17

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Integrating Curricular and Extracurricular Approaches to Prevent Sexual Violence in Junior High Schools in Indonesiaen

Integración de enfoques curriculares y extracurriculares para prevenir la violencia sexual en las escuelas secundarias de Indonesia

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Resumen

Este estudio tiene como objetivo explorar diversas cuestiones relacionadas con la violencia sexual en las escuelas secundarias de la ciudad de Padang Panjang, Indonesia, a través de discusiones en grupos focales y entrevistas en profundidad. Se utilizó un enfoque cualitativo para explorar las experiencias y percepciones de los involucrados, incluidos los docentes y administradores escolares. Este estudio examina cómo las instituciones formales e informales pueden abordar la violencia sexual contra los estudiantes. La investigación investiga diversas estrategias para manejar los casos de violencia sexual utilizando teorías de la educación en valores, el control social, los componentes del buen carácter y el modelo socioecológico como marco de prevención. Los hallazgos identifican temas clave relacionados con la naturaleza, las causas, los impactos y las intervenciones en torno a la violencia sexual en entornos educativos. Este estudio destaca que los factores que contribuyen a la violencia sexual incluyen influencias del entorno social, problemas familiares y malentendidos de las percepciones culturales. Resalta la importancia de la educación curricular y extracurricular que fomente el desarrollo del carácter, los valores religiosos y las prácticas culturales para cultivar la tolerancia y el respeto entre los estudiantes. Este estudio ofrece recomendaciones para la prevención de la violencia sexual que pueden ser implementadas por las instituciones gubernamentales municipales y organizaciones informales, como grupos religiosos, culturales y tradicionales. Estas recomendaciones enfatizan la importancia de desarrollar programas educativos integrales y la participación activa de las organizaciones comunitarias para abordar y prevenir eficazmente la violencia sexual en las escuelas.

Palabras clave: Escuelas Secundarias; Violencia Sexual; Estrategias Preventivas; Instituciones Informales; Educación En Valores; Educación Religiosa; Intervención Cultural

Abstract

This study aims to explore various issues of sexual violence in junior high schools in Padang Panjang City, Indonesia. through Focus Group Discussions and in-depth interviews. A qualitative approach was used to explore the experiences and perceptions of stakeholders, including teachers and school administrators. This study examines how both formal and informal institutions can address sexual violence against students. This research investigates various strategies for handling cases of sexual violence using the theories of character education, social control, Components of Good Character, and the social-ecological model as a prevention framework. The findings identify key themes related to the nature, causes, impacts, and interventions surrounding sexual violence in educational settings. This study highlights that contributing factors to sexual violence include social environment influences, family issues, and misinterpretations of cultural perceptions. It emphasizes the importance of curricular and extracurricular education that fosters character development, religious values, and cultural practices to cultivate tolerance and respect among students. This study provides recommendations for the prevention of sexual violence that can be implemented by municipal government institutions and informal organizations such as religious, cultural, and traditional groups. These recommendations emphasize the importance of developing comprehensive educational programs and the active involvement of community organizations to effectively address and prevent sexual violence in schools.

Keywords: Junior High Schools; Sexual Violence; Preventive Strategies; Informal Institutions; Character Education; Religious Education; Cultural Intervention

1. Introduction

A study conducted by the World Health Organization through the Global School-based Student Health Survey reveals alarming statistics, indicating that 1 in 20 adolescents in Indonesia has experienced suicidal thoughts, with 20.9% of students contemplating suicide due to experiences of sexual violence (Marthoenis, 2024). The 2018 Program for International Student Assessment highlights a concerning link between violence and students' academic performance. Notably, Indonesia ranks fifth globally in the number of sexual violence cases, with 41.1% of 15-year-old students reporting similar experiences, significantly higher than the OECD average of 22.7% (CBS, 2020). In 2022, Indonesia was ranked 68th out of 78 OECD member countries (Ainley *et al.*, 2020).

Data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission for 2022-2023 show 21.6 million cases of children's rights violations in schools, with 58% categorized as sexual violence, often leading to tragedies such as suicide (KPAI, 2022). The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection records that 25% of violence occurs in primary and junior high schools, 18.75% in senior high schools, and 6.25% in Islamic schools, with the remainder involving human trafficking and other issues (Berutu *et al.*, 2023). The following image illustrates the prevalence of violence against school children in ten provinces in Indonesia based on case types (Figure 1).
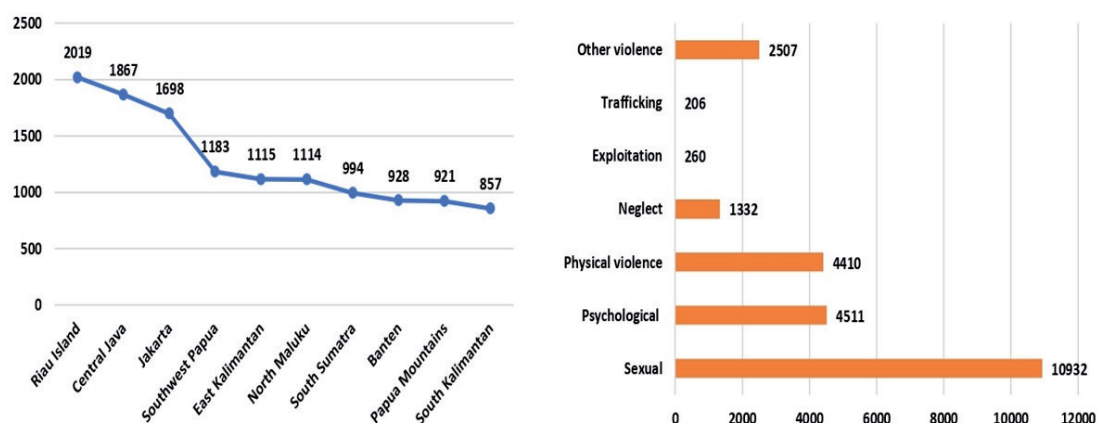

Figure 1. Cases of Violence Against Children in 10 Provinces in Indonesia in 2023. Source: Simfoni-PPA (2023).

In response to this crisis, the Government has undertaken various measures, including issuing the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation No. 46 of 2023, which addresses preventing and handling violence in educational environments. This new regulation reflects a more progressive approach compared to the previous Regulation No. 82 of 2015.

To tackle acts of violence, the Government has introduced the concept of *Mobilization Schools*, which aims to instill nationalism among students, foster a harmonious educational ecosystem, and encourage collaboration between students, educators, parents, and the community. The Directorate General of Primary and Secondary Education emphasizes the critical roles of parents, schools, and teachers in preventing and addressing violence against students. By promoting cooperation among stakeholders, the Government hopes to reduce incidents of violence.

However, current regulations in Indonesia have not fully integrated the views of education experts. Experts argue that this crisis stems from weak regulations in junior high schools regarding school and parental supervision, insufficient emphasis on religious and cultural values in the curriculum, lack of internalization of school social practices, and limited public awareness (Mayus & Samudra, 2024). This situation highlights the urgent need for collective awareness and coordinated actions to monitor and support victims of violence. Despite the existence of Regulation No. 46 of 2023, the prevalence of violence against school children continues to rise (see Figure 2).
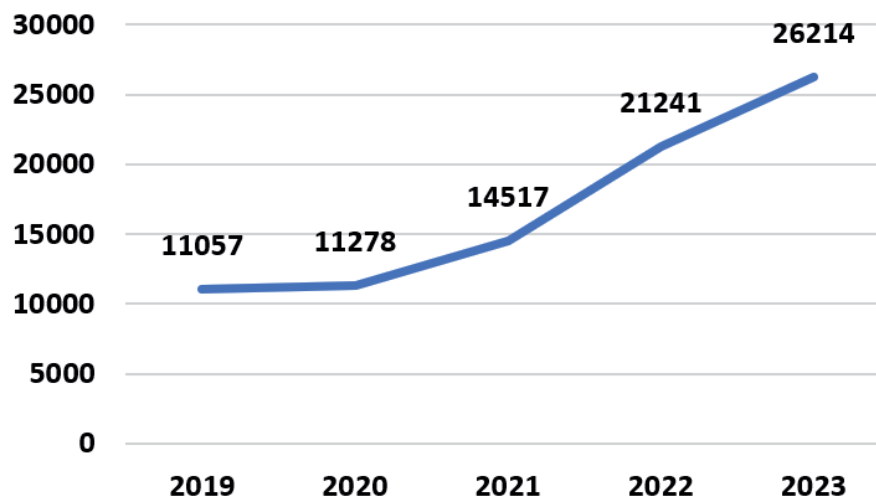

Figure 2. Increasing Cases of Violence Against Children in Indonesia. Source: Luvleen & Parul (2020).

This study aims to explore the issue of sexual violence in junior high schools in Padang Panjang City, Indonesia, and to understand how both formal and informal institutions can address, prevent, and manage sexual violence within the school environment. The research aims to identify factors influencing the occurrence of sexual violence, including social environment, family issues, and cultural misperceptions. Additionally, this study seeks to provide recommendations on implementing practical prevention approaches, emphasizing the integration of character education, social control, the Good Character Components Model, and the social-ecological model to create a safer and more supportive environment for students. The study also focuses on understanding the roles of various stakeholders, including teachers, school principals, parents, and informal leaders, in reducing the prevalence of sexual violence in schools.

2. Theoretical Framework

Theories of character education, social control, and the social-ecological model have been widely applied to prevent violence, including sexual violence, in various countries. In the United States, character education is implemented through programs like Character Counts, which teaches moral values such as responsibility, honesty, and empathy (Smith, 2013). These programs aim to shape positive student behavior by promoting moral development, which is considered a protective factor against sexual violence by fostering understanding of discipline, empathy, and respect. For example, in Japan and South Korea, character education is integrated into the education systems, emphasizing

discipline, respect, and cooperation to reduce violence, including sexual misconduct (Holian & Prysby, 2020).

In addition, the Good Character Components Model proposed by Lickona (2024) is essential in this study. This model focuses on moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral actions, aiming to transform negative behaviors such as sexual violence into positive behaviors. By fostering self-control, empathy, and moral decision-making, the model helps students understand the importance of consent and respect, which are crucial in preventing sexual violence.

In Sweden, social control theory is applied through social policies supporting public welfare, such as a strong social welfare system and inclusive education (Abulhul, 2021). Social control theory argues that societal institutions, such as schools, should regulate student behavior through formal mechanisms like rules and regulations, as well as informal mechanisms such as peer influence and teacher-student relationships to prevent harmful behaviors, including sexual violence (Alexiadou *et al.*, 2016). Similarly, the governments of Australia and Canada use this theory to prevent domestic and sexual violence by enforcing strict supervision and public policies that support victim protection (Kuskoff & Parsell, 2019). Public campaigns also help to reshape social attitudes and foster a culture that rejects sexual violence (Lee *et al.*, 2022).

The social-ecological model, which is applied in the United States, Australia, and the Netherlands, recognizes that multiple factors, including the individual, family, school, and society, contribute to influencing sexual violence (Haas *et al.*, 2012). This model emphasizes community-based prevention and involves many stakeholders to reduce violence. Programs like Green Dot in the USA and school-based initiatives in the Netherlands promote social change by educating communities about sexual violence and acknowledging that sexual violence can arise from complex social dynamics. Research by Diab *et al.* (2018) has shown that peer relationships, school culture, and family environments significantly contribute to the prevalence of sexual violence, underlining the need for early intervention and creating a supportive community environment.

In Indonesia, the prevalence of sexual violence in schools highlights the need for a holistic approach that involves families, schools, governments, and communities. To address this, character education theory and the social-ecological model are highly relevant. Character education focuses on the development of moral values, ethics, and character through both formal and informal education, although its full implementation is still evolving. The integration of the Good Character Components Model, which identifies sexual violence as a negative behavior, is necessary to transform students' behavior into more positive and moral actions. This model helps build students' capacity for empathy, self-control, and moral behavior. Curricular and extracurricular activities, such as religious education and national ideology, play an important role in teaching positive values and reducing sexual violence. Community leaders and informal figures further strengthen this education.

The social-ecological model provides a more comprehensive understanding of how various societal layers influence student behavior. It acknowledges that factors like an unstable family environment or a lack of social support increase the risk of sexual violence. Thus, this model advocates for collaboration between families, schools, governments, and communities to create a safe student environment. The model also emphasizes the need for policies and regulations that support student protection.

Social control theory is also crucial, highlighting the importance of regulating student behavior to prevent violence (Costello & Laub, 2020). In the context of sexual violence, the lack of supervision by society or educational institutions can increase the likelihood of such incidents. Active participation from parents, schools, and informal leaders is essential to monitoring behavior, educating students, and creating a safer environment.

By combining these four theories—character education, social control, and the social-ecological model—this research provides a solid framework for understanding and addressing sexual violence in schools. These theories require collaboration among various stakeholders to create an environment conducive to character development and reduce the risk of sexual violence. Key steps in preventing sexual violence among students include strengthening moral values, promoting empathy, and increasing supervision from both schools and parents.

3. Method and Material

This study focuses on understanding how institutions and leaders in the study area identify and address incidents of sexual violence, as well as their efforts to prevent sexual violence in their respective school environments. The research uses a qualitative approach to explore the experiences and perceptions of individuals regarding sexual violence in the schools within the study area.

3.1. Participant Selection and Data Collection

This study involves 50 teachers from 20 junior high schools, selected based on several criteria, including the school's academic performance, available facilities, and the socio-economic status of students' families. These criteria ensure a diverse and representative sample of schools involved in the study (Cheron *et al.*, 2022). Primary data were collected through three Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**.** Each FGD session lasted between 90 and 120 minutes and concluded once data saturation was reached. The FGD participants included teachers from various academic disciplines, such as religious education, national ideology education, counseling, and health education**.** In addition to the FGDs, in-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted with five school principals to gain deeper insights into the policies and approaches implemented in their schools to address sexual violence (Stockdill *et al.*, 2022).

3.2. Participant Observation

In addition to the data collected through FGDs and IDIs, this research also involved participant observation in three selected schools. This observation focused on interactions between students and teachers during extracurricular activities related to sexual violence prevention. The observations were conducted from September 22 to October 19, 2023, with two visits per school to ensure a comprehensive data collection process.

3.3. Data Analysis

The data collected from interviews, FGDs, and observations will be analyzed using thematic analysis (Duriesmith & Meger, 2020). The analysis will be conducted manually to ensure that all main themes are comprehensively covered. This coding process will help identify the key themes that emerge from the collected data, ensuring a holistic understanding of the issue (Robinson, 2021; Ayre & Mccaffery, 2021).

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628

3.4. Data Translation Process

All data collected through interviews, FGDs, and observations, originally in the local Minangkabau language, will be translated into English. The translation process will involve native (local) speakers to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the translated data, while preserving the integrity of the information.

4. Result

We combined the findings from FGDs and IDIs and presented them in ten main themes as follows:

a) Sexual Violence as an Issue

In the FGDs, researchers queried participants about various aspects of sexual violence issues.

School principals expressed their views on the matter:

> "Sexual violence in schools undermines students' mental health. We have encountered 1-2 cases indicating sexual harassment of students at school, both verbally and physically by other students".

Guidance and Counseling Teachers added:

> "For handling cases of verbal sexual violence, we believe it doesn't necessarily need to go through legal channels; usually, guidance and counseling teachers handle them within the school."

National Ideology Education Teachers stated:

> "At our school, we and other teachers advocate in a more polite manner. Together with guidance and counseling teachers, we resolve these cases."

Religious Education Teachers commented:

> "In critical situations, we may need the involvement of police and strict legal actions, but the involvement of students' parents is crucial when cases of sexual violence, whether verbal or physical, occur."

b) Causes of Sexual Violence

Religious Education Teachers stated:

> "In cases I've handled, perpetrators of sexual violence often come from troubled families. For example, parents who frequently impose excessive punishment on their children, which contradicts religious teachings. Other causes include stressful home environments, hostility, exposure to pornography, resulting in students becoming targets of sexual violence."

National Ideology Education Teachers added:

> "The influence of environments, games, and age-inappropriate media makes students feel more comfortable expressing sexual violence behaviors. I think in today's increasingly information-rich environment, extracurricular education is needed to cultivate values, morals, etiquette, and anti-sexual violence subjects."

Guidance and Counseling Teachers in FGDs:

"In certain situations, physical and sexual violence against school students generally occurs because students trust strangers too much, the victim's attire, and the victim's attitudes and behaviors."

The school principal added his opinion:

"The city government can establish educational institutions for perpetrators if they are still immature and provide religious education that teaches human values, norms, and awareness of the consequences of their actions."

c) Impact of Sexual Violence

Guidance and Counseling Teachers passionately explained:

"Usually, after students become victims, the impact is that they cannot control their behavior and emotions and are unable to adapt to their environment. Every teacher, especially guidance and counseling teachers, carefully observes student behavior in our school."

Health Education Teachers added their perspective:

"Based on our experience in handling students, the impact of both verbal and physical sexual violence is extremely severe. In cases of physical violence, victims tend to isolate themselves and experience trauma, leading to a decline in academic performance due to absenteeism. Verbal and physical sexual violence occurs when students lack awareness of their actions, attitudes, and behaviors, which can trigger such behaviors. This necessitates socialization against sexual violence. Socialization can be achieved through various student engagement methods."

Religious Education Teachers elaborated on their viewpoint:

"We have discussed with students who have experienced trauma. They have expressed that the impact of sexual violence causes them to fear meeting others, disrupts their psychology, leads to trauma, stress, depression, phobias, sometimes nightmares, and occasionally suspicion towards misbehaving students."

d) Solutions to Sexual Violence

1) Government Programs and Community Participation

From the Health and Family Planning Office, the City Government explained solutions to reduce the prevalence of violence among junior high school students as follows:

"The government has four core programs, one of which is a program to provide insights to young people about reproductive health, aiming to create adolescents free from drug protection, free sex, and HIV/AIDS to minimize violence cases among students."

The Education Office added further explanation:

"The City Government has included an anti-sexual violence program in the extracurricular curriculum. The Government advocates all activities related

to sexual violence by involving students in various government programs, such as teenage counseling. The PIKR DeJaVu program involves many students as pioneers in teenage counseling, socializing modules against sexual violence, and anti-drug campaigns."

Religious and Traditional Leaders expressed additional insights:

"The Saleh Children's Studio program promotes the 'Planning Generation' program among adolescents supported by health experts and religious and traditional leaders to eradicate poverty by providing business lessons for dropout students. This program provides training in skills such as weaving, tablecloth weaving, and clothing embroidery for dropout students. These skills training are divided into four parts: fashion design, embroidery, garment making, and culinary arts. All the products of these skills are sold in stores as their income."

Religious Education Teachers explained the procedural solutions as follows:

"We may need standard operating procedures or comprehensive guidelines on how to handle cases of sexual violence and incorporate them into extracurricular activities or integrate them into the core curriculum of Religious Education."

2) Extracurricular Interventions

The Teacher of National Ideology Education emphasized the importance of integrating curricular interventions with extracurricular activities:

"We teach national ideology education so that students can mold themselves into good individuals. The curricular teaching emphasizes honesty, discipline, responsibility, empathy, cooperation, peace, politeness, and responsiveness. These principles should be implemented in extracurricular activities so that students are accustomed to being polite and avoiding violence."

When we asked traditional leaders in an interview, they explained:

"To implement honest, disciplined, responsible, empathetic, cooperative, peaceful, polite, and responsive behavior, we involve religious figures, traditional leaders, and other community figures in extracurricular activities. Practices are conducted on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 6:00 to 8:00 AM. The goal is for students to understand the values of the community, which they must respect, be respectful to elders, and be afraid to commit crimes because there are traditional sanctions, in addition to state law sanctions".

We also asked religious leaders, and their explanation is as follows:

"Gender equality programs, religious book reading programs, Quran recitation competitions, adolescent counseling, and the Generasi Berencana program on reproductive health to achieve drug-free, free sex, and HIV/AIDS-free teens are included in extracurricular education."

3) Role of Traditional Leaders

During the interview with Traditional Leaders, we gathered information about their roles as follows:

"Since 1992, we have often participated in FGDs in the Province and the capital Jakarta to provide insights into tackling student violence cases at elementary, junior high, and senior high schools. We offer several important solutions, especially in every school activity and practice of behavior and maintaining these noble values that began to fade with the rapid development of information technology. Students began to ignore the mildew and mold."

Another traditional leader added:

"We are involved in extracurricular activities that integrate with local curriculum content, such as cultural art activities, for example traditional games, regional dance art, traditional music, batik; and handicrafts such as carving crafts, leather crafts, weaving crafts, traditional foods, so that students can be independent."

The Teacher of National Ideology Education explained the involvement of Traditional Leaders in FGD as follows:

"In extracurricular practices, we invite and involve traditional leaders and sometimes tribal chiefs to teach traditional practices, such as wearing traditional clothes. This practice occurs every Tuesday when students wear traditional and religious clothing at school."

d) Role of Religious Figures

We interviewed Religious Figures regarding their role in addressing violence among junior high school students. They expressed their views as follows:

"We have long been involved in extracurricular activities. Religious teachers teach religious curriculum, especially about religious values in the Islamic Education module, while Christian and Buddhist values are included in the Christian and Buddhist Religious Education modules. These tolerance values are very important so that students can grow up with tolerance towards religion, ethnicity, and race and view equality and justice. They are taught to consult, manners, honesty, and good behavior, and continue to develop good morals."

Another Religious Figure added:

"Religious values generally include educated behavior, compassion, helping each other, not being selfish, characteristics of honesty, and instilling a giving nature to the poor community. We teach students in extracurricular activities to give alms - collected by the school to help the poor community. In extracurricular education, this subject is practiced well."

e) Role of Cultural Figures

We interviewed Cultural Figures regarding their role in addressing violence among junior high school students. They expressed their views as follows:

"We incorporate cultural practices into practices that junior high school students easily understand. For example, the National Ideology Education Curriculum and Religious Education are integrated with Minangkabau culture and philosophy, such as regional dance art, traditional music, and lessons in sewing regional clothing, especially to promote tourism in this area. So, Cultural practices have been incorporated into extracurricular activities based on West Sumatra Provincial Regulation Number 3 of 2007.

Another Cultural Figure added:

"The students at the school have ethnic and religious diversity, and they must be tolerant, respect each other, and be equal. Non-Muslim students are given subjects according to their religion, and spiritual teachers have the same beliefs. Tolerance is conveyed as an attitude of mutual respect, appreciating each individual's beliefs, not imposing will, and not ridiculing or demeaning other religions for any reason. Junior high schools organize all curricular and extracurricular activities aimed at behaving well.

During the FGD, the Religious Teacher explained:

"With extracurricular activities integrated with culture, students are busy creating and staying away from violence. The integration of these cultural activities is a contribution from every teacher, principal, and cultural figure to prevent sexual violence in schools."

f) Role of Parents

We interviewed parents of junior high school students regarding their role in addressing violence.

Parents of junior high school students expressed their views:

"We are aware that parents play a crucial role in controlling their children's behavior both at home and in the community. During school coordination meetings, each school explains to parents the importance of caring for junior high school students, and extracurricular lessons at school are recommended to be implemented by parents at home."

Another parent of a junior high school student added:

"In our opinion, the role of parents is crucial in preventing children from engaging in sexual violence behavior. By being actively involved and supporting their children, parents can help create a safe environment and teach children basic values such as empathy, respect, and courage at home."

A guidance counselor added:

"Parents are expected to protect students at home and create an atmosphere where students feel comfortable at home and when they go to school. Parents and teachers at school are places where students can bring their problems, express their feelings, and naturally express their emotions."

g) Challenges

In the FGD, the guidance counselor provided insights into future challenges:

> "Our future challenges include continuous socialization supported by increasing the quantity and quality of Information, Communication, and Education (ICE) activities and enhancing the role of parents at home. Another challenge is the implementation of Ministerial Regulation Number 46 of 2023 recently enacted, and the role of the Violence Prevention and Handling Team in Educational Units established by the central Government, as they have not yet been equipped with technical guidelines (Standard Operating Procedures) to work effectively in preventing sexual violence."

Cultural and religious figures we interviewed discussed future challenges:

> "We hope that schools will spearhead efforts to prevent physical violence, starting from elementary schools. Schools as pioneers can be utilized to prepare the Golden Generation 2045 with discussions and ideas to prepare high-quality, competent, and highly competitive Indonesian students. Intensive socialization of sexual violence prevention ideas among junior high school students should be conducted to inspire students to be more enthusiastic about learning and working in all sectors. All of these pose challenges for us, the Government, and schools."

The results of interviews and FGDs with individuals and stakeholders highlight various factors in addressing sexual violence in junior high schools in the study area. They emphasize the importance of a collaborative approach between schools, local communities, and government institutions. Key findings show that sexual violence in schools has a significant impact on students' mental health, with underlying causes such as family issues, exposure to inappropriate media, and a lack of awareness from various parties. This study also emphasizes the role of various community groups, including religious and cultural leaders, in preventing sexual violence by promoting values of respect, empathy, and discipline through curricular and extracurricular activities.

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of parental involvement and the need for comprehensive educational programs to raise awareness and provide appropriate interventions. Despite ongoing challenges, the integration of social, religious, and cultural values, alongside the involvement of informal leaders, offers promising solutions to reduce incidents of sexual violence. This study recommends adopting a multi-stakeholder approach to strengthen prevention efforts and create a safer educational environment for students.

5. Discussion

5.1. Implementation of Character Education

From the research findings, we identified key factors that influence the management of sexual violence cases among junior high school (JHS) students in the study area. In Indonesia, curricula such as national ideology and religious education significantly shape students' character. It is similar to implementing character education theory in the United States, where programs like *Character Counts* teach moral values such as responsibility, honesty, and empathy to shape positive behavior among students (Walker &

Thoma, 2017). This program aims to reduce violence and other negative behaviors, similar to the efforts in Indonesia's religious and national ideology education, which instills positive values such as tolerance, honesty, and respect (Michie, 2017). This mandatory curriculum garners broad community support, actively promoting religious education and responding to violence in line with cultural values. Local regulations enforce this curriculum, integrating state ideology alongside character education and emphasizing tolerance, honesty, and respect. Teachers also address conflict resolution to curb intolerant behaviors related to religion, ethnicity, and race (Wijaya Mulya & Aditomo, 2018).

Meanwhile, extracurricular activities in elementary schools strengthen independence, courtesy, cultural understanding, and discipline. In Japan and South Korea, character education is highly integrated into their education systems, emphasizing discipline, respect, and cooperation. Character education in these two countries aims to reduce violence by instilling moral values in students, as found in this study, where religious and national education curricula play a significant role in teaching these values to reduce sexual violence among students (Kang *et al.*, 2022).

At home, parents play a crucial role in fostering these values. Formal institutions like city government, education, health, and family planning agencies prioritize youth development through extensive training and programs, aiming to cultivate a drug-free, violence-free environment while promoting adolescent health and reducing sexual violence (Tidmarsh *et al.*, 2022). Programs such as PIKR DeJaVu and Sanggar Anak Saleh engage students in counseling and vocational skills, supported by community and cultural leaders, promoting a holistic approach to youth development and violence prevention.

Figure 3. Student involvement in City Government Programs to prevent sexual violence. Source: Photos obtained by the author from the City Government, Schools, and author coverage

5.2. Social Control

Social control theory emphasizes the importance of societal control in shaping individual behavior. In Western countries like Sweden, this theory is applied through social policies that support public welfare via a robust social welfare system and inclusive education (Vasiljevic *et al.*, 2023). In Australia, social control is implemented through strict monitoring of unacceptable behaviors, including violence in schools and communities, alongside policies that protect victims of sexual violence (Chalmers *et al.*, 2016). In this study, we also found that social control in the context of sexual violence in Indonesia is strongly influenced by the active roles of parents, schools, and informal leaders in monitoring

and educating students. It aligns with the social control implemented in Australia, where parental and community involvement is critical in creating a safe environment for students (Tidmarsh *et al.*, 2022). With the active participation of various stakeholders, the school environment becomes safer, reducing the potential for sexual violence.

In addition to government intervention, informal leaders play a crucial role in significantly reducing the prevalence of sexual violence. Cultural traditions, customs, and religious teachings are viewed as ethnic values. City governments and school administrators encourage these informal leaders to actively participate in school activities, where they help socialize national, religious, and cultural values and norms. These values and norms are integrated into local extracurricular activities. A notable finding regarding social control in the study area is the collaboration between informal leaders, school counselors, and principals to teach traditional practices. Students participate in activities such as learning about customs, religion, and educational ethics and sharing food to foster camaraderie. Students enjoy exchanging food and drinks during these sessions, emphasizing sharing and preventing selfishness. Such practices also nurture empathy towards classmates who may not have brought food that day (Figure 4). These activities take place every Tuesday from 06:00 to 08:00 in the school.

This collaborative context encourages students to actively engage in various activities aimed at fostering brotherhood and solidarity to prevent sexual violence. This approach is a softer alternative to involving law enforcement in controlling student behavior and handling crimes. Collaborative efforts from informal leaders contribute to creating a positive school environment that prevents violence and encourages healthy social interactions among students.

Figure 4. Involvement of informal institutions to instill noble and anti-sexual values. Source: Photos obtained by the author from the City Government, Schools, and author coverage

5.3. Implementation of Good Character Components Model

To delve deeper into the results of this research, we began by integrating the Good Character Components Model with the results of the FGD (Suroso & Husin, 2024; Sonnenschein *et al.*, 2023). This model identifies sexual violence as a negative behavior that needs to be transformed into positive behavior by enhancing students' understanding of moral values and ethics. The model teaches that to prevent sexual violence, it is important to instill three main components in character education: moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral actions (Kotluk *et al.*, 2017). By integrating interventions based on these moral values into the curriculum, this study aims to equip students with better skills to control themselves, develop empathy, and act morally.

The study hopes to integrate this education into both curricular and extracurricular activities to more effectively and sustainably prevent sexual violence. Examples from the USA, Japan, South Korea, and Australia, which share similarities with Indonesia in their

implementation, can serve as models for character education integrated into the education system. Emphasizing values such as discipline, respect, and cooperation in schools can help reduce violence among students. Character education is directed towards strengthening moral values to form individuals who are more empathetic and respectful of one another, directly contributing to the reduction of sexual violence in schools. In the study area, formal leaders, such as school principals and teachers, find implementing the Good Character Components Model easier because they receive full support from informal leaders.

5.4. Implementation of the Social-Ecological Model

After developing the students' character, we proceeded to use the Social-Ecological Model as a framework to understand the factors influencing student behavior in the context of sexual violence. This model demonstrates that sexual violence is not only influenced by individual factors, such as self-control or empathy, but also by factors related to family, school, and society. The model encourages us to examine the interaction between the individual and the various systems around them and how each system influences student behavior. In this research, we found that an unstable family environment or a lack of supportive social environments could be risk factors that increase the likelihood of sexual violence among students. Therefore, the model emphasizes the importance of collaboration between various parties—such as families, schools, Government, and communities—to create a safer and more supportive student environment.

The implementation of the social-ecological model in Australia is seen in community-based programs that involve families and schools in the prevention of sexual violence. These programs are supported by policies involving various layers of society in supporting violence prevention in schools and communities (Castillo *et al*., 2019). A similar program is also implemented in the Netherlands, where community- and school-based violence prevention policies aim to reduce sexual violence through the involvement of multiple stakeholders. In Figure 5, we illustrate the factors influencing student behavior, the role of formal and informal institutions, and how these institutions conduct curricular and extracurricular interventions to enhance students' character development. To clarify further, we have divided it into two segments: the individual components and the institutional components.
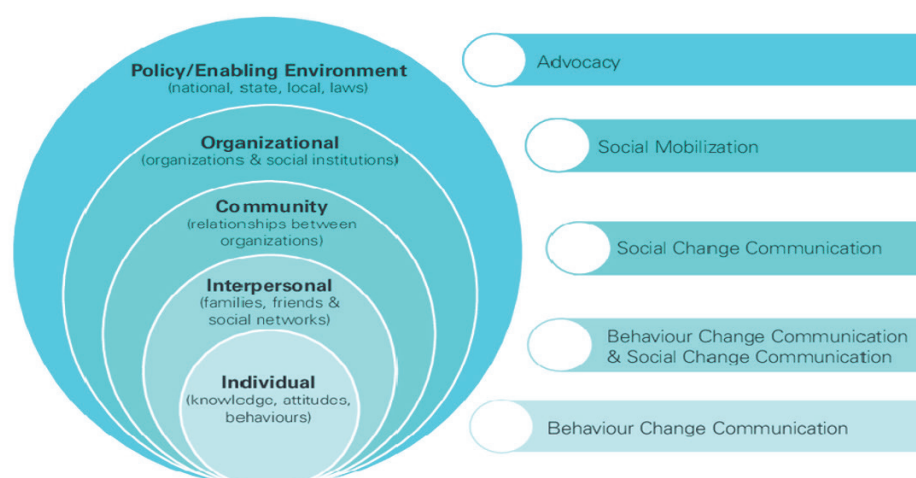

Figure 5. Social-Ecological Model: Prevention Framework. Source*:* Sittichai & Smith (2018); Faller (2019)

Explanation of Figure 5:

Regarding the role of individuals, such as students and teachers, this study emphasizes the importance of character education, moral understanding, and community-based efforts in reducing sexual violence among junior high school students. Teachers highlighted that character education can nurture students' potential, emphasizing moral traits that align with national development goals. This aligns with findings by Trisiana *et al.* (2020) and Andari *et al.* (2022), emphasizing that teachers play a key role in identifying students who can contribute positively to national culture while filtering out conflicting cultural elements.

Several studies have identified a lack of moral understanding, low self-awareness, and insufficient empathy as significant factors contributing to sexual violence (Moothathamby *et al.*, 2020), low self-awareness (Lim & Chapman, 2022), and a lack of empathy and compassion (Fatimah *et al.*, 2021; Nurchintyawati, 2023). Research indicated that fostering good morals can effectively reduce sexual violence in schools (Bermúdez & Felletti, 2021). Furthermore, verbal sexual violence among male students was linked to a lack of moral understanding and empathy towards female students, in line with Kuang's (2023) study on moral feelings, which emphasizes the role of conscience in evaluating actions. Although the study area reported low instances of sexual violence, cases of verbal abuse among junior high school students were identified. Researchers used probing techniques and traditional dance exercises to foster a supportive environment for victims to share their experiences. Interestingly, some victims exhibited self-control and managed their emotions to avoid retaliation (van den Berg *et al.*, 2022;theories focusing on the conceptualization and empirical measurement of people's morality in terms of general moral values -such as Moral Foundation Theory- (implicitly McConnell & Savulescu, 2023).

The Visual Storytelling Method (VSM) emerged as a crucial tool in addressing sexual violence. Through engaging storytelling and multimedia elements, VSM helps students internalize positive values such as empathy and respect (Langwenya *et al.*, 2022age, HIV status and mode of HIV acquisition on the exposure to SV using generalised estimating equations models and proportional hazard model. PARTICIPANT AND SETTING: Data from a 4-year prospective cohort study of 1447 adolescents (ages 10-19, 57% girls, 76% living with HIV; Zhao & Elmqvist, 2023). VSM also plays a key role in reducing the prevalence of sexual violence by emphasizing the importance of teacher and student involvement in creating a safe, respectful atmosphere (Leinonen *et al.*, 2021; Dasu *et al.*, 2023).

This research aligns with studies by Allroggen *et al.* (2018) and Littleton & DiLillo (2021) on the prevalence and impact of sexual violence and highlights the importance of informal support networks (Terry & Townley, 2019; Lynch *et al.*, 2022). It also emphasizes the role of NGOs in preventing gender-based violence (Kumari, 2023; Istratii & Ali, 2023). The study's proposed model integrates formal institutions, informal leaders, and individuals to prevent sexual violence, emphasizing curricular and extracurricular interventions.

The findings suggest that the model can be applied in similar settings, especially in developing countries, and provides a framework for future studies using phenomenological methods to refine strategies for preventing sexual violence among junior high school students.
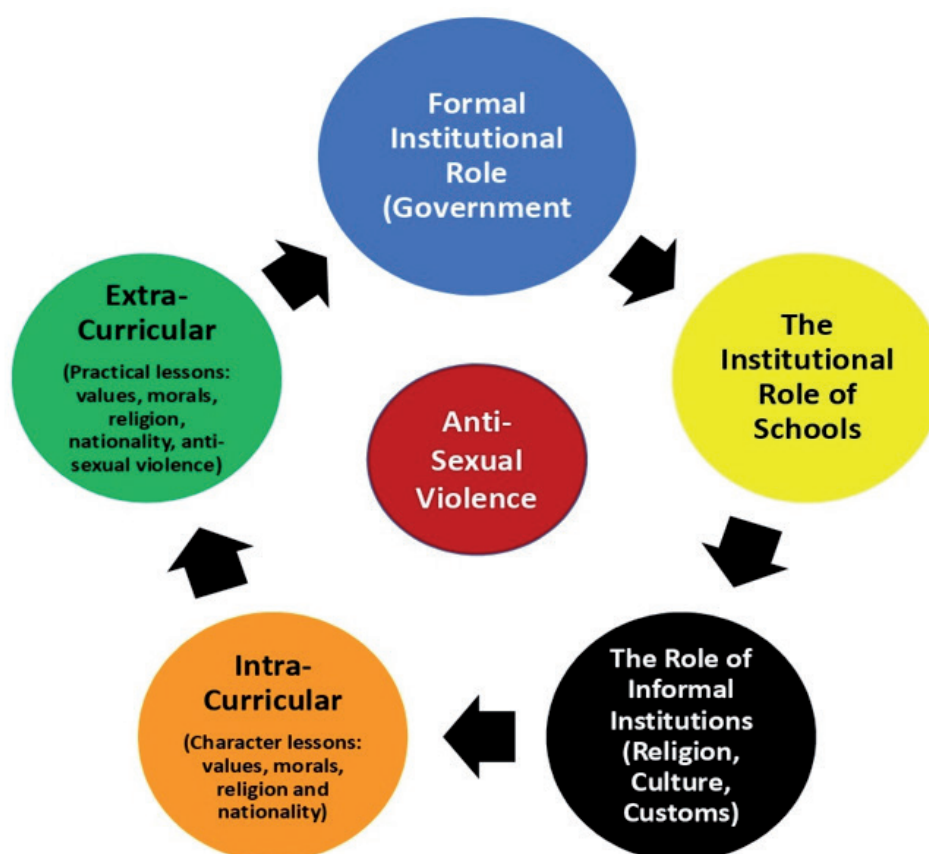
Figure 6. Collaborative Model for Anti-Sexual Violence Intervention. Note: Model created by researchers based on field findings, 2023

6. Conclusion

This study highlights the importance of a multidimensional approach to addressing sexual violence in junior high schools in the study area by integrating character education theory, social control theory, the Good Character Components Model, and the social-ecological model. The Good Character Components Model identifies sexual violence as a negative behavior that needs to be transformed through education involving moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral actions. The implementation of this model in Indonesia emphasizes character development through the religious and national education curriculum, teaching values such as tolerance, honesty, and respect, as well as extracurricular activities that promote civility and discipline.

In comparison to countries like the United States, Australia, Japan, and South Korea, the application of character education theory in these nations focuses more on integrating moral and ethical values taught through formal and extracurricular programs that emphasize discipline, respect, and cooperation to reduce violence, including sexual violence. In the USA and Australia, social control is enacted through strict public policies and anti-sexual violence campaigns, with a focus on victim protection and more stringent school supervision.

Applying the social-ecological model in Indonesia differs from that in these countries. In Indonesia, this model includes greater involvement from local communities and

the role of informal institutions, such as religious, cultural, and traditional leaders, to address sexual violence. In contrast, this model focuses more on other countries' government policies and school-level interventions. One important finding of this study is how integrating the Good Character Components Model with the social-ecological approach can create a more holistic prevention strategy. In Indonesia, the significant contribution of informal institutions, such as religious and cultural leaders, in socializing anti-sexual violence values shows a more collaborative, community-based approach. This finding underscores the importance of cultural and religious support in creating sustainable social change to prevent sexual violence in schools. Furthermore, the study highlights that the diverse social and cultural influences in Indonesia require adaptation in the application of these theories, considering local norms and traditional practices that can either support or hinder the prevention of sexual violence among students.

7. Recommendations

Recommendations stemming from this research include expanding VSM initiatives across more schools and regions, accompanied by comprehensive training for educators. Strengthening partnerships between schools, local Government, NGOs, and community leaders is also crucial for sustaining prevention efforts. Continuous qualitative research and evaluation can further refine strategies and ensure their relevance and effectiveness in diverse cultural contexts. In essence, by fostering collaboration and innovation across multiple sectors, communities can create safer environments for students, promoting mutual respect and resilience against sexual violence.

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