities on unproductive things.

3.2. Cognitive control: Prioritizing learning experiences and academic priorities

Students use their cognitive control to keep them focused on enriching their learning experiences to improve academic performance. In this case, students with good academic performance can do what they know [15], so they always pay attention to primary needs, including lecture time, assignment time, and hobby time proportionally [14], [18]. They do not want these two important activities to collide with each other, because according to [23], along with increasing social interaction, it will also have an impact on one's self-control. KMNN (Male, 27 years old) stated that: "*Football is my hobby. My friends usually invite me to play football, but I asked them whether we play in the city of Kupang or outside the city of Kupang, because in principle, my hobby is not a job*." Although hobbies are an important part of students' channels of expression, they are not prioritized when they coincide with academic activities. It indicates that students prioritize learning experiences and prioritize long-term goals (becoming teachers) to control their involvement in other secondary activities.

There is a fundamental difference between students with high academic performance and low academic performance in playing their cognitive control. High academic performance students use cognitive control to prioritize activities based on long-term orientation. For example, they manage time effectively [7], can control themselves and their energy appropriately [9]–[10], and always act according to their goals [11], [12]. They are not easily contaminated with an invitation to do their hobby. The information is analyzed to predict the consequences they will receive if they focus on their hobby "too much." Another decision they choose when their team competes is to choose a permit so that the learning experience on campus is not hampered or even disrupted. Thus, they make evaluations and decisions based on their priorities and goals for engaging in an activity. For example, what will happen if they follow the invitation to do a hobby and neglect duties? Or what are the consequences for students if they ignore their hobbies and choose to do assignments?

The actual learning experience is entitated to various "investigation" activities that students do outside of class. Students actively prepare and look for assignments that the lecturer has given. It is due to feelings of fear, worry, sadness, or panic when students are late in submitting assignments. This student's emotional polemic is also based on the continued impact on his learning performance, learning outcomes and can continue to decrease his GPA due to not passing for some courses. For example, OL (Male, 26 years old)

said when he was late submitting assignments, *"I feel panicked and afraid of being scolded by the lecturer and not passing the course."* So if they are not involved in the learning experience and academic priorities, anxiety also increases because of fear of academic failure.

3.3. Decisional control: Make decision critically and assertive towards destructive behavior

Some self-control problems cause hasty decision-making [31], which can eventually lead to various personal and interpersonal problems [32]. Interpersonal problems are reflected when students want to refuse a destructive invitation but want to maintain social relations [2]. Students with good decisional control will prevent them from counterproductive behavior [5] and suppress academic procrastination [17], [18], [19], [20], [21]. They are assertive towards various deviant behaviors as well as being more change-oriented. For example, MNM (Male, 27 years old) shared an experience when a colleague asked him to skip class "*I refused because it was a dishonest act."* Although students often refuse the invitations of their colleagues with deviant behavior, they also do not always attend class, and there are meetings that they do not attend for some reason. Their decision is also an implication of the professionalism of the lecturer in teaching. Some students show fearful behavior and loss if they do not attend lectures taught or accompanied by good and competent lecturers. For this reason, the impact of student decision control also depends on their adaptive attitude to change because students have nothing to lose if they are not included in the class taught by lazy and unprofessional lecturers.

There are three interesting phenomena in the case of using decision control. First, decision control is used to maintain universally accepted values and norms. They can refuse a destructive invitation or action because it is counterproductive to norms and ethics. For example, MNM (Male, 27 years old) refused the invitation to skip school, which he conveyed, "Because it is a bad act." This response underscores that skipping class is seen as an attitude contrary to universal norms or rules. Second, decision control is used to focus on learning goals so that they avoid destructive behavior. Listen to the statement from WHHSP (Male, 27 years old) regarding the invitation to skip class "I am afraid to skip class because I am afraid that I will miss lecture materials and assignments." Thus, students can make strategic decisions because their anxiety level is low and their time management is high [33]. This decision confirms the academic consequences that students experience if they are late for learning materials and assignments. For example, he does not update the material and cannot analyze and synthesize the material topics discussed in the discussion class and can impact the failure of his studies.

Finally, students use decision control critically when inviting others to change. When there are colleagues who do not do assignments, students only have two decisions, to help or ignore them. Some students use decision control to help their colleagues do better, as did UR (Male, 24 years old) "*Ask a friend to do an assignment or give him an example in order to complete the task well.*" This effort is also based on the number of times and opportunities students have to help their colleagues become better. However, for some repetitions of peer negligence, they will be more assertive in assisting because it can be time-consuming. Moreover, at the same time, they both have the same status as students, so that decision control should not exceed their capacity and end up harming themselves. It is the distinguishing characteristic of students who have a high academic reputation and vice versa. Where they can make critical decisions when helping and rejecting their peers, if this decision continuum is not considered critically, it will impact the minimal use of time and opportunities to perform optimally.

4. Conclusion

Academic performance is not information obtained quickly but rather a long accumulation of various student preparations that are identified through the success of their learning performance. One of the strategic areas used to maintain academic performance is self-control because, in a social relation, students often interact, and various invitations, decisions, and even dilemmatic behavior can keep students away from productive learning behaviors. This study succeeded in exploring the strategy of prospective physical education teachers to maintain academic performance using self-control: First, students always use free time and opportunities to complete lecture assignments. They view the task not because of obligation, so that completing the task is not in a state of "urgent," but always uses free time and opportunities. Second, academic activities and assignments are used to develop productive learning experiences while

strengthening students' goals to prioritize academic completion of undergraduate programs. And the last, to control various constructive behaviors, students are always critical and evaluative of various stimulations, so that he makes several rejections to become a trend of academic performance.

Acknowledgement

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