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Empowering Children through Sex Education: A Study on Kindergarten Policies in Indonesia

Munir Yusuf^{ID}, Firman^{ID}, Hasriadi^{ID} and Mirnawati^{ID}
Palopo State Islamic Institute, Palopo, Indonesia

Abstract. This article explores the urgency of sexual education for early childhood, focusing on the role of teachers in delivering this material. This study aims to understand how sex education can be delivered according to the psychological developmental stages of early childhood. Employing ten participants, this qualitative study included observation and in-depth interviews with teachers and parents at two major kindergartens in Palopo City, namely Paramata Bunda Palopo Kindergarten and Datok Sulaiman Palopo Kindergarten. Research instruments included interview guidelines and observation sheets. Data were analysed through thematic analysis, considering the perspectives of educational psychology, educational sociology and religious education. The results showed that sex education needs to be delivered with simple language and content adapted to early childhood development, involving the active role of teachers, parents, and the community. Sexual education can also help children understand the values of gender equality and avoid sexual discrimination. In addition, religious education plays an important role in understanding moral values in the context of sex. This study concludes that sexual education for early childhood is important and needs to be done with an approach appropriate to the stages of child development and involving various parties. The contributions of this study include recommendations for developing sexual education curricula in kindergartens and the education of teachers and parents in providing sexual education. The results also show potential for future research in developing more effective strategies in sexual education for early childhood.

Keywords: sex education, early childhood, kindergarten

1. Introduction

Sexual education has become an important and controversial topic in early childhood education. However, the literature to date is lacking in describing how sex education should be provided to young children, especially in Indonesia's education context. In addition, the role of teachers in sexual education for early childhood has also not been widely researched.

* Corresponding author: *Munir Yusuf*, munir_yusuf@iainpalopo.ac.id

This gap becomes even more critical given that Indonesia has various cultural and religious backgrounds, each of which has its views on sexual education (Suri & Chandra, 2021; Wijaya Mulya & Aditomo, 2019). Therefore, the approach used to provide sexual education needs to be adapted to Indonesia's socio-cultural and religious context. This research is designed to fill this gap in knowledge by focusing on how sex education should be provided in the context of early childhood education in Indonesia, the role of teachers in sexual education, and how sex education can teach gender equality values and prevent sexual discrimination.

Literature on the role of teachers in early childhood sexual education in kindergartens has shown that teachers have a very important role in delivering appropriate and effective sex education to young children. Teachers are key facilitators in delivering accurate and thorough information about the body, gender and healthy interpersonal relationships. They are the primary source of information for children and are responsible for conveying this information in a way that children can easily understand. In addition, teachers also serve as mediators in conversations between children and their parents, helping to facilitate healthy and effective dialogue about sexuality. In this capacity, teachers have great potential to influence children's views and attitudes towards sexuality and gender relations, making their role in early childhood sexual education particularly important and one which should be prioritized (Bostic et al., 2023; Scanlon et al., 2022). Teachers also set a good example in demonstrating positive attitudes and behaviours related to sex.

In providing sex education, teachers must pay attention to early childhood physical and psychological development (Galbally et al., 2022). Young children prefer learning through direct experience and examples provided by their teachers (Brey & Pauker, 2019; Knox-Lane et al., 2023; Leung et al., 2023). Therefore, teachers need to use creative and innovative methods in providing sex education to children, such as stories, pictures and games. In this way, children will be more interested, and it will be easier to understand the material delivered by the teacher. In addition, teachers should also pay attention to the cultural norms and values that exist in the surrounding community. For example, in some communities, the topic of sex is considered a taboo topic and should not be discussed in front of children. Therefore, teachers should pay attention to the cultural values around them and ensure that the material delivered is in accordance with the values adhered to by the local community.

The role of teachers in early childhood sex education is also very important in building healthy and positive interpersonal relationships between children (Qu et al., 2022). Teachers should help children understand the concept of friendship and maintain a good attitude in interacting with their peers (Audley & Jović, 2020; Salvat et al., 2022). It is important to prevent unwanted behaviours such as harassment or inappropriate actions towards peers.

In addition, teachers should also build positive relationships with children's parents. Teachers should realise that parents have an important role in helping

their children understand the topic of child sex (Alfaro et al., 2023; Jahng, 2020). This way, parents will feel more confident in providing appropriate sex education that aligns with their cultural values.

However, the role of teachers in early childhood sex education is not limited to providing information and resources. Teachers must also consider children's safety and privacy when providing sex education. Teachers should ensure that children feel comfortable and safe asking questions or expressing their feelings about sex; they should provide a safe and open environment for children to discuss these topics without feeling embarrassed or afraid (Ayanwale et al., 2022; Berchiatti et al., 2020; Roche et al., 2023).

In addition, teachers should also pay attention to the sources of information they use in providing sex education as much information is inaccurate or inappropriate for young children (Van Loon & Roebbers, 2020). Therefore, teachers should choose appropriate and comprehensive sources of information, such as books or materials that the school or sex education experts have approved.

In teaching sex education to young children, the very important role teachers play in helping children understand this topic appropriately and developmentally appropriately cannot be underestimated (Bloor et al., 2022; Santelli et al., 2021). Therefore, teachers should have adequate knowledge about sex education and be able to provide information creatively and innovatively. In this way, children will more easily understand the material presented and develop positive attitudes and behaviours related to sex.

The introduction of sex education for early childhood is still relatively low in Indonesia (Ismiulya et al., 2022). In addition, many parents and teachers do not have sufficient knowledge to provide appropriate sex education for young children. This can have an impact on children's sexual development and the occurrence of unhealthy sexual behaviour in the future. As a formal education institution, kindergartens have an important role in providing sex education in early childhood. However, the role of teachers in providing sex education is still debated in society, and scientific research on this topic is limited.

This research explores teachers' role in early childhood sex education in kindergartens, focusing on case studies in several kindergartens in Palopo City, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The research will use a qualitative approach with observation, interview and documentation study methods. Through this research, it is expected to find valuable information about the role of teachers in early childhood sex education, as well as factors that influence the quality of sex education provided by teachers. The results of this study can contribute to developing a sex education curriculum in kindergarten and provide recommendations for the development of training and education for teachers and parents to provide appropriate sex education in early childhood.

As this research focuses on understanding and analysing how sexual education is delivered to young children in kindergarten, several research questions were formulated, namely:

1. How are sexual education teaching methods applied to early childhood in kindergartens?
2. What are the perceptions of parents and the community towards the implementation of sexual education for early childhood?
3. What challenges are faced in delivering sexual education for early childhood in Kindergarten?
4. What is the school policy in delivering sexual education materials?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Teacher skills in providing sex education in early childhood

Teacher skills in providing sex education in early childhood are very important. As such, the pedagogical approach can be a reference for improving such skills. The pedagogical approach in early childhood sex education is based on the principle that young children can understand the concept of sex appropriately and positively if delivered with methods appropriate to their developmental stages (Gong et al., 2020; Suntheimer & Wolf, 2020). Therefore, teachers must pay attention to the delivery and selection of appropriate methods for providing sex education in early childhood.

The pedagogical approach in sex education for early childhood aims to provide effectively and targeted sex education so that children can understand correctly about sex and healthy behaviour related to sex and involves participatory learning methods, where teachers and children interact and learn together. In this approach, teachers must pay attention to the stages of early childhood development and adapt learning methods to these stages. As early childhood has different characteristics in understanding information (Friesen, 2023), teachers must, therefore, use learning methods suitable for children's developmental stages, such as picture stories, songs, or games.

In addition, the pedagogical approach in sex education also encourages teachers to open good communication with children and parents. Teachers need to build positive relationships with children and parents so that children feel comfortable and open in discussing sex (Rey-Guerra et al., 2022). In addition, teachers need to invite parents to be involved in children's sex education, so that parents at home can reinforce the information teachers provide.

In implementing the pedagogical approach, teachers must also pay attention to the values and norms prevailing in society. Teachers should ensure the information provided is in line with the prevailing values and norms so children can develop positive attitudes and behaviours related to sex. With a pedagogical approach, sex education for early childhood can be done effectively and on target so that children will more easily understand sex and healthy behaviour related to sex and can develop positive attitudes towards themselves and others.

Sigmund Freud's theory of psychosexual development suggests that children experience stages of psychosexual development that affect their understanding of sexuality (Freud, 2022). The oral, anal, phallic, latent and genital stages play an important role in shaping children's understanding of the body, gender identity and social relationships.

In addition, Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development emphasises the importance of cognitive development in children's understanding of sexual concepts (Pakpahan & Saragih, 2022). Early childhood experiences cognitive development that influences how they understand information about the body, gender roles and the differences between boys and girls.

Albert Bandura's social learning theory is also relevant in early childhood sex education (Rumjaun & Narod, 2020). This theory highlights the importance of environmental influences and behavioural examples in children's learning. Children learn about sexuality through observing and imitating behaviour from adults, including teachers and parents. Therefore, the role of teachers and parents is crucial in providing positive sex education in early childhood.

Furthermore, Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of development emphasises the importance of social environment and context in children's development (Tudge & Rosa, 2020). In early childhood sex education, this theory considers family, school and community factors in shaping children's understanding of sexuality and promoting healthy sex education.

2.2. Parental involvement in early childhood sex education

As partners in providing sex education to children, teachers should build effective communication with parents and engage them in affording early childhood sex education. Through interactions with parents, teachers can learn about family values and better understand children's needs (Andoni et al., 2022). This can strengthen the teacher's role in early childhood sex education and increase parental involvement in providing sex education to children.

Parental involvement in early childhood sex education is very important because parents have a huge role in shaping children's values and attitudes about sex (Yang et al., 2022). Parents need to open communication with children about sex and answer children's questions honestly and accurately. They also need to model good behaviour related to sex and teach values and norms as appropriate to their culture and religion (Lin et al., 2021). In addition, parents can use resources such as quality books, videos, or websites to assist in providing sex education to their children. Finally, parents can participate in activities organised by schools related to children's sex education. With parental involvement, children can obtain consistent and correct information about sex and form positive attitudes and behaviours related to sex.

The following are some things parents can do to help teachers in delivering an understanding of sex education in early childhood:

- 1) Provide accurate information about children's sexual development:

Parents can provide accurate and developmentally appropriate information to teachers. This will help teachers plan and deliver sex education materials appropriate for the child's developmental stage.

2) Sharing experiences and insights:

Parents can share their experiences and insights on how to teach sex education to children correctly and effectively. By sharing experiences and insights, parents can help teachers understand the needs and challenges in teaching sex education to young children.

3) Establish good communication with teachers:

Parents can establish good communication with teachers and be open to providing input or suggestions for children's sex education. This will help teachers improve or adjust the sex education materials delivered to children (Barnett et al., 2020; Correia et al., 2020; Davis et al., 2023; Lipscomb et al., 2021).

2.3. The urgency of children's understanding of sex

As educators, teachers have an important role in helping children understand the concept of sex in a positive and healthy manner. Through appropriate sex education, teachers can help children understand values about friendship, communication, decision-making and other social skills to help children develop a positive sexual identity (Ademuyiwa et al., 2023). Therefore, the role of teachers in improving children's understanding of sex is very important in early childhood sex education.

Understanding sex education for early childhood has a very important urgency because, at that age, children begin to experience physical and psychological development that affects how they understand their bodies and relationships with others (Marshall et al., 2020). Therefore, a correct and appropriate understanding of sex education early on will help children understand and appreciate their bodies and develop a positive understanding of relationships with others.

In addition, an understanding of sex education at an early age will also help children to recognise and avoid unhealthy behaviours and sexual harms such as sexual harassment and sexual violence. With proper understanding, children can distinguish healthy and unhealthy behaviours in their relationships with others. Sex education at an early age also helps form positive and healthy relationships between children and their parents, teachers, and surroundings (Bloor et al., 2022; Van Leent et al., 2023). In a supportive and positive environment, children will feel comfortable and open to ask and talk about their sex issues, which can help them build self-assurance and foster self-confidence.

In order to create a healthy and independent young generation, understanding sex education in early childhood is very important and must be done appropriately and correctly. Providing a proper and correct understanding of sex education early on, will enable children to develop a positive understanding of themselves and their relationships with others and avoid potential sexual harms to themselves and others (Leung & Lin, 2019).

3. Method

3.1. Research design

This study used a qualitative approach to explore the influence of sexual education on early childhood character development in Indonesia (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The main objective was to understand kindergarten teachers' perspectives and experiences in implementing sexual education in their curriculum. This qualitative approach was chosen for its ability to provide an in-depth and detailed picture of the perceptions, understandings and experiences of the research subjects, which in this case are kindergarten teachers. This research design aims to generate rich and meaningful data to provide new insights into sexual education in Indonesia's early childhood education context.

3.2. Participants

This study involved participants from two leading kindergartens in Palopo City, namely Paramata Bunda Palopo Kindergarten and Datok Sulaiman Palopo Kindergarten. Participants were selected based on their involvement in early childhood sexual education at the kindergarten. From each kindergarten, three teachers were involved as research participants, comprising a total of six teachers. In addition, the study also involved four parents, two from each kindergarten. The decision to involve this number of participants was based on the principle of data saturation in qualitative research. Data saturation occurs when new information or data found in subsequent interviews no longer add to the researcher's understanding or knowledge of the phenomenon under study. In this study, the interview process was stopped after the researcher felt that the information obtained from the third participant in each kindergarten was sufficient and no longer added new knowledge. Therefore, interviews with the fourth participant and so on were not conducted. This reflects the efficiency approach in qualitative research, where data are collected until reaching the point of saturation.

3.3. Data collection

Data collection in this study involved three main methods: observation, interviews and documentation studies. The research instruments include observation sheets, interview guidelines and documentation study guides, all of which have been validated by two experts in the field of early childhood education, Dr Fatmaridah Sabani and Dr Nur Rahmah. Dr Fatmaridah Sabani is an expert in early childhood education, while Dr Nur Rahmah is the Head of the Early Childhood Islamic Education Study Program at Palopo State Islamic Institute. This validation process helped improve the quality and trustworthiness of the data collected and the analyses generated.

3.3.1. Observation

Through the observation method, the researcher will directly observe the situation and interactions in the kindergarten, which is the research location. In this case, the researcher will observe how the teacher delivers sexual education material and how students respond to the explanation. In addition, researchers will also pay attention to the interaction between teachers and parents in the context of early childhood sexual education. This observation is important to

obtain a direct and in-depth picture of the reality in the field and to understand the broader context in which sex education is provided.

3.3.2. *Interview*

The interview method will be used to dig deeper into teachers' and parents' experiences, perceptions and opinions regarding early childhood sexual education. These interviews will be conducted individually and designed as semi-structured interviews, where the researcher will have a planned set of questions and be flexible in exploring topics or ideas that arise during the interview process. These interviews will provide valuable information about participants' subjective perspectives and approaches to early childhood sexual education.

3.3.3. *Documentation Study*

In the documentation study method, researchers will collect and analyse various documents and learning materials used in sexual education in kindergartens. These materials may include curriculum, textbooks, handouts and other digital materials. Through documentation studies, researchers can understand how sexual concepts and issues are taught and presented to students and how these materials reflect and support the school's sexual education approach.

3.4. **Data analysis**

In this study, the process of analysing interview data was carried out with the help of Atlas.ti software (Friese, 2019). This software allows researchers to perform several important stages in qualitative data analysis, including coding, categorisation, visualisation, and data interpretation. Coding in this research maps and organises the interview transcript data into manageable information units. Then, the categorisation stage helps group the codes based on similar themes or topics. Visualisation serves to assist the researcher in understanding the relationships between categories and sub-categories, as well as in mapping out common patterns and themes. Furthermore, interpretation is used to extract meaning and findings from the categorised and visualised data.

Data from observation and documentation studies are analysed descriptively and are presented in a detailed and systematic narrative, describing the phenomenon or event based on the empirical data obtained. This descriptive analysis allows researchers to understand the context, dynamics and meaning of the phenomenon under study more deeply and comprehensively.

3.5. **Research procedures**

This procedure ensured the research could be conducted systematically and efficiently. The steps taken in this research involve the following:

3.5.1. *Identification and Selection of Participants*

Firstly, the researcher will identify and select kindergartens in Palopo City involved in early childhood sexual education. Teachers and parents of students in those schools will be identified as potential participants and will be selected based on predetermined criteria, including their involvement in sexual education and their willingness to participate in the study.

3.5.2. Data Collection Through Interviews

Once the participants are identified and selected, the researcher will conduct in-depth interviews with teachers and parents. These interviews will be designed to understand their experiences, perceptions and approaches to early childhood sexual education. Interview questions will focus on their experiences in teaching or supporting sexual education and their perceptions of the effectiveness and relevance of such education.

3.5.3. Observation

In addition to the interviews, the researcher will conduct observations at the school to understand more about how sexual education is provided and what role parents play in this process. This observation will involve direct classroom observation and interactions between teachers, students and parents related to sexual education.

3.5.4. Documentation Study

The researcher will collect and analyse educational materials and documents used in sexual learning at the kindergarten. This analysis will include reviewing the content, approaches and methods used in the materials and how they are used in practice.

3.5.5. Data Analysis

Once the data have been collected, the researcher will use a qualitative analysis approach. This analysis is about describing the data and trying to understand their meaning. By doing so, the researcher can formulate important findings, answer research questions, and conclude the research results.

4. Results

The results of this study are based on interviews, observations and document studies. Through interviews with teachers in several kindergartens, the study showed how teachers deliver sexual education to young children. This information also helps understand what challenges teachers face and how they try to overcome them. Furthermore, direct observation in the classroom allows researchers to see how sexual education is provided and received by children. Through observation, researchers can understand the context and nuances of sexual education practices in kindergartens. The results of the document study provide insights into how the current sexual education curriculum and materials are designed and organised. Through document analysis, researchers can see what is already in place and what may still need to be improved or changed in the approach to sexual education for early childhood.

The results of the interviews are presented in the form of diagrams generated from the analysis with Atlas ti. The results showed that the learning content of sex education conducted by teachers includes two things: a) explaining with simple language, b) explaining the differences in sex to children, and c) introducing sexual terms to children.

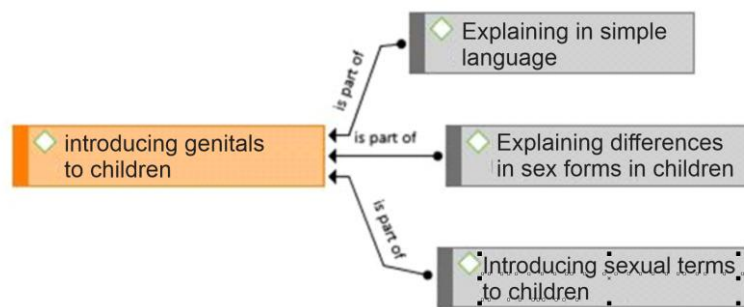


Figure 1. Introducing genitals to children

Views on sex education for children were categorised into two categories: a) sex education is unnatural, and b) sex education for children is very important.

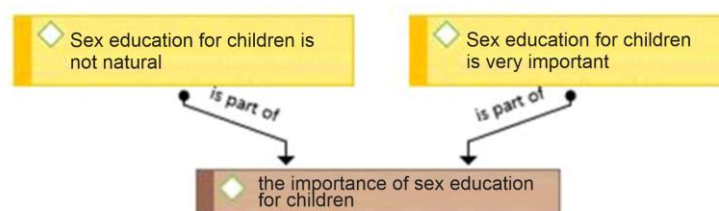


Figure 2. Views on sex education for children

Teachers' and parents' responses to children's questions about sexuality involved: a) explaining to children who ask about menstruation, b) feeling taboo to talk about sex with children, c) children ask about where babies come from, d) children have never asked about sex.

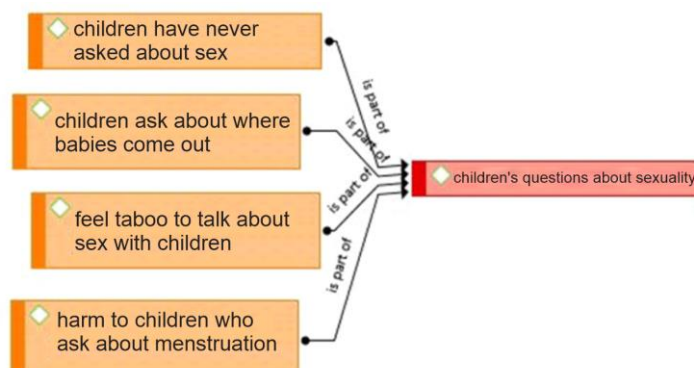


Figure 3. Teacher and parent responses to children's questions about sexuality

The difficulties experienced in introducing sex education to children include four things, namely: 1) lack of time with children, 2) difficulty communicating with language that is easy for children to understand, 3) children prefer to play and not focus, 4) children are less close to parents.

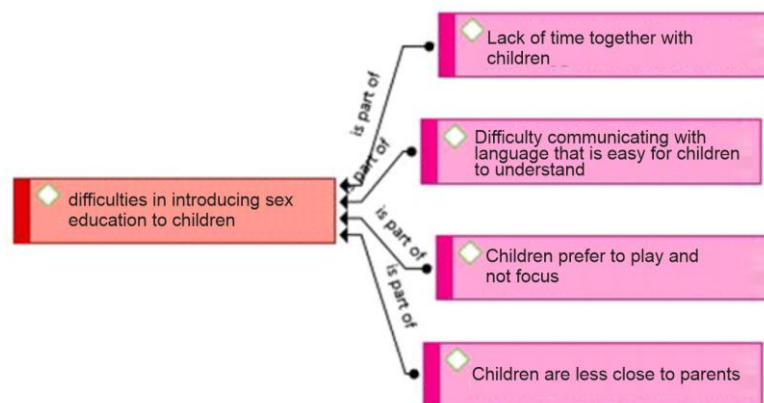


Figure 4. Difficulties experienced in introducing sex education for children

The interviews provide an in-depth picture of how teachers and parents handle sexual education for young children.

a. Learning Content

Teachers understand the importance of explaining the concept of sexuality in simple language that is easy for children to understand. They also focus on recognising the physical differences between boys and girls and introducing sexual terms to children in an age-appropriate way.

b. Views on Sex Education

Two views were found. Some people felt that sexual education for early childhood was not appropriate, perhaps out of concern that this would affect the child's innocence. However, other views emphasise that sexual education is essential to protect children from sexual abuse and help them understand their bodies.

c. Response to Children's Questions

Some teachers and parents feel awkward and taboo to talk about sex with children. However, they also realise that children may question sexuality, such as menstruation or where babies come from. A good and age-appropriate response is very important in these situations.

d. Difficulties in Introducing Sex Education

Some challenges include a lack of time with children, difficulty communicating in a language that children can understand, preferring to play and not focus, and a lack of closeness between children and parents.

These interviews show that sexual education for early childhood is a complex and sensitive topic that requires knowledge, expertise and good communication between teachers, parents and children.

The observations showed various forms of presentation in learning sexuality in early childhood. Some of the main findings are presented in the following table:

Table 1. Form of Presentation in Learning

No.	Materials / Materials	Serving Techniques	Description
1.	Simple stories	Storytelling Teacher	Teachers use simple stories that children easily understand to introduce basic concepts of sexuality and privacy. Stories can be fictional stories or examples of everyday situations.
2.	Clear pictures	Expository	Pictures and illustrations are used to help children understand the concepts visually. The teacher explains and discusses the pictures with the children.
3.	Educational games	Game Play in class	Teachers use a variety of educational games specifically designed to facilitate learning about sexuality. These games may involve simulations, role plays or other activities that allow children to learn in a fun and interactive setting.

This observation shows that teachers use various methods and techniques to deliver sexual education to young children. These techniques are designed to ensure that the material is delivered in a way that children can understand and is appropriate for their stage of development.

a. Simple stories

Teachers utilise narratives that children can grasp to introduce the ideas of sexuality and privacy using storytelling approaches. These could be imaginary stories or ordinary occurrences relevant to youngsters' experiences. This strategy allows youngsters to think about and comprehend things in a situation they can relate to.

b. Vivid pictures

This expository technique involves using visuals to help children understand concepts of sexuality. Teachers can use pictures or illustrations to explain concepts more concretely, allowing children to visualise and understand concepts better. Pictures can also be a starting point for discussion and answering children's questions.

c. Educational games

Teachers use educational games as an interactive technique to deliver sexual education. These games could involve simulations, role-playing or other activities that allow children to learn in a relaxed and fun environment. Through games, children can practise the concepts they learn and see how they apply them in real-life situations.

This observation shows that creative and interactive approaches can help deliver sexual education to young children in a way that is effective and sensitive to their developmental stage.

Document studies were conducted on the guidelines and handbooks for learners, teachers, parents and visitors. The handbook is a guideline and policy issued by the Republic of Indonesia's Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology. The handbook contains various school policies, including behaviour and association in the educational environment. These guidelines and handbooks aim to provide clear and firm guidance to all parties involved in early childhood education activities at the institution. Learners, teachers, parents and visitors can refer to the handbook to understand the policies and behaviours that must be followed in the educational setting.

The document study on the guidelines and handbooks of early childhood education institutions in Palopo City revealed various policies and guidelines relevant to sexual education.

a. Uniform Use Policy

The handbook includes a policy on school uniforms for boys and girls. It reflects efforts to introduce gender concepts to children from an early age.

b. Use of Specific Attributes

The handbook also includes rules on the use of specific attributes for Muslimah children, showing respect for different cultures and religions within the school community.

c. Social Behaviour Rules

The handbook includes rules on interactions between students, teachers, parents and visitors within the school environment. It includes rules on how to communicate and interact respectfully and safely.

d. Protection for Children with Special Needs

The handbook also includes a protection policy for children with special needs, demonstrating the school's commitment to ensuring all children have equal access to education.

This document study shows that school guidelines and handbooks play an important role in creating a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students. They also serve as useful tools to help teachers, parents, and students understand and comply with the policies and behaviours set by the school. In addition, they ensure that the policies and behaviours reflect values that support quality and relevant learning, including in the context of sex education.

5. Discussion

This research was conducted through interviews, observations and document studies to understand how sexual education is delivered to young kindergarten children. The interviews showed that the topic is taught through simple language, the introduction of physical differences between boys and girls, and the introduction of sexual terms. While some people feel that sex education is not natural for early childhood, this research shows that many also see it as an important part of a child's education. However, challenges in teaching include

lack of time, communication difficulties, children's lack of focus, and lack of closeness with parents.

Observations and document studies showed different ways of delivering sexual education materials, such as teachers use simple stories, pictures and educational games to explain the concept of sexuality to children. The document study found school policies on various matters, including uniforms, rules of socialising and protection for children with special needs. Thus, this research shows that sex education for early childhood is a complex and sensitive topic, but, with the right approach, it can be delivered in a way that is effective and respectful of their developmental stage.

This research found some important intersections and differences with other studies that focus on sexual education at the nursery school level. In the Chinese context, research by Chen Jiayue et al. (2022) noted that policies supporting sexual education in kindergartens are incomplete, and sexual education in kindergartens lacks teaching instructions. In addition, they also emphasised that sexual education in kindergartens lacks important family support. These findings align with this study, reflecting similar challenges in implementing sexual education in kindergartens.

However, there are important differences when comparing this study with that by Santelli et al. (2021b) in the United States. They showed that, while sexual education has strong support from parents and health professionals, acceptance of sexual education among US adolescents has declined or stagnated over the past 25 years. It contrasts with our findings which show an increase in interest and participation in sexual education among kindergarten students in Indonesia.

In a study conducted by Ismiulya et al. (2022) in Indonesia, parents' understanding of providing sexual education to their children was lacking. These findings coincide with the results of this study, reflecting the communication challenges between parents and children in delivering sexual education. However, this study also highlighted variations in approaches to sexual education, such as the use of uniforms and rules of social interaction, which were not highlighted in the previous study.

The introduction of sex differences in children also needs to be adjusted to their developmental stages (Di Pietro et al., 2023; Ibrahim et al., 2021; Swider-Cios et al., 2023). Through experience, observation and interaction with people around them, children begin to become aware the physical differences between men and women early; therefore, parents and teachers must provide a correct and appropriate understanding of these physical differences so that children do not misunderstand or get confused about them. A correct and appropriate understanding can also help children develop positive attitudes towards their bodies and avoid unnecessary shame or anxiety related to physical differences.

Reflections from this study indicate that sexual education in early childhood is an important and integral part of their overall education, although it requires an

appropriate approach to their development stage. The findings of this study indicate that there is a need for capacity building for teachers and support for parents in providing effective and age-appropriate sex education for young children. Parallel to the study conducted by Nguyen et al. (2022), the results of this study reflect the need for clearer and more structured school policies to support holistic and inclusive sexual education. This includes protections for children with special needs and policies that address issues such as socialising rules and uniform use. In a broader context, the findings are an important indicator that early childhood sexual education can and should be an integral part of the early childhood education curriculum.

The findings of this study have several important implications. Firstly, there is an urgent need to train teachers and other educators in the effective and age-appropriate delivery of sexual education to young children. This training should include ways to communicate about this sensitive topic in language that children can easily understand and is appropriate to their developmental stage. Secondly, the findings also point to the need for greater support for parents in understanding and engaging in their children's sexual education. This could be through educational resources, workshops or information sessions. Thirdly, the results underscore the need for clear and consistent school policies that support inclusive and holistic sexual education, including protection for children with special needs. The findings imply that sexual education should be placed in a broader context within the early childhood education curriculum and requires collaboration between teachers, parents and policymakers.

Based on the findings of this study, several action steps need to be taken. Firstly, teachers should be engaged in specialised training to deliver sexual education to early childhood. Ensuring they have the necessary knowledge and skills to explain this topic appropriately and sensitively is important. Secondly, schools and governments must develop and implement clear and consistent policies on sexual education in kindergartens. This includes rules on how and when these topics are taught, as well as protections for children who may be vulnerable. Third, an increase of parental involvement and understanding of the importance of sexual education for their children. This could be through information sessions, guidance and discussions. Fourthly, the development and use of teaching materials and methods appropriate to children's age and developmental stage. By taking these steps, sexual education can be effectively delivered to young children while respecting and paying attention to their maturity and readiness.

The perspective of religious education in the context of sex education for early childhood is that religious education views sex as an integral part of human life that must be managed properly under applicable rules and moral values (Bhana, 2023; Marshall, 2018). Therefore, sex education for early childhood should be tailored to the religious teachings of the child's community. In addition, religious education pays attention to the values of purity, so sex education for early childhood must provide an understanding of the virtues of maintaining personal purity and avoiding behaviour that is not under religious teachings. Religious education also emphasises the importance of a humanist approach in providing

sex education for early childhood, which means that it must pay attention to children's psychological and emotional conditions so that trauma or confusion does not occur.

In terms of the role of parents, religious education also emphasises the importance of parents and teachers in providing sex education for early childhood. Parents and teachers are expected to guide children in developing a positive understanding and attitude towards sex under religious teachings. Finally, religious education also sees the importance of preventing actions that are unhealthy or contrary to religious teachings. Therefore, sex education for early childhood should provide an understanding and knowledge of the negative impact of unhealthy behaviour contrary to religious teachings.

The novelty of this study lies in the multidisciplinary approach used to explain and address sexual education for early childhood. It involves the integration of various perspectives, including educational psychology, educational sociology, and religious education, each of which brings a unique and important view on the issue.

From the educational psychology perspective, this research provides new nuances by emphasising the importance of delivering sexual education materials appropriate to the child's stage of psychological development. It includes attention to content, language and teaching methods adapted to cater to children's comprehension and information-processing capacities at each stage of their development.

Meanwhile, through the lens of the sociology of education, this study makes a novel contribution by looking at sexual education as part of a child's socialisation process. It involves understanding that family, school, and society play important roles in shaping children's sexual perceptions and attitudes. Therefore, this study offers a sexual education framework that involves and considers all these parties, significantly contributing to research in this area.

This study stands out from a religious education perspective by incorporating religious values and teachings in sexual education. It opens up new insights that sexual education is not just about factual knowledge but also about shaping values, attitudes and behaviours that align with the religious teachings of the child's society.

Thus, this research introduces a new and comprehensive framework for sexual education in early childhood, which attempts to accommodate the complexity and uniqueness of this issue in the context of early childhood education. It represents a step forward from traditional sexual education approaches that are often one-dimensional and do not consider other important factors. As such, this study provides valuable new insights for educational practitioners and sets the foundation for further research in this area.

6. Conclusion

The most important finding of this research is that sexual education has started to be implemented in kindergartens, although it is still a controversial topic in society. This research shows that sexual education materials can be delivered to young children using simple language, explaining physical differences between men and women, and sexual terms through stories, pictures and educational games. Many parents and educators recognise the importance of sexual education as part of a child's education.

This research makes a significant contribution to the development of teaching methods for sexual education in kindergarten. The findings enrich our understanding of how best to deliver this sensitive topic to children in the context of early education. The research also emphasises the importance of cooperation between schools and parents in delivering sexual education and the challenges teachers face in the teaching process.

While this study provides an important overview of sexual education in kindergarten, some limitations should be noted. Firstly, the study focused on one particular educational context and may not cover the whole picture of sexual education in Indonesia. Secondly, this study only involved a few participants, so the results may not be generalisable to a wider population. For future research, it is recommended to conduct a study with a larger and more diverse sample and explore children's own experiences and views on the sexual education they receive.

7. Reference

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