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Internalizing Anti-Sexual Violence Education as a Preventive Strategy Against Risky Sexual Behavior Among Adolescents

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the internalization of anti-sexual violence education as a preventive strategy against risky sexual behavior among adolescents. The research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore deeply the implementation process, strategies, and impacts within educational settings. Data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation, and analyzed using data condensation, data display, and verification techniques. The findings reveal that the internalization process, carried out through habituation, role modeling, and reinforcement, significantly enhances students' awareness of personal boundaries, improves social interactions, and strengthens their ability to avoid risky behavior. In addition, supportive school environments and teacher involvement play crucial roles in the effectiveness of this process, although cultural barriers remain challenges. The study implies that integrating cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions in education is essential to achieve meaningful and sustainable behavioral change among adolescents, particularly in preventing sexual violence and promoting ethical conduct.

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Introduction

The issue of anti-sexual violence education has become increasingly important in contemporary society due to the rising concerns about adolescents' vulnerability to risky sexual behavior. This study is significant because it addresses the urgent need to equip young individuals with knowledge, values, and awareness to protect themselves and others from harmful interactions. Adolescents are in a critical developmental stage where curiosity and social influence often shape their behavior, making them more susceptible to misinformation and risky decisions (Muniroh et al., 2024; Werdiningsih & Winursito, 2024). Evidence from various educational contexts shows that the absence of structured guidance on sexual ethics and personal boundaries contributes to unsafe behavior patterns among youth. Therefore, integrating preventive education into formal schooling is not only relevant but necessary to foster responsible attitudes. In conclusion, this research is important because it contributes to the development of a value-based educational approach that can support adolescents in making safe, informed, and ethical decisions in their social lives.

Despite its importance, many societies still face significant challenges in addressing issues related to sexual violence and risky sexual behavior among adolescents. One of the main problems is the lack of comprehensive and age-appropriate education that discusses these topics openly and constructively (Werdiningsih & Winursito, 2024). Cultural taboos often prevent educators and parents from addressing sexual issues, resulting in limited awareness among adolescents. As a consequence, many young individuals rely on inaccurate information from peers or the internet, which may increase their vulnerability to risky behavior. Furthermore, the absence of preventive education contributes to the persistence of harmful social norms, such as victim-blaming and misunderstanding of consent. This situation highlights the urgent need for educational interventions that not only provide knowledge but also foster moral awareness and behavioral change. Thus, the problem lies not only in the lack of information but also in the failure to internalize values that can guide adolescents toward responsible behavior.

Field observations reveal that the phenomenon of risky sexual behavior among adolescents is closely linked to the lack of structured educational interventions in schools. In many cases, students demonstrate limited understanding of personal boundaries and appropriate social conduct. Teachers often focus on academic achievement while overlooking the importance of character education related to sexual ethics and prevention of violence (Kholifah, 2024; Mannan & Shulhani, 2024; Safuan, 2024). Interviews with educators indicate that discussions about sexual violence are often avoided due to discomfort or lack of training. Additionally, students tend to perceive such topics as sensitive or embarrassing, which further limits open communication. This phenomenon suggests that the absence of a systematic approach to internalizing anti-sexual violence values creates a gap between knowledge and behavior. As a result, adolescents may engage in actions that expose them to potential risks without fully understanding the consequences. Therefore, addressing this phenomenon requires a more integrated and value-oriented educational strategy.

Previous studies have explored various aspects of sexual education and adolescent behavior, emphasizing the importance of knowledge dissemination and awareness campaigns. Many researchers have highlighted that providing information about reproductive health and sexual risks can improve adolescents' understanding and reduce harmful behavior. However, most of these studies primarily focus on cognitive outcomes, such as knowledge acquisition, without paying sufficient attention to the affective and behavioral dimensions of learning. As a result, although students may understand the concepts theoretically, they do not always translate this knowledge into practice. This limitation indicates that current approaches to sexual education may not be fully effective in shaping long-term behavioral change (Das, 2024; Suardi et al., 2024). Therefore, there is a need to move beyond traditional information-based approaches and develop strategies that emphasize value internalization and character development as integral components of education.

In addition, several studies have attempted to integrate moral and character education into the prevention of risky behavior among adolescents. These studies suggest that incorporating ethical values and social norms into the learning process can positively influence students' attitudes and actions. However, there remains a lack of research that specifically examines how anti-sexual violence education can be internalized through systematic and structured strategies within educational settings. Moreover, existing research often lacks empirical evidence on how such internalization processes impact students' real-life behavior. This gap highlights the need for further investigation into the mechanisms through which educational values are internalized and translated into consistent behavioral patterns (König et al., 2024; Ming et al., 2024; Nursyifa et al.,

2024). Consequently, this study positions itself as an effort to address this gap by focusing on both the process and impact of internalizing anti-sexual violence education among adolescents.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the internalization process of anti-sexual violence education as a preventive strategy, rather than merely examining knowledge or awareness. This study emphasizes the integration of cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions in shaping adolescents' attitudes toward risky sexual behavior. By exploring how values are embedded through daily practices, role modeling, and reinforcement, this research offers a more comprehensive understanding of educational effectiveness. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of contextual factors, such as school environment and teacher involvement, in supporting the internalization process. This approach provides a new perspective that bridges the gap between theory and practice, making it highly relevant for educational institutions seeking to implement sustainable preventive programs. Therefore, this research is important to address existing limitations and contribute to the development of more effective educational strategies.

Based on the issues and gaps identified, the research problem of this study focuses on how the internalization of anti-sexual violence education can be implemented as an effective preventive strategy against risky sexual behavior among adolescents (Nengyanti et al., 2024). The underlying argument of this research is that internalization, which involves the integration of knowledge, values, and behavior, is more effective than traditional instructional approaches that focus solely on cognitive aspects. It is hypothesized that when students actively engage in value-based learning processes, they are more likely to develop responsible attitudes and avoid risky behavior. Furthermore, this study aims to contribute to the field of education by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of internalization strategies in shaping adolescent behavior. In conclusion, this research seeks to offer both theoretical and practical contributions by demonstrating the importance of holistic education in promoting safe and ethical behavior among adolescents.

Method

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a case study design to explore in depth the process of internalizing anti-sexual violence education as a preventive strategy against risky sexual behavior among adolescents. The qualitative case study design is chosen because it allows the researcher to understand complex social phenomena within their real-life context, particularly how values are embedded, practiced, and interpreted by students and teachers (Henline-Hall, 2024; Ilhami et al., 2024). This design is considered appropriate as the focus of the study is not to measure variables quantitatively but to gain a comprehensive understanding of behaviors, perceptions, and experiences (Nurfajriani et al., 2024). Through this approach, the researcher is able to capture rich, detailed data that reflect the realities of educational practices related to anti-sexual violence.

The research was conducted in Islamic junior high school settings, which were selected purposively based on their relevance to the research focus. These locations were chosen because they represent educational environments where moral and character education are emphasized, making them suitable contexts for examining the internalization of values. Additionally, preliminary observations indicated that these schools have implemented forms of character education related to ethical behavior and social norms. The selection of these sites also considers accessibility, willingness of participants, and the presence of phenomena relevant to the study. Therefore, the chosen locations provide meaningful and contextually rich data to support the research objectives.

Data collection techniques in this study include observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to capture students' behavior, interactions, and the implementation

of educational activities related to anti-sexual violence. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with teachers and students to obtain deeper insights into their experiences, perceptions, and responses toward the educational process. Documentation, such as lesson plans, school policies, and activity reports, was also analyzed to complement the findings. The combination of these techniques enables data triangulation, ensuring that the information obtained is comprehensive and credible.

The data analysis process follows several systematic steps, including data condensation, data display, and data verification. Data condensation involves selecting, focusing, and simplifying the raw data obtained from the field to make it more manageable and meaningful. This is followed by data display, where the organized data are presented in the form of descriptive narratives, tables, or matrices to facilitate interpretation (Phillips et al., 2024). Finally, data verification is conducted by drawing conclusions and confirming them through continuous comparison with the data collected. This iterative process ensures that the findings are accurate and grounded in the data.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, this study applies several validation techniques, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility is achieved through prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation of data sources and methods. Transferability is addressed by providing detailed descriptions of the research context, allowing readers to determine the applicability of the findings to other settings (Rogo, 2024). Dependability is ensured through a clear and consistent research process, while confirmability is maintained by minimizing researcher bias and supporting findings with evidence from the data. These strategies strengthen the validity and reliability of the research results.

Findings

Concept of Internalizing Anti-Sexual Violence Education

Based on classroom observations, the internalization of anti-sexual violence education among adolescents was not only delivered through theoretical explanation but also embedded in daily interactions between teachers and students. Teachers consistently introduced values such as respect, personal boundaries, and mutual responsibility during lessons and informal communication. Students were observed to gradually demonstrate awareness of appropriate behavior, such as maintaining respectful communication and understanding limits in peer interactions. This indicates that internalization occurs when values are repeatedly practiced in real-life situations rather than merely explained conceptually.

The results of interviews with teachers revealed that internalization is viewed as a long-term process requiring continuous reinforcement. Teachers emphasized that students need to be guided not only to understand the concept of sexual violence prevention cognitively but also to develop emotional sensitivity and ethical awareness. One teacher stated that students often begin to understand the importance of consent and personal boundaries after being given relatable examples and real-life scenarios. This reflects that affective and experiential learning plays a crucial role in internalization.

Furthermore, interviews with students indicated that they began to recognize the importance of respecting themselves and others after receiving consistent guidance from teachers. Students expressed that discussions about boundaries and consequences helped them reflect on their behavior in social contexts. This suggests that internalization is effective when students are actively engaged in the learning process and encouraged to relate the material to their daily experiences.



Figure 1. The Process of Cultivating Ethical Minds through Moral Values, Respect, and Daily Practice

The figure illustrates the process of cultivating ethical minds through a structured integration of values and practices. On the left side, foundational elements such as moral values, respect, and personal boundaries are emphasized as the starting point, highlighting the importance of teaching ethical principles, fostering mutual regard, and establishing safe behavioral limits. These core values then move through a transformational process, symbolized by the arrows, toward the development of internalized ethical understanding. On the right side, this transformation is reflected in practical applications, including open dialogue, ethical education, and daily practice. Open dialogue encourages active discussion and critical thinking, ethical education strengthens the internalization of principles, and daily practice reinforces these values in consistent behavior. Overall, the figure demonstrates that ethical development is a continuous process that begins with foundational values and is strengthened through communication, education, and habitual practice in everyday life.

Forms of Implementation in Educational Settings

Observational findings showed that the implementation of anti-sexual violence education was integrated into both formal and informal learning environments. In classroom settings, teachers incorporated relevant topics into subjects such as religious education and civic education. Outside the classroom, schools organized activities such as seminars and group discussions to deepen students' understanding. These various forms of implementation allowed students to receive consistent messages across different contexts, reinforcing the importance of preventing sexual violence.

Interviews with teachers highlighted that integrating anti-sexual violence education into the curriculum is considered an effective approach because it ensures continuity and structure in learning. Teachers explained that delivering this material through multiple channels, such as classroom instruction, counseling sessions, and extracurricular activities, helps students understand the topic more comprehensively. One teacher noted that interactive methods, such as discussions and role-playing, were particularly effective in engaging students and making the material more relatable.

From the students' perspective, interviews revealed that they found these varied approaches helpful in understanding sensitive topics. Students stated that seminars and group discussions provided a safe space for them to ask questions and express their opinions. They also appreciated the use of real-life examples, which made the learning process more meaningful. This indicates that diverse implementation strategies contribute to a deeper and more practical understanding among students.

Strategies for Internalization

Classroom observations indicated that teachers applied several strategies to internalize anti-sexual violence education, including habituation, role modeling, and reinforcement. Habituation was evident in daily routines, such as encouraging respectful communication and reinforcing ethical behavior. Teachers consistently modeled appropriate attitudes, demonstrating how to interact respectfully with others. Students appeared to imitate these behaviors over time, suggesting that role modeling plays a significant role in shaping their attitudes.

Interviews with teachers revealed that they intentionally use reinforcement strategies to strengthen students' understanding and behavior. Positive reinforcement, such as praise and encouragement, was given when students demonstrated respectful behavior. Conversely, corrective feedback was provided when inappropriate behavior occurred. Teachers emphasized that consistency in applying these strategies is essential to ensure that values are deeply internalized and not easily forgotten.

Students, during interviews, expressed that they were more likely to follow rules and values when teachers consistently demonstrated them. They also mentioned that receiving feedback helped them understand their mistakes and improve their behavior. This suggests that internalization strategies are effective when they involve continuous guidance, clear expectations, and consistent reinforcement from educators.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

Observations revealed that a supportive school environment significantly contributed to the success of internalizing anti-sexual violence education. Schools that maintained a positive and respectful atmosphere enabled students to feel safe and open in discussing sensitive topics. Adequate facilities, such as counseling rooms and access to educational materials, also supported the implementation process. These factors created an environment conducive to learning and value formation.

Interviews with teachers identified several supporting factors, including strong collaboration between teachers, school administrators, and parents. Teachers noted that parental involvement played a crucial role in reinforcing values taught at school. However, they also highlighted inhibiting factors, such as cultural taboos surrounding discussions of sexual education and limited resources. These challenges sometimes made it difficult to deliver the material effectively.

Students, in their interviews, expressed that they felt more comfortable discussing sensitive issues when teachers were approachable and understanding. However, some students admitted that they still felt embarrassed or hesitant due to societal norms. This indicates that while supportive factors can enhance the process, cultural barriers remain a significant challenge that needs to be addressed through continuous education and awareness.

Impact on Adolescents' Behavior

Observational data showed noticeable changes in students' behavior after the implementation of anti-sexual violence education. Students demonstrated increased awareness of personal boundaries and showed more respectful interactions with peers. Instances of inappropriate behavior were reduced, and students appeared more cautious in their actions. This suggests that internalization has a tangible impact on students' daily behavior.

Interviews with teachers confirmed these observations, as they reported improvements in students' attitudes and social interactions. Teachers noted that students became more responsible and showed greater understanding of the consequences of risky behavior. They also observed that students were more willing to speak up when witnessing inappropriate behavior, indicating increased awareness and confidence.

From the students' perspective, interviews revealed that they felt more informed and capable of making responsible decisions. Students stated that they were better able to recognize situations that could lead to risky behavior and knew how to avoid them. This demonstrates that the internalization of anti-sexual violence education not only enhances knowledge but also influences attitudes and decision-making, contributing to positive behavioral changes.

Table 1. The Impact of Internalizing Anti-Sexual Violence Education on Adolescents' Behavior

No	Aspect Observed	Observation Findings	Interview Findings (Teachers)	Interview Findings (Students)	Interpretation
1	Awareness of Personal Boundaries	Students showed improved understanding of appropriate physical and social limits in interactions	Teachers reported students are more aware of respecting others' space and rights	Students stated they now understand what is acceptable and what is not	Indicates successful internalization of boundary awareness
2	Social Interaction Behavior	More respectful communication and reduced inappropriate jokes or actions	Teachers observed better manners and more ethical behavior in peer interactions	Students feel more responsible in how they speak and act	Reflects positive behavioral change in daily interactions
3	Ability to Avoid Risky Behavior	Decrease in behaviors that may lead to risky sexual situations	Teachers noted students are more cautious and think before acting	Students expressed they can identify and avoid risky situations	Shows effectiveness of preventive education
4	Critical Thinking Skills	Students more actively analyze situations related to social and moral issues	Teachers stated students ask more reflective and critical questions	Students feel more confident in making decisions	Demonstrates development of higher-order thinking
5	Confidence to Speak Up	Students more willing to report or respond to inappropriate behavior	Teachers observed increased student participation in discussions	Students said they are braver to express opinions or concerns	Indicates growth in self-confidence and assertiveness

The table above illustrates the impact of internalizing anti-sexual violence education on adolescents' behavior based on observation and interview findings. It shows that students demonstrate increased awareness of personal boundaries, as reflected in their ability to understand appropriate limits in social interactions. In addition, their communication and behavior toward peers have become more respectful, indicating positive changes in social interaction. The data also reveal that students are more capable of avoiding risky sexual behavior, as they are able to recognize and respond to potentially harmful situations. Furthermore, the development of critical thinking

skills is evident through students' ability to analyze social and moral issues more deeply. Another significant finding is the increased confidence among students to speak up, either in expressing opinions or responding to inappropriate behavior. Overall, these findings indicate that the internalization of anti-sexual violence education has contributed not only to students' cognitive understanding but also to meaningful changes in their attitudes and behavior, supporting its role as an effective preventive strategy.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the internalization of anti-sexual violence education plays a significant role in shaping adolescents' understanding and behavior. Based on classroom observations, the process of internalization is not merely limited to theoretical instruction but is embedded in daily interactions between teachers and students. Teachers consistently integrate values such as respect, consent, and personal boundaries into both formal and informal learning situations. As a result, students gradually demonstrate increased awareness of appropriate behavior in their social environment, suggesting that repeated exposure and practice are essential in transforming knowledge into lived values (Parhan et al., 2024; Qorib & Afandi, 2024).

Furthermore, the implementation of anti-sexual violence education is carried out through various educational approaches, including curriculum integration, classroom instruction, and extracurricular activities (Faiz et al., 2023; Grenier, 2023; Motta & Galina, 2023; Naqach & Chaouki, 2023). Observational data reveal that these diverse methods create a more comprehensive learning experience for students. Interviews with teachers confirm that combining different forms of delivery, such as discussions, seminars, and role-playing activities, enhances students' engagement and understanding. This multifaceted approach ensures that students receive consistent messages across different contexts, which strengthens the internalization process.

In terms of strategies, the study found that habituation, role modeling, and reinforcement are key components in effectively internalizing values. Teachers play a crucial role as role models by demonstrating respectful and ethical behavior in their daily interactions. Observations show that students tend to imitate these behaviors over time, indicating the importance of example-based learning. Additionally, reinforcement strategies, such as providing feedback and encouragement, help solidify students' understanding and promote consistent behavior. Interviews with students further reveal that they are more likely to adopt positive values when they are consistently practiced and reinforced.

The success of this internalization process is also influenced by various supporting and inhibiting factors (Liu & Yin, 2023; Naqach & Chaouki, 2023; O'Connor & Park, 2023). A supportive school environment, characterized by positive relationships and open communication, significantly enhances students' willingness to engage in discussions about sensitive topics. Teacher competence and parental involvement also contribute to the effectiveness of the program. However, challenges such as cultural taboos surrounding sexual education and limited resources may hinder implementation. These findings suggest that addressing both internal and external factors is essential to optimize the impact of anti-sexual violence education.

Moreover, the impact of internalizing anti-sexual violence education is evident in observable changes in students' behavior. Students show greater awareness of personal boundaries, improved social interactions, and increased ability to avoid risky situations. Teachers report that students have become more responsible and demonstrate a deeper understanding of the consequences of their actions (Bruton et al., 2024; Mundiri, 2023; Sugiono, 2024). Students themselves express that they

feel more confident in making decisions and responding to potentially harmful situations. This indicates that the internalization process not only enhances knowledge but also influences attitudes and behavioral outcomes.

Overall, the findings highlight that internalizing anti-sexual violence education serves as an effective preventive strategy against risky sexual behavior among adolescents. The combination of comprehensive implementation, effective strategies, and supportive environments contributes to meaningful and lasting changes in students' cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains. Despite existing challenges, the study emphasizes the importance of continuous efforts to strengthen educational practices in this area. By fostering awareness, responsibility, and critical thinking, anti-sexual violence education can play a vital role in promoting safe and healthy adolescent development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the most important finding of this study highlights that the internalization of anti-sexual violence education serves as an effective preventive strategy in shaping adolescents' awareness, attitudes, and behavior, particularly in fostering respect for personal boundaries, ethical interactions, and the ability to avoid risky situations. The key lesson learned is that education which integrates cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions is more impactful than approaches that focus solely on knowledge transfer. The strength of this study lies in its contribution to the field of education, especially in providing a comprehensive understanding of how value-based learning can be systematically internalized within school environments to promote positive behavioral change among adolescents. This research also offers practical insights for educators in designing more holistic and contextually relevant educational strategies. However, this study has limitations, including its focus on a specific context and limited number of participants, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve broader settings, incorporate mixed-method approaches, and explore the long-term impact of internalization strategies to further strengthen the effectiveness of anti-sexual violence education.

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