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# Sex Education in Special Schools: Integration of Sexual Education and Hearing-Impaired Learners' Curriculum

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### ABSTRACT

Adolescents with hearing impairments face challenges in accessing information related to sexual education and self-protection. Limited access to communication and high use of social media increase their risk of sexual misinformation. This study aims to examine the implementation of sexual education in Special Schools (SS) through a mix method approach that combines qualitative and quantitative methods. The results of the study show that the level of students' understanding of sexual education is still low, with an average score of 45%. In addition, the integration of sexual education in the curriculum is still not optimal, especially due to the limitations of teaching materials and teacher training. Therefore, this study recommends an educational module that integrates sexual education with a curriculum that supports the special needs of students with hearing impairments.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescents with hearing impairments have limited access to communication which makes them vulnerable to a lack of adequate information related to self-protection. Nowadays, the high use of social media and the ease of accessing it are also one of the challenges to suppress the tendency to negative behavior, including exposure to content for deaf children that is not appropriate for their age and misinformation about sexuality. Social media is a source of unverified information that can mislead children in understanding important issues related to self-awareness, privacy, and personal protection. Education is necessary because technology and the spread of information are increasingly widespread and difficult to filter (Siswi et al., 2021). This further emphasizes the urgency of comprehensive and inclusive sexual education that not only teaches basic knowledge but also skills to navigate the digital world safely and responsibly. Teens seek out misinformation mainly due to a lack of reliable sources, cultural taboos, curiosity, and excessive access to online information (Rahmavati, 2013). Addressing these issues through proper education and open discussion can help reduce the spread of misinformation among adolescents.

Based on data from the National Commission on Anti-Violence against Women, there were 105 cases of violence against women throughout 2023. Including sensory disabilities as many as 33 people (Muhammad, 2024). Vulnerability of hearing impairment are more likely to experience violence, both physically and sexually, compared to their counterparts who do not have a disability. According to Azis (2015) the lack of a sharp ear in listening to voices and speech makes deaf children tend to find it difficult to acquire broad knowledge, especially through voice media, have minimal vocabulary and language mastery and experience difficulties in conveying various ideas and wills to others. The formal education curriculum is often not completely incomplete and has not provided comprehensive information in classroom learning. Various problems related to the implementation of sexual education in schools are partly due to the lack of a handbook or definite guidelines for the implementation of sexual education in their schools. Rahmasari et al., (2016) In his research, he also revealed that teachers of extraordinary schools often feel lacking in mastering material about sex education.

In this regard, the importance of sexual education is none other than to provide a basic understanding of body functions, healthy relationships and how to maintain privacy and self-protection. Especially considering learning for children with hearing impairments, an inclusive and specific approach is needed. Therefore, the integration of sexual education for them must be specifically designed to provide better access for them to understand sexual education issues. The integration of sexual education for students with hearing impairments still faces various challenges. Teachers often feel less confident in teaching this topic due to a lack of specific training. In addition, the lack of educational resources designed for students with special needs is also an obstacle in providing education that suits their needs (Amin & Mappanyukki, 2024; Rahmasari et al., 2016).

Existing education policies need to support the integration of sexual education in a special curriculum for students with hearing impairments. One of them presents learning resources such as learning modules that accommodate the learning characteristics of students with hearing impairments and integrate sexual education and curriculum. The learning experience in the module can be designed based on themes that are relevant to the learner's environment (Pristiwanti et al., 2022). With supportive policies, schools can be better prepared to provide holistic education for all.

Teachers have a very important role in building self-awareness and personal protection of students with hearing impairments. With the right guidance, learners can learn how to respect themselves, understand physical limitations, and protect their privacy. Through this study, the researcher aims to highlight the implementation of sex education including the level of knowledge of students and the integration of sexual education in the curriculum for students with hearing impairments in special schools.

## 2. METHODS

This research was carried out from August to October 2024 in two SS in Gorontalo province. The subjects in the study were 3 (three) extraordinary school teachers and 10 (ten) adolescent students with hearing impairments. The sampling technique is through the purposive sampling technique. The sampling technique is sampling from the population determined by the researcher. The subject of the teacher is the teacher who teaches the hearing impairment students in the special school and the subject of the student is the hearing impairment adolescent student aged 12 to 15 years who has experienced menstruation and can understand the instructions.

This study uses research mix method. Research design mix method is a research method used to collect, analyze and communicate qualitative and quantitative methods in research. The method with the incorporation of this research procedure in its implementation is more dominant in one method than the other. The more dominant methods in this study are the qualitative method and the quantitative method as a complement.

The data from the Mix Method approach will be integrated to provide a deeper understanding of the implementation of sexual education and reproductive health in two SS. Tests are given to students and interviews with teachers. This study seeks to identify the extent to which the implementation of sexual education has been carried out, including students' knowledge and the integration of sex education with the curriculum. Quantitative data from learners will illustrate their understanding of topics in sex education while qualitative data from teachers will provide insights into the implementation of the sexuality education curriculum adapted for learners with hearing impairments as well as the integration of sex education with the curriculum.

These two types of data allow for a comprehensive analysis of the implementation of sexual education in SLB. The results of this approach will show the relevance of the integration of sexual education in the curriculum for adolescents with hearing impairments, in line with the title of this study, namely the Implementation of Sex Education in Special Schools: Integration of Sexual Education and the Curriculum of Hearing Impaired Students. Through this research, it is hoped that it can be known how sexual education plays a role in building students' self-awareness and understanding, as well as how the curriculum can be optimized to support this development.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Result

##### 3.1.1. Efforts to Implement Sex Education

Based on the interviews, the teacher has made several attempts to address the behavior shown by the students and efforts to provide learning about sex education. The information obtained is:

*"So far, if students show bad behavior, they will be reprimanded directly. In the school itself, there are no teaching materials about sexual education. But it is in the subject of civic education about self-identity"*

*Mrs. RN (6th grade teacher).*

*"When there is a report, they are given a warning. Actually, it is in the subject of natural education about parts of the human body"*

*Ms. SL (Grade VII & IX teacher)*

*"Usually teachers give explanations through videos and classroom teacher directions, but there are no books as a source that explains specifically about sexual education for deaf children. Subjects in schools are also in natural sciences, civic education and special programs. Sometimes in school lessons about sex are also given during character development."*

*Mrs. NY (teacher of grades VII, VIII & IX)*

Based on the information obtained, it is known that teachers have made several efforts in providing sex education to students. These efforts include direct reprimands, explanations through videos during the implementation of learning several subjects and the provision of education during character development. The teacher revealed that the implementation of learning about sex education is contained in natural science subjects about parts of the human body, civic education about self-identity and special programs. However, he revealed that there was no book in the school that explained specifically about sex education for students with hearing impairments.

##### 3.1.2. Students' understanding of sex education

The results of the comprehension test about sex education were given to 10 students with hearing impairments to reflect the level of understanding of the students. The indicators in the test contain knowledge about:

- i. Body parts and functions of male and female body parts
- ii. Body changes in men and women (puberty)
- iii. Sexual behavior and sexual violence that should not be committed
- iv. How to take care of yourself

The results of measuring students' understanding were obtained as follows:

**Table 1.** Result of the Knowledge Test on Topics in Sex Education

No.	Subject	Score	Value	Category
1	FD	38	70	Keep
2	B	16	30	Low
3	FK	22	41	Low
4	SAB	17	31	Low
5	AP	4	76	Keep
6	On the	34	63	Keep
7	IS	13	24	Low
8	CN	21	39	Low
9	RM	21	39	Low
10	ND	21	39	Low
Total			246	
Average			45%	Low

Based on the results of the students' comprehension test on the topic, it can be concluded that the average level of students' knowledge is 45% or a low category.

### 3.1.3. Integration of Sex Education with the Curriculum

The integration of sex education in the curriculum is an effort to provide systematic and structured information about reproductive health, sexuality, and its relationship with the community environment. Based on the study of the implementation of sexual education for adolescents and the study of the curriculum literature that is currently in force, it is found that the implementation of sex education can be integrated in natural science subjects and special programs. The integration of sex education with the curriculum can be written in the Table 2. Based on this integration, topics that can be learned by adolescent students who are hindered by listeners include male and female body parts, physical characteristics during puberty and harassment and violence in a relationship.

**Table 2.** Integration of Curriculum and International technical guidance on sexuality education

Curriculum		<i>International Technical Guidance On Sexuality Education</i>	
Natural Sciences	Special Needs Program (Communication Development, Perception, Sound And Rhythm)	Gender Understanding	Gender Understanding
Students study the stages of human growth and development	Students say sentences about material about reproductive health	Identify your identity	Describe body parts related to sexual and reproductive health
Students identify the physical characteristics of males and females during puberty	such as male and female concept material, Gender Equality, puberty material; and other actual information.	Illustrate how abuse and violence in relationships are strongly linked to gender roles and stereotypes	Describe the menstrual cycle and identify the physical symptoms and feelings that girls may experience during this time
			Comparing the similarities and differences between girls and boys with respect to puberty changes

### 3.2. Discussion

#### 3.2.1 Efforts to Implement Sex Education

Learning about sex education has been implemented in schools, although it is not structured and comprehensive. Teachers use a variety of methods to deliver sexuality-related materials, although there is no specific curriculum or teaching materials available for sex education for hearing-impaired learners. Teachers reprimand directly when students show inappropriate behavior. This method is more reactive and aims to deal with the situation that occurs at that time. This restraint is important to provide students with an understanding of acceptable behavioral boundaries, although the approach may not touch on the preventive education aspects of sexuality in depth. In addition, some teachers use materials from other subjects such as natural sciences (NC) and civic education (CE) to insert sex education implicitly. For example, material on human body parts in science and self-identity in CE is a bridge for teachers to provide a basic understanding of sexuality. This shows that there are efforts to integrate sex education through available subjects, but with limited focus specifically on sexual material. Visual methods, such as the use of videos, are also applied to help learners understand the material better. Spencer & Marschark (2010) revealed that teaching for students with hearing impairments must pay attention to visualization and complex teaching. This approach is in line with the needs of students with hearing impairments who need visual media to improve their understanding.

However, the limitation of books or special teaching materials about sex education for children with hearing impairments is one of the obstacles experienced. This hinders more focused and systematic teaching about sex education. Furthermore, character development in schools is also one of the platforms to convey sex education, although the material may not be specific and consistent. This character education can be an effective platform if sex education is included as part of students' moral and social development. From the overall efforts that have been made, although there has been awareness and initiative from teachers to deliver sex education, there is no structured or integrated approach in the curriculum designed specifically for deaf students.

The lack of resources (specific teaching materials) and the limitations of a curriculum that integrates sex education comprehensively make this education not optimal (Rahmasari et al., 2016). This opinion is in line with what was expressed in the research Ameen & Mappannuki, (2024) that the existing curriculum cannot run optimally without resources. Therefore, it is crucial to develop inclusive teaching materials and design more specific sex education curricula to meet the needs of students with hearing impairments. This will assist teachers in conveying clearer, more directed, and in-depth information about sexuality and reproductive health.

### 3.2.2 Students' understanding of sex education

Referring to the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, the age of adolescents is 10 to 18 years old. In general, the age is in grades 4 elementary to 12 high school. In this study, the researcher specified subjects in middle adolescence, namely 12 to 15 years old. This is because based on the interviews conducted, teachers mentioned a lack of understanding of sex education and some of the teacher's behaviors mentioned some deviant behaviors that had been shown by students at that age or students who were in grades 6 to IX of junior high school. Therefore, the researcher gave a knowledge test to 10 students with hearing impairments in two extraordinary schools. Teenagers have a right to themselves. This is a fundamental aspect of sexuality education. Where they must understand anatomy, respect their bodies and others, prevent violence and be able to make their own decisions (Arini et al., 2023). So that This test covers four important topics for teen learners, namely:

- i. Body parts and their functions: Understanding the anatomy of the male and female bodies is an important basic knowledge for learners so that they can recognize and understand their own bodies properly.
- ii. Body changes during puberty: This topic helps learners understand the physical changes that occur when entering puberty, which is crucial in preparing them to face these changes with confidence and reduce confusion and maintain hygiene
- iii. Prohibited sexual behavior and sexual violence: This aspect is important to equip students with awareness of the boundaries of healthy and unhealthy sexual behavior, as well as to protect them from potential sexual violence or harassment. Understanding this concept can help them protect themselves from risky situations.
- iv. How to take care of yourself: Self-care skills are an important step in sexual education, especially in the context of personal safety. This includes knowledge of how to avoid insecure situations, understanding their own bodily rights as well as personal body parts that should not be touched and should not be seen by others.



However, the test results showed that the understanding of students with hearing impairments about sex education was generally low, with the average score below the expected comprehension standard (45%). Based on the test results, only two students achieved the medium category with a score of 68% (FD) and 73% (AP), while the other eight were in the low category, with a score between 23% and 41%. These values show that most students still have a limited understanding of important topics in sex education. This study underlines the gap in understanding sex education for students with hearing impairments. Factors such as teaching methods, appropriate communication for children with hearing impairments, and learning materials that are tailored to their needs are likely to affect this level of understanding.

### 3.2.3 Integration of Sex Education with the Curriculum

The results of this study show that the level of understanding of students with hearing impairments regarding sex education is still low, with an average of 45%. The low results of this test indicate that there is a gap in students' understanding of hearing impairments on important issues related to reproductive and sexual health. The main challenge in sex education for this group is limited access to information presented in a method that they can understand effectively. Another factor that also affects this low understanding is the lack of material specifically designed for students with hearing impairments. The information conveyed verbally or in writing is often insufficient to accommodate their needs. Based on interviews with teachers at extraordinary schools, it is known that some students show deviant or inappropriate behavior in a sexual context. This further emphasizes the urgency of providing sex education modules that are more targeted and in accordance with their needs.

The researcher seeks to design a sex education module that is specifically designed for students with hearing impairments, based on the results of tests and interviews that have been conducted. This module uses visual and interactive approaches, such as illustrative images, videos with sign language, as well as activities that allow students to learn through hands-on experience. This is in line with the implementation of learning based on the bandura learning theory which states that the important components of social learning theory in learning are: 1) Attention, before imitating the individual, first pay attention to the model to be imitated; 2) Retention. After observing and paying attention to a model, then at another time the individual will notice the same behavior towards the model; 3) production. Individuals who have followed the model must be able to demonstrate skills because of observation; 4) Motivation. Once an individual sees of a model, the individual will remember it. The results of these observations will be shown or not depending on the desire or motivation of the individual (Aryuni & Wahyuni, 2021; Bandura, 1997).

Hiebert & Nowicki, (2019) In his research, he found that the learning process of students with hearing impairments occurs through observations made from their environment (modeling). If individuals imitate model behavior and its consequences are beneficial or positively reinforced, then individuals will tend to carry out these behaviors (Bandura, 1977). Therefore, in the sex education module for students with hearing impairments, students are given the opportunity to observe, recall, and make decisions about a condition presented in the form of a case study that is close to them.



Thus, it is hoped that information about the body, puberty, and safe sexual behavior can be conveyed more easily and effectively. This module also refers to the integration of the sex education curriculum that has been carried out. Topics such as male and female body parts, physical changes during puberty, sexual behaviour and sexual violence, and how to prevent sexual violence, will be covered in this module. Through a social learning approach that is tailored to the needs of students with hearing impairments, it is hoped that they can gain a better and more comprehensive understanding of reproductive and sexual health. Integration between interviews, test results, and curriculum reviews as well as topic recommendations from International technical guidance on sexuality education (UNESCO, 2018) is the foundation in the development of this module.

Research conducted Mulyeni & Lianty, (2021) revealed that in compiling modules for students, hearing impairments must use simple sentences and the use of pictures as visual instructions and comprehension instructions for students. In addition, visual information is important in learning for students with hearing impairments, including images accompanied by text, and visual characteristics of people such as emotions and objects such as colors, symbols, and objects to teach concepts (Marschark & Hauser, 2012; Mapepa & Magano, 2018). The resulting modules are expected to help improve students' understanding of hearing impairments about important topics in proper sex education, as well as facilitate teachers in delivering material more effectively.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the implementation of sexual education for students with hearing impairments in Special Schools still faces various challenges, including the lack of specific resources and teaching materials. Although efforts to integrate sexual education have been carried out through subjects such as Natural Sciences and Civic Education, the results of the study show that the level of understanding of students is still low. Therefore, a more systematic approach is needed in the preparation of sexual education modules that are tailored to the needs of students with hearing impairments, as well as better training for teachers in teaching this material. The integration of sexual education in the curriculum will help increase students' self-awareness about their bodies, puberty changes, and protection from sexual violence.

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#### 6. AUTHORS' NOTE

This article is an original work of the author, and all research and data presented are the results of independent and valid research. None part of this article is the result of plagiarism, and the data used has been obtained through legitimate research methods and verified for accuracy.

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