

SAFEGUARDING INNOCENCE: DEVELOPING CURRICULUM OF ISLAMIC SEXUAL EDUCATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Hardiyanti Pratiwi

*Antasari State Islamic University
Jl. A. Yani Km 4.5 Banjarmasin Indonesia
Email: hardiyantipratiwi@uin-antasari.ac.id*

Murniyanti Ismail

*Antasari State Islamic University
Jl. A. Yani Km 4.5 Banjarmasin Indonesia
Email: Murniyanti.ismail@uin-antasari.ac.id*

Article received August 05th, 2023; Article revised October 28th, 2023; Article approved November 11st, 2023

Abstract

Article 15 of Law No. 35/2014 affirms the right of every child to be protected from various forms of exploitation, including sexual crimes. A well-structured and age-appropriate Islamic sexuality education curriculum plays an important role in shaping a healthy understanding of children's physical, emotional, and social interactions. This research reviews the development of a sexuality education curriculum using the Dick and Carey development model in an Early Childhood Education (ECE) or Kindergarten B unit that refers to the Merdeka Curriculum. This curriculum includes four learning domains, namely intellectual skills, verbal information, psychomotor skills, and attitudes, which are in line with the Learning Outcomes of religious values and character, identity, and the basics of literacy and Steam. The learning design process begins with goal identification through performance analysis and needs assessment, then designing learning objectives that address specific challenges. The curriculum contains two themes, namely Showing Appropriate Reactions to Verbal Harassment and Inappropriate Touching which has 13 learning outcomes and Maintaining Cleanliness and Hygiene of Sensitive Body Parts which has 5 learning outcomes. The media needed to support learning include videos, picture storybooks, cards, snakes and ladders games, puppets, and songs. The appropriate methods are storytelling, socio-drama, interactive games, and discussions. The product was validated by material and curriculum experts. After revision, the values achieved showed improvement, with the Curriculum and Learning Evaluation Expert Assessment increasing from 3.06 to 3.74, reflecting increased suitability and effectiveness. The Early Childhood Sexuality Education Material Content Expert Assessment progressed from 3.08 to 3.67, highlighting improved inclusivity and accuracy.

Keywords: curriculum, early childhood, islamic sexuality education, sexual abuse

INTRODUCTION

Sexuality education for early childhood is a foundational component of a child's overall development (Mackin et al., 2016). During this formative stage, children are curious about their bodies, relationships, and the world around them (Cacciatore et al., 2019). A well-structured and age-appropriate sexuality education curriculum helps children develop a healthy understanding of their physical selves,

emotions, and interactions with others. It lays the groundwork for a positive body image, self-esteem, and respectful relationships. By introducing concepts such as consent, personal boundaries, and respect for others, children learn the fundamental building blocks of interpersonal interactions.

Sexuality education, undoubtedly, is an urgent matter that needs to be implemented, but in a child-friendly and appropriate context. Article 15 of Law Number 35 of 2014 states

that every child has the right to protection from political exploitation, involvement in armed conflicts, engagement in social unrest, participation in events involving violence, engagement in warfare, and sexual crimes (Latifiani, 2019). Without sexuality education, the likelihood of sexual violence against children could increase because children might not be able to identify inappropriate behaviors directed at their own bodies by others (Breuner et al., 2016; Robinson et al., 2017).

In 2019, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (Kemen PPPA), through the "Simfoni" (Online Information System for the Protection of Women and Children), recorded at least 1,500 cases of sexual violence against children. This emphasizes the importance of providing proper sexuality education to empower children with knowledge and awareness about their bodies, boundaries, and appropriate behavior, ultimately helping to prevent such cases of abuse.

In Islamic societies, where religious values play a significant role, the approach to sexuality education takes on a distinct character. Islamic teachings emphasize modesty, respect for the human body, and the sanctity of relationships. An Islamic sexuality education curriculum seeks to harmonize these teachings with contemporary knowledge and challenges (Tabatabaie, 2015). It aims to ensure that children grow up with a holistic understanding of their bodies as a gift from God, the importance of maintaining modesty, and the ethical principles governing interactions with others (Tabatabaie, 2015).

Research has shown that children are vulnerable to various forms of sexual abuse (Miller-Perrin & Wurtele, 2017; Murray et al., 2014; Singh et al., 2014). Developing an Islamic sexuality education curriculum that educates children about inappropriate touching, the importance of consent, and avenues for seeking help aligns with Islamic principles of protecting the vulnerable. This curriculum can empower children to identify and report abusive behavior, fostering a safer environment.

In many societies, discussions about sexuality are considered sensitive or taboo, which can lead to misinformation or lack of guidance (Goli et al., 2022). In Islamic communities, these taboos can be rooted in cultural norms or misconceptions about

religious teachings (Rouhparvar et al., 2022). A well-designed curriculum should take into account these cultural sensitivities while providing clear, accurate, and age-appropriate information that dispels myths and misconceptions. This helps educators and parents overcome their discomfort and enables open, constructive discussions (Ott & Stephens, 2017).

The proliferation of easily accessible information, especially through the internet and television, presents a challenge (Weatherred, 2015). Children can be exposed to inappropriate or inaccurate content that contradicts Islamic values. An Islamic sexuality education curriculum should equip children with critical thinking skills, enabling them to differentiate between credible sources and unreliable information. This skill becomes especially important in an era where misinformation spreads rapidly.

According to the need assessment conducted during preliminary research with 247 early childhood educators, the main difficulties encountered by educators in teaching early childhood sexuality education, given the growing importance of this topic due to the increasing occurrences of child sexual violence, are the absence of a dedicated curriculum for early childhood sexuality education provided by the Ministry of Education or early childhood education institutions (Pratiwi et al., 2023). In the absence of a specialized curriculum, instructors are unable to ascertain the essential learning goals, age-appropriate resources, acceptable instructional approaches, and media suitable for these children. Hence, it is imperative to create a curriculum for early childhood sexuality education that is in line with the *Merdeka Curriculum*.

The lack of a curriculum of this nature poses substantial challenges for educators in adequately addressing the subject of sexuality with young children (Francis & DePalma, 2014). An early childhood curriculum that is customized to the specific requirements and growth phases of young children is essential in order to enable educators to deliver material that is suitable for their age, delivered with sensitivity and accuracy, and to cultivate a learning environment that is secure and encouraging.

Creating a curriculum centered around the *Merdeka* Curriculum concept enables educators to provide sexuality education in a manner that is consistent with overarching educational objectives and principles. This approach guarantees that children not only acquire accurate information but also gain knowledge about values, character growth, and literacy proficiency. The development of this curriculum is needed to provide educators with the necessary skills and direction to effectively address the delicate and critical topic of early childhood sexuality education.

Literature Review

Sexuality Education in Western and Islamic Perspectives

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines sexuality and sexual health in broad terms. Sexuality is a fundamental aspect of human life that encompasses gender, gender identity and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy, and reproduction. It is experienced and expressed through thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors, practices, roles, and relationships. While sexuality can encompass all these dimensions, not all are necessarily experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, legal, historical, religious, and spiritual factors (World Health Organization, 2006).

Sexual health is a state of physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being related to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction, or weakness. Sexual health requires a positive approach and respect for sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having a safe and enjoyable sexual experience free from coercion, discrimination, and violence. In order to achieve and maintain sexual health, the rights of all individuals must be respected, protected, and fulfilled (World Health Organization, 2010).

From a global perspective, the World Health Organization categorizes sexuality education programs into three groups: (1) Programs primarily or exclusively focused on preventing premarital sexual relationships; (2) Comprehensive programs, which encompass prevention of premarital sexual relationships

as an option but also include contraception and safe sex practices; and (3) Programs that incorporate elements of category 2 but also lead to a broader perspective of sexual growth and development, sexual rights, and the right to education. This latter program is termed holistic sexuality education. In the European Standards for Sexuality Education, holistic sexuality education is defined as learning about the cognitive, emotional, social, interactive, and physical aspects of sexuality (World Health Organization, 2007).

Sexuality education begins in early childhood and evolves through adolescence and adulthood. Its purpose is to support and protect sexual development. Gradual sexuality education equips children and adolescents with information, skills, and positive values to understand all aspects of sexuality, have safe relationships, and take responsibility for their own and others' sexual health and well-being (World Health Organization, 2010). This approach promotes healthy self-esteem and a focus on well-being, enabling a necessary shift in perspective when conceptualizing childhood sexuality and sexuality education (Ketting et al., 2016; Morawska et al., 2015).

Sexuality manifests differently throughout human developmental stages; the sexual needs of children and adolescents differ from those of adults. Consequently, any sexual activity involving an older person or adult with a young child can be considered sexual abuse. This serious issue occurs across all societies (Stoltenborgh et al., 2011). Despite increasing research, healthcare and education professionals, and even parents, have limited knowledge of normal sexual development in children (Balter et al., 2016). To maintain and support the sexual development of children and adolescents, a clear and easily understood model of sexual development is necessary (Europe, 2010; Romeo & Kelley, 2009). Such a gradual model of sexual development aids in understanding and supporting individuals in experiencing normal and healthy sexual development. For children and adolescents, this model can be used in sexuality education to facilitate self-understanding and appreciation for personal development, promoting resilience against external pressures and avoiding actions or statements that violate others' privacy boundaries.

Most sexuality education models primarily focus on mid-to-late adolescence,

with general topics like preventing unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases (Ketting et al., 2016). The sexual development of young children and their emotional needs often do not receive adequate attention. Some models do provide skills to help young children protect themselves from sexual abuse (Kenny et al., 2012, 2015). Therefore, a model focused on positive sexual health and development throughout childhood and adolescence is greatly needed (McKee et al., 2010; Robinson & Davies, 2017).

The above understanding and characteristics of sexuality education are rooted in the context of secular democratic societies. The interpretation and implementation of these concepts in school curricula have garnered criticism, particularly from Muslim scholars. While comprehensive sexuality education encompasses its nature and process, it may not be complete from an Islamic perspective. Common sexuality education initiatives in the West lack the values and morality associated with sex, sexual dysfunction, deviations, and marital institutions (Athar, 2018).

Islamic sexuality education is implemented within a broader context of Islamic values and principles. In non-Islamic schools, children are often educated about skills like contraception to prevent sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies, or they learn about consent or abortion. Rarely are topics discussed concerning purity or sexual acts, or moral teachings emphasizing the importance of chastity and waiting until marriage (Ashraah et al., 2013). Islam obligates its followers to discipline their children and educate them in all aspects of life, including how to eat, sleep, and even derive pleasure. Undoubtedly, sexual education receives important attention within Islamic teachings. Both boys and girls should receive age-appropriate sexuality education tailored to their developmental stage, as well as the customs and traditions of their community. Islam assigns responsibility to both parents and educational institutions to discuss and explain sexual matters to children, along with the religious duties arising from that understanding (Ali, 2016). Discussions between parents and children should commence from an early age, gradually eliminating misinformation that children might receive from unreliable sources such as

the internet. Parents are also advised not to engage in improper behavior in front of their children related to sexual themes, both in speech and actions, which might trigger inappropriate imaginations in the child.

In almost all Muslim-majority countries, parents are often reserved when it comes to discussing sexuality. Many Muslim parents perceive discussing sexual topics with their children as sinful, inappropriate, and unfitting for a child. This perception stems from the idea that sexuality is only related to marital relationships. This narrow definition ultimately leads to many Muslim children acquiring information about sexuality from unreliable sources such as pornography, peers, television, the internet, and so on. A lack of accurate sexual information can result in a lack of respect for one's own and others' intimate boundaries, as well as a disregard for physical well-being (Rassool & Khan, 2020).

Conceptual Framework Objectives of Early Childhood Sexuality Education

Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) is an ongoing educational process that provides children and young individuals with the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to safeguard their health, cultivate respectful social and sexual relationships, make informed decisions, and comprehend and uphold the rights of others (Huaynoca et al., 2014; Zulu et al., 2019). The CSE curriculum promotes a constructive perspective on sexuality, highlighting principles such as respect, inclusivity, non-discrimination, equality, empathy, responsibility, and other important qualities. Here are several learning outcomes that can be expected from early childhood sexuality education (Smith et al., 2023):

1. Cultivate a secure and optimistic perspective about sexuality.
2. Cultivate and foster strong interpersonal connections.
3. Comprehend and honor the human physique.
4. Acquire knowledge of the topics of gender and sexual orientation.
5. Enhance proficiency in communication and decision-making abilities.
6. Acquire knowledge of the concepts of consent and boundaries.

7. Comprehend and proactively mitigate instances of sexual abuse and exploitation.
8. Acquire knowledge on the process of puberty and the maintenance of reproductive well-being.
9. Enhance proficiency in media literacy

Sexuality education should commence in kindergarten and progress systematically throughout middle and high school (Cacciatore et al., 2019; Haberland & Rogow, 2015). Education is a lifelong endeavor that commences inside the confines of one's home, under the guidance of reliable caretakers, and extends into the realm of formal schooling and beyond. Effective sexuality education programs promote informed decision-making on sexual health and mitigate risks associated with violence, exploitation, and abuse.

The purpose of Islamic sexuality education is to provide accurate and healthy knowledge about sexuality within the framework of Islam, aiming to achieve a happy and fulfilling life (Khalaf et al., 2014). Islam recognizes that humans are created as pairs to reproduce and increase the population of the ummah of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Islam provides a comprehensive framework for enjoying the blessings bestowed by Allah. When practiced within the framework set by the Quran and Sunnah, sexuality becomes a source of emotional satisfaction, pleasure, and procreation, ultimately contributing to the maintenance and growth of a healthy population within the Islamic community (Rassool & Khan, 2020).

Islamic sexuality education encompasses several key aspects that reflect its holistic approach. It involves discussing sexuality within the framework of marriage, aiming to nurture love, compassion, and family harmony (Razali et al., 2017). Adhering to moral values is emphasized, exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad's teachings on modesty and self-control. The education spans different developmental stages, tailored to children and adolescents, while promoting gender respect and acknowledging their differences. With a strong emphasis on the family unit as society's cornerstone, Islamic teachings guide individuals in fostering healthy family relationships. Moreover, it stresses the prohibition of harmful behaviors such as masturbation and homosexuality,

directing believers towards righteous and modest lives (Rassool & Khan, 2020).

The role of parents and schools in sexuality education is vital. Parents have a significant responsibility in educating their children about sexuality, while schools provide a unique community resource to promote health and development (Robinson et al., 2017). Open and honest communication between parents and children is crucial in providing accurate information and nurturing healthy attitudes toward sexuality. In Islam, the context of marriage and family life defined by the Quran and Sunnah is central to sexuality education (Ismail et al., 2022; Nadeem et al., 2021). Schools play a role in universal education, focusing on developing knowledge, rationality, understanding, skills, and values related to sexuality within a respectful and tolerant framework (Miedema et al., 2020).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is a research and development (R&D) type using the Dick and Carey development model (2005). The research develops a sexuality education curriculum for early childhood education, specifically Group B, based on local culture within the *Merdeka* Curriculum format supplemented with teaching modules.

The adaptation of the Dick and Carey instructional design model into a refined sequence of steps for the development of an Islamic sexuality curriculum for early childhood underscores the meticulous process undertaken to create an effective and impactful educational framework. By sequentially addressing the identification of instructional goals, thorough instructional analysis, learner characteristics, performance objectives, instructional strategies, materials, criterion tests, and summative evaluation, this modified approach ensures a holistic and learner-centric approach. Through this systematic method, the curriculum aims to cater to the diverse needs of young learners, imparting knowledge, values, and skills in an age-appropriate and culturally sensitive manner, ultimately fostering a meaningful and enriching educational experience.

The research was conducted at TK Islam Tahfiz Ummul Qura in Banjar Regency, focusing on Group B students aged 5 to 6 years, totaling 24 participants. The study employed a Product Assessment Sheet for

expert validators to perform content analysis. This instrument was strategically employed to evaluate the accuracy, relevance, sequencing, and comprehensiveness of materials, as well as the appropriateness of instructional strategies, media, and assessment components. The research methodology aimed to create a culturally sensitive and effective sexuality education curriculum tailored to early childhood education needs.

DISCUSSION

Identification of Instructional Goals

The Robinson and Robinson (2008) Performance Relationship Map effectively assesses early childhood sexuality education issues. Insufficient sexual education by teachers leads to negative sexual behaviour in young students. This problem shapes early sexuality understanding and behaviour in ECE. The risk of students being influenced by unreliable sources prevents EC from meeting its operational goals. Due to operational needs, EC needs sexual education to achieve desired results. Teachers are not meeting sexual education performance standards using appropriate materials and methods due to a lack of guidelines. EC sexual education guidelines and teacher capacity improvements are suggested by the performance needs analysis to close the outcome gap. Curriculum and teacher communication are more important than external factors. Solutions include a comprehensive curriculum with planning, content, assessment, and evaluation, and sexual education teacher training.

The learning goals underpin all instructional design. Choosing and refining learning goals requires a systematic process, clear goal statements, and resources for learning material creation. The Indonesian independent curriculum turns learning goals into outcomes, especially in early childhood education. These outcomes carefully integrate religious and moral values, physical-motor skills, cognitive and language proficiency, socio-emotional growth, and Pancasila student profile. An FGD and *Merdeka* ECE curriculum analysis were conducted with TK Islam Tahfiz Ummul Qura in Banjar Regency to determine sexual education learning outcomes. The extracted learning outcomes match the three stimulation elements:

1. Religious values and moral ethics yield a learning outcome fostering active

participation in personal hygiene, health, and safety practices as an expression of self-care and gratitude towards a higher power.

2. Self-identity stimulation results in a learning outcome centered around the recognition, expression, and management of personal emotions, while nurturing healthy social relationships.
3. Positive behavior towards oneself and the environment culminates in a learning outcome that encourages adaptation to surroundings, adherence to norms and rules, and the display of constructive conduct towards various spheres - family, school, community, country, and the global arena.

Complete Instructional Analysis

In this research step, the goal is to analyze the instructional objectives, categorize them into different learning domains, and identify the main steps required to achieve these objectives. This analysis helps determine the sequence of steps learners must take to master the objectives and the sub-skills required to comprehend the objectives fully.

The first step involves classifying the instructional objectives into four different learning domains:

1. Intellectual Skills involve problem-solving and critical thinking. Learners engage in unique cognitive activities, such as classifying, forming concepts, applying rules, and solving problems. The highest intellectual skill level is problem-solving, which can be further categorized into structured and unstructured problem-solving.
2. Verbal Information involves the retention and recall of specific information. Learners are expected to respond to specific questions with clear answers. It may include memorization and recall of facts or concepts.
3. Psychomotor Skills require the coordination of mental and physical activities. Learners perform physical actions to achieve specific outcomes. Psychomotor skills might involve physical actions coupled with cognitive processes.
4. Attitudes reflect tendencies to make specific choices or decisions. Determining attitude-based objectives involves considering whether learners have choices to make and if these objectives influence decision-making.

Determine Entry Behaviors and Learner Characteristics

The research results from this step involve a comprehensive analysis of student characteristics and the learning context to develop effective sexuality education

instruction in an early childhood setting. The collected data sheds light on various aspects influencing instructional design and delivery.(Table 1 & 2)

Table 1: Student Characteristics Analysis Results

Components	Description
Early Skills and Knowledge	Students are expected to possess certain early skills before instruction begins. This might include awareness about personal hygiene and some understanding of body parts. Some students may have misconceptions, such as beliefs about nudity in specific situations.
Prior Knowledge	Students' prior knowledge is limited and often derived from unreliable sources like peers and media. Several misconceptions related to sexuality need to be addressed.
Attitudes towards Content and Delivery	Students can be convinced that learning about sexuality promotes healthy living and ethical friendship. Storytelling and simulations are identified as effective methods for teaching.
Academic Motivation	Students' motivation varies, and teachers play a crucial role in engaging them. The ARCS model is a useful framework for gauging students' motivation levels.
Developmental Level	Students are within the preoperational stage of Piaget's cognitive development, implying they can comprehend logical relationships and categorize objects. This insight informs the choice of instructional approaches.
Learning Preferences	Students prefer active learning methods that engage them physically and intellectually rather than passive listening.
Attitudes towards Instructors	Students respond positively to friendly and nurturing teachers. Negative attitudes towards instructors can hinder effective learning.
Group Characteristics	The student population is diverse in terms of economic backgrounds and religious beliefs. Parenting and school activities contribute to shaping students' understanding of sexuality.

Write Performance Objectives, Instructional Strategy, And Instructional Materials

Table 2: Objectives, Strategy and Media

Theme	Objectives	Instructional Strategy	Educational Media and Materials
Demonstrating Appropriate Reactions to Verbal Harassment and Inappropriate Touch	Objective 1: Children recognize their sensitive body parts and those of the opposite gender, understanding their functions	Provide factual information through interactive activities. Children will play a body parts puzzle game to identify sensitive body parts and understand their functions correctly.	Body parts puzzle, Body parts diagram posters, Children's anatomy encyclopedias.
	Objective 2: Children understand the concept of marriage and the birth of a baby afterward.	Impart specific information about marriage and its outcomes. Children will engage in activities like creating a family tree to comprehend the sequence of events leading to the birth of a baby.	Little Abid book, Family photos of each child, Materials for creating a family tree.
	Objective 3: Children comprehend where babies come from and where they develop.	Deliver factual information through engaging methods. Children will explore storybooks and categorize information to learn about the origin and development of babies.	Little Abid book ("Where Do I Come From?"), Usborne books ("Where Do Babies Come From?"), Children's encyclopedias.
	Objective 4: Children are aware of the development of body	Focus on intellectual growth and concept application. Children will	Usborne books, Children's encyclopedias.

parts like breasts for breastfeeding.	recognize developmental aspects of their bodies, including body parts with specific functions.	
Objective 5: Children demonstrate appropriate clothing choices to protect their bodies.	Emphasize physical activities and psychomotor skills. Children will role-play scenarios to exhibit an understanding of using clothing for body protection.	Dressing-up props, Role-playing scenarios.
Objective 6: Children understand who is allowed to touch or see their sensitive body parts and under what circumstances.	Impart factual knowledge regarding boundaries. Children will identify permissible individuals and contexts for interactions involving sensitive body parts.	Stick figure images for playing, Lyrics or audio for "appropriate touch" song, Sound effects.
Objective 7: Children can differentiate inappropriate touches and recognize verbal harassment regarding their sensitive body parts.	Engage cognitive skills and concept comprehension. Children will differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate touches, and recognize verbal harassment through play and discussion.	Dolls or figurines for interactive play, Picture storybooks.
Objective 8: Children can refuse inappropriate touches on themselves.	Focus on psychomotor skills linked to cognitive processes. Children will practice refusing unwanted touches through role-playing scenarios.	Dolls or figurines for interactive play, Picture storybooks.
Objective 9: Children can report inappropriate touches to someone who can protect them.	Develop courage through psychomotor and mental activities. Children will learn to report inappropriate touches to a trusted adult through engaging in activities like board games.	Custom-made snakes and ladders game board, Dice.
Objective 10: Children understand the impact of verbal harassment and inappropriate touches on others.	Enhance cognitive skills and understanding of consequences. Children will grasp the outcomes of such actions on others with the help of educational videos.	Educational videos, Picture storybooks.
Objective 11: Children exhibit privacy principles, such as respecting personal space and avoiding looking at others' sensitive body parts.	Focus on psychomotor skills. Children will demonstrate privacy-respecting behaviors, like knocking before entering a room.	Observation notes on children's displayed privacy principles.
Objective 12: Children show respect for others by refraining from verbal harassment or inappropriate touches.	Cultivate attitudes based on beliefs. Children will develop a respectful attitude by refraining from inappropriate behavior.	Educational videos, Picture storybooks.
Objective 13: Children display appropriate religious ethics (Islam) when forming friendships with the opposite gender.	Foster attitudes based on beliefs. Children will exhibit religiously appropriate ethics when interacting with the opposite gender in friendships.	Picture cards with ethical scenarios.

Theme: Maintaining Cleanliness and Hygiene of Sensitive Body Parts	Objective 1: Children recognize self-touching and its dangers.	Convey factual information. Children will identify the risks of self-touching by exploring picture books and encyclopedias.	Children's anatomy encyclopedias, Body diagrams, Picture storybooks.
	Objective 2: Children can avoid self-touching and understand the factors that encourage such behavior.	Engage cognitive skills and problem-solving. Children will learn to avoid self-touching and understand its underlying factors through exploration and comprehension.	Children's anatomy encyclopedias, Child-friendly psychology resources.
	Objective 3: Children exhibit good behavior during toileting.	Focus on psychomotor skills in relation to mental activities. Children will showcase proper toileting behavior through exposure to educational videos and role-playing.	Educational videos, Role-playing props.
	Objective 4: Children demonstrate hygiene and etiquette during toileting.	Include psychomotor skills and mental activities. Children will exhibit proper hygiene during toileting after playing matching card games.	Hygiene-themed matching card games, Educational videos.
	Objective 5: Children value their sensitive body parts by maintaining cleanliness and hygiene.	Develop attitudes based on beliefs. Children will cultivate an attitude of maintaining cleanliness for their sensitive body parts through interactive activities like matching card games.	Hygiene-themed matching card games, Children's ethical belief resources.

Develop Criterion Tests and Summative Evaluation

Student-centered assessment underpins learning progress, according to research. This assessment process puts students first, measuring their learning objectives. The assessment criteria are linked to clear educational performance objectives and learning outcomes.

Assessments include pretests, practise tests, and posttests. Students' knowledge and skills are tested before instruction. This helps teachers identify strengths and weaknesses. Practise tests let students test their knowledge during class. Finally, post-instruction tests measure student learning objectives, indicating teaching success.

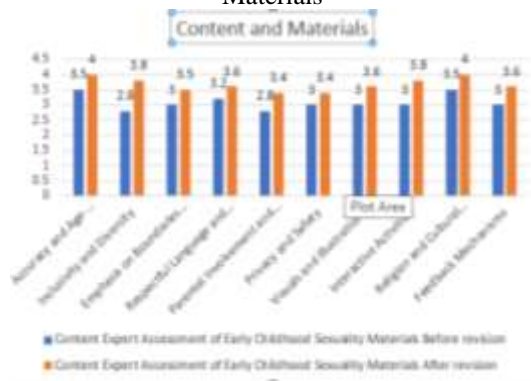
Summative evaluation includes expert assessment, per Dick and Carey. This assessment should help the researcher understand the content, sequence, teaching methods, and evaluation methods since early childhood sexual education is new. The expert assessment compares instruction to expectations. Highly skilled professionals evaluate Curriculum and Learning Evaluation

and Early Childhood Sexuality Materials Analysis, which are expert assessments. A curriculum and learning evaluation professor and an educational psychology doctorate expert are involved. Early childhood sexuality education materials are evaluated for clarity, coherence, goals, and developmental relevance.

Acuity and age-appropriateness ensure information matches developmental stages and uses child-friendly language and concepts. Inclusivity and diversity assessments show children's diverse worlds. Consent and boundaries teach children respect and boundaries. Respectful language and tone foster a nonjudgmental learning environment. Parental guidance and communication aid adult conversations. Children learn consent and boundaries from privacy and safety discussions. Culturally sensitive content, interactive activities, and well-designed visuals improve comprehension. Materials improve with feedback. The expert evaluation uses developmental considerations, topic sensitivity, and educational principles to create

safe, respectful resources that help kids understand their bodies and relationships.

Figure 1: Expert Assessment of EC Sexuality Materials



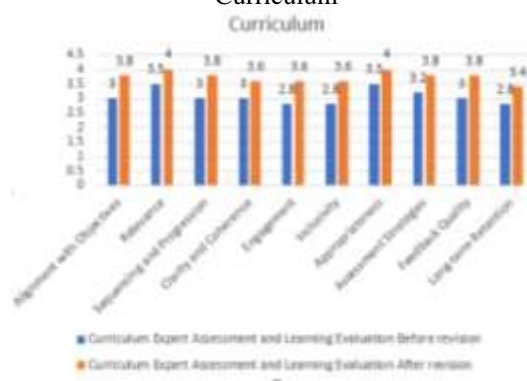
Before Revision (3.08): Initially, the content expert assessment of the early childhood sexuality materials received an average score of 3.08 out of 4. This suggests that the materials were generally accurate and age-appropriate, but there was room for improvement in various areas related to inclusivity and sensitivity.

After Revision (3.67): Following the revision, the content expert assessment score increased to 3.67 out of 4. This indicates that the revisions made to the materials resulted in significant improvements, particularly in terms of inclusivity, accuracy, and appropriate language. The revisions enhanced the overall quality and effectiveness of the materials, getting them closer to the highest possible score.

A curriculum is assessed by experts in several areas. Experts evaluate the curriculum's coherence and effectiveness in meeting learning objectives. The assessment determines if the curriculum is relevant and useful to students. Clarity and coherence evaluate instructional material comprehension, while sequencing and progression determine concept logic. Engagement evaluates how well the curriculum promotes critical thinking and active participation through various methods and activities. Inclusivity ensures cultural sensitivity, while appropriateness evaluates audience development and knowledge. Consider assessment strategies and feedback quality for effective evaluation and constructive guidance. The curriculum's long-term retention test shows it teaches lasting skills. Expert assessments ensure the curriculum is well-designed and meets its

goals by providing a meaningful and impactful learning experience.

Figure 2: Expert Assessment of EC Sexuality Curriculum



Before Revision (3.06): Prior to the revision, the curriculum and learning evaluation received an average score of 3.06 out of 4. This indicates that the curriculum was relatively well-aligned with educational objectives and had an effective learning evaluation strategy, but there was room for improvement in certain areas.

After Revision (3.74): After the revision, the curriculum and learning evaluation's score improved to 3.74 out of 4. This signifies that the revisions made resulted in a significant enhancement in the curriculum's alignment with objectives and the efficacy of the learning evaluation. The improvements made during the revision process have led to a more refined and effective curriculum, bringing it closer to the maximum possible score.

The Effectiveness of Sexuality Education Curriculum as a Curriculum Development Product for Early Childhood Education

Students are encouraged to practise personal hygiene and safety as part of the *Merdeka* Curriculum. In this context, sexuality education is essential. A joint initiative by the Ministries of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek), Home Affairs (Kemendagri), Religious Affairs (Kemenag), Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPPA), Social Affairs (Kemensos), Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI), and National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) signed an MoU on preventing and handling violence in schools in Jakarta on October 12, 2023.

Children spend most of their time in schools, their second most important setting. Thus, schools must provide a safe and supportive learning environment for children (Lewallen et al., 2015). Proactive measures are needed to eliminate intolerance, sexual violence, and bullying in schools (Espelage et al., 2014; Sprague & Walker, 2021).

The curriculum should include an early childhood sexuality education curriculum to promote children's holistic development. It teaches kids how to understand and protect their bodies, maintain personal cleanliness, and recognise appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. It also promotes respect, understanding, and agreement (Badan Standar Kurikulum dan Asesmen Pendidikan, 2022).

Since the curriculum is the main guide to learning, including sexuality education will help children overcome physical and mental health issues (Amiruddin, 2016). This extensive teaching meets the *Merdeka* Curriculum's goals and creates a safer, more inclusive learning environment where sexual violence and bullying can be addressed and prevented. Early childhood sexuality education ensures that children receive a complete, safe, and *merdeka*-aligned education.

Child sexual abuse is high, so a comprehensive sexuality education curriculum is essential. A detailed curriculum helps teachers deliver early childhood sexuality education and overcomes their reluctance to address specific topics. Cheung et al. (2021) found that teachers are most confident in teaching self-protection but least in teaching gender body parts and life's origins.

Several countries are strengthening sexuality education curriculum, according to (UNESCO, 2015). Curriculum reviews suggest prioritising core competencies and testing how gender, religious, and cultural norms affect students' behaviour. Sexuality education content should be tailored to local needs, but core topics must be included to meet international standards.

Effective sexuality education for young children requires appropriate responses to context and needs (UNESCO, 2015). Understanding gender, sex, and sexuality cultural messages is essential for culturally relevant programming. Sexuality education should be grade-appropriate and age-appropriate. The content for 5–8-year-olds

emphasises friendship, love, tolerance, inclusion, respect, and gender roles (Kirby & Ecker, 2009).

National laws and policies should guide sexuality education. In the foundational phase, sexuality education goals and content focus on Life Skills. Gender differences, genital organs, their functions and care, and risky behaviours are covered in the curriculum. Then, students learn about personal and social well-being to identify inappropriate touches, protect themselves from sexual abuse, respect others' privacy, and express friendship and affection through behaviour and good manners (Kirby, 2011).

Strategies, Media, and Teacher Confidence in Delivering Early Childhood Sexuality Themes

In the realm of social sciences, the term 'sexuality' carries a broader meaning than 'sex'. Sexuality encompasses not only the biological domain but also the psychological and social aspects, such as gender identity and roles, love, and relationships (World Health Organization, 2006). Early childhood children exhibit a great curiosity about sexuality (Chrisman & Couchenour, 2002). However, many early childhood educators are unsure of the appropriate methods and may not be psychologically prepared to discuss sexuality with children (Balter et al., 2016; Counterman & Kirkwood, 2013). Teachers often deliver these sexuality themes in a general manner without delving into various components, which might leave significant questions in children's minds. This might prompt them to seek answers from non-professional and less credible sources, potentially leading to misinformation. As a result, this could negatively impact the future development of children's sexuality. From this aspect, the teacher becomes the central figure to ensure the success of education for young children (Saputra, 2016), including sexuality manners.

In early childhood education settings, behaviors related to sexuality are not uncommon. Children might ask questions like why women can become pregnant while men cannot? Where do babies come from? Why do girls have to wear their whole swimsuit while boys don't? (Balter et al., 2016; Sciaraffa & Randolph, 2011). Moreover, they might engage in gender-bound play, refusing to play with children of the opposite gender, such as

playing with dolls or playing soccer (Chapman, 2016; Farr et al., 2018). They might also exhibit behaviors resembling those of adults, like expressing a desire to marry a classmate, asking two dolls to kiss, or role-playing pregnancy and childbirth (Robinson & Davies, 2017). At times, they even show curiosity about private body parts, touching their own genitalia, looking at other children's genitalia, or touching a female teacher's breasts. These behaviors indicate the urgency for educators to talk to children about sexuality, helping them acquire accurate knowledge, learn social norms, and develop healthy attitudes toward sexuality (Cheung et al., 2021). If educators neglect children's sexual exploration and avoid discussing sexuality in the classroom, children might not learn how to respect others and may struggle to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate touch. They might also consider sexuality a taboo topic and feel ashamed of their sexual feelings in the future. There is empirical evidence that early childhood educators' responses to children's curiosity about sexuality and their practices in teaching sexuality education in the classroom vary greatly. Some teachers are confident in openly discussing sexuality with children, while others avoid such discussions by ignoring children's questions and behaviors related to sexuality.

On the one hand, they are willing to talk to children about anatomical terms, how to respect and care for their bodies, and the physical differences between boys and girls. Similarly, Martin (2014) found that American childcare providers in their sample tended to treat children's sexual behaviors (like touching others' private body parts) as misbehavior and employed common classroom management strategies to stop such behavior. Additionally, the more common the sexual behavior, the more likely educators were to ignore it.

CLOSING

The instructional design process begins with identifying goals through performance analysis and needs assessment, then creating learning objectives that address specific challenges. Critical thinking is pivotal, and tools like the Performance Relationship Map aid contextual understanding. Learning goals, derived from objectives, guide design

efforts, aligned with early childhood education's holistic values. Categorizing objectives into domains and breaking down learning steps optimizes instructional efficiency. Determining entry behaviors and learner characteristics tailors effective design, linking student attributes to relevant and engaging instruction. Precise performance objectives emerge from analysis, shaping themes like appropriate reactions and hygiene practices. Instructional materials, such as visual aids and videos, support strategy alignment. Developing criterion tests and expert assessments ensures curriculum and materials enhance learning. Scores highlight improvements: Curriculum Expert Assessment and Learning Evaluation increased from 3.06 to 3.74, reflecting refined alignment and efficacy; Content Expert Assessment of Early Childhood Sexuality Materials improved from 3.08 to 3.67, emphasizing inclusivity and accuracy. These iterative processes enhance educational quality and contribute to impactful early childhood sexual education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We express our sincere appreciation to the committed educators at Tahfiz Ummul Qura Islamic Kindergarten Banjarmasin for their proactive partnership in the creation and implementation of an early childhood sexuality education curriculum. We also thank the validators for their very valuable input.

And most importantly, we also express our gratitude and appreciation for the support of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, especially through the Litapdimas grant which provided financial support for this research.

REFERENCES

- Ali, K. 2016. *Sexual ethics and Islam: Feminist reflections on Qur'an, hadith, and jurisprudence*. Simon and Schuster.
- Amiruddin, A. 2016. Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai Agama Pada Anak Usia Dini Di Raudhathul Atfhal Perwanida 1 Lipu Kabupaten Majene. *Al-Qalam*, 20(1), 109–118.
- Ashraah, M. M., Gmaian, I., & Al-Shudaifat, S. 2013. Sex education as viewed by

- Islam education. *European Journal of Scientific Research*, 95(1), 5–16.
- Athar, S. 2018. Sex Education: An Islamic Perspective. *ISLAMICITY*. <https://www.islamicity.org/2191/sex-education-an-islamic-perspective/>
- Badan Standar Kurikulum dan Asesmen Pendidikan, K. 2022. *Struktur Kurikulum Merdeka*. <https://kurikulum.kemdikbud.go.id/kurikulum-merdeka/capaian-pembelajaran>
- Balter, A.-S., van Rhijn, T. M., & Davies, A. W. 2016. The development of sexuality in childhood in early learning settings: An exploration of early childhood educators' perceptions. *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*, 25(1), 30–40.
- Breuner, C. C., Mattson, G., Committee on Adolescence, Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, Breuner, C. C., Adelman, W. P., Alderman, E. M., Garofalo, R., Marcell, A. V., & Powers, M. E. 2016. Sexuality education for children and adolescents. *Pediatrics*, 138(2), e20161348.
- Cacciatore, R., Korteniemi-Poikela, E., & Kaltiala, R. 2019. The steps of sexuality—A developmental, emotion-focused, child-centered model of sexual development and sexuality education from birth to adulthood. *International Journal of Sexual Health*, 31(3), 319–338.
- Chapman, R. 2016. A case study of gendered play in preschools: How early childhood educators' perceptions of gender influence children's play. *Early Child Development and Care*, 186(8), 1271–1284.
- Cheung, S. K., Kwan, J. L. Y., & Yim, K. Y. K. 2021. Pre-service early childhood teachers' perceptions about sexuality education and behavioural intentions towards children's curiosity about sexuality. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 47(1), 89–103.
- Chrisman, K., & Couchenour, D. 2002. *Healthy Sexuality Development: A Guide for Early Childhood Educators and Families*. ERIC.
- Counterman, L., & Kirkwood, D. 2013. Understanding healthy sexuality development in young children. *Voices of Practitioners*, 8(2), 1.
- Dick, W., Carey, L., & Carey, J. O. 2005. *The systematic design of instruction*.
- Espelage, D. L., Polanin, J. R., & Low, S. K. 2014. Teacher and staff perceptions of school environment as predictors of student aggression, victimization, and willingness to intervene in bullying situations. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 29(3), 287.
- Europe, W. 2010. Standards for Sexuality in Europe. A Framework for Policy Makers, Educational and Health Authorities and Specialists. *Cologne: WHO Europe and Federal Centre for Health Education BZgA*. [Http://www.oif.at/Fileadmin/OEIF/andere_Publikationen/WHO_BZgA_Standards.Pdf](http://www.oif.at/Fileadmin/OEIF/andere_Publikationen/WHO_BZgA_Standards.Pdf).
- Farr, R. H., Bruun, S. T., Doss, K. M., & Patterson, C. J. 2018. Children's gender-typed behavior from early to middle childhood in adoptive families with lesbian, gay, and heterosexual parents. *Sex Roles*, 78(7), 528–541.
- Francis, D. A., & DePalma, R. 2014. Teacher perspectives on abstinence and safe sex education in South Africa. *Sex Education*, 14(1), 81–94.
- Goli, S., Rahimi, F., & Goli, M. (2022). Experiences of teachers, educators, and school counselors about the sexual and reproductive health of educable intellectually disabled adolescent girls: A qualitative study. *Reproductive Health*, 19(1), 96.
- Haberland, N., & Rogow, D. 2015. Sexuality education: Emerging trends in evidence and practice. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 56(1), S15–S21.
- Huaynoca, S., Chandra-Mouli, V., Yaqub Jr, N., & Denno, D. M. 2014. Scaling up comprehensive sexuality education in Nigeria: From national policy to nationwide application. *Sex Education*, 14(2), 191–209.
- Ismail, A. F. O., Bensala, Y., & Baimukhanbetov, B. 2022. Islamic Sexual Education: Necessity for Imparting Sexual Modesty. *DAYAH: Journal of Islamic Education*, 5(1), 1–18.

- Kenny, M. C., Dinehart, L. H., & Wurtele, S. K. 2015. Recognizing and responding to young children's sexual behaviors in the classroom. *Young Exceptional Children*, 18(1), 17–29.
- Kenny, M. C., Wurtele, S. K., & Alonso, L. 2012. Evaluation of a personal safety program with Latino preschoolers. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 21(4), 368–385.
- Ketting, E., Friele, M., Michielsen, K., & European Expert Group on Sexuality Education. 2016. Evaluation of holistic sexuality education: A European expert group consensus agreement. *The European Journal of Contraception & Reproductive Health Care*, 21(1), 68–80.
- Khalaf, Z. F., Low, W. Y., Merghati-Khoei, E., & Ghorbani, B. 2014. Sexuality education in Malaysia: Perceived issues and barriers by professionals. *Asia Pacific Journal of Public Health*, 26(4), 358–366.
- Kirby, D. 2011. Sex education: Access and impact on sexual behaviour of young people. *New York: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Secretariat*.
- Kirby, D., & Ecker, N. 2009. International technical guidance on sexuality education: An evidence-informed approach for schools, teachers and health educators. *Paris, France: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*.
- Koyama, A., Corliss, H. L., & Santelli, J. S. 2009. Global lessons on healthy adolescent sexual development. *Current Opinion in Pediatrics*, 21(4), 444–449.
- Latifiani, D. 2019. The darkest phase for family: Child marriage prevention and its complexity in Indonesia. *JILS*, 4, 241.
- Lewallen, T. C., Hunt, H., Potts-Datema, W., Zaza, S., & Giles, W. 2015. The whole school, whole community, whole child model: A new approach for improving educational attainment and healthy development for students. *Journal of School Health*, 85(11), 729–739.
- Mackin, M. L., Loew, N., Gonzalez, A., Tykol, H., & Christensen, T. 2016. Parent perceptions of sexual education needs for their children with autism. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*, 31(6), 608–618.
- Martin, A. D. 2014. From Adam and Eve to Dick and Jane: A literary nomadic inquiry on gender and sexuality in teaching and teacher education. In *Gender, feminism, and queer theory in the self-study of teacher education practices* (pp. 143–156). Brill.
- McKee, A., Albury, K., Dunne, M., Grieshaber, S., Hartley, J., Lumby, C., & Mathews, B. 2011. Healthy sexual development: A multidisciplinary framework for research. *International Journal of Sexual Health*, 22(1), 14–19.
- Miedema, E., Le Mat, M. L., & Hague, F. 2020. But is it comprehensive? Unpacking the 'comprehensive' in comprehensive sexuality education. *Health Education Journal*, 79(7), 747–762.
- Miller-Perrin, C., & Wurtele, S. K. 2017. Sex trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. *Women & Therapy*, 40(1–2), 123–151.
- Morawska, A., Walsh, A., Grabski, M., & Fletcher, R. 2015. Parental confidence and preferences for communicating with their child about sexuality. *Sex Education*, 15(3), 235–248.
- Murray, L. K., Nguyen, A., & Cohen, J. A. 2014. Child sexual abuse. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics*, 23(2), 321–337.
- Nadeem, A., Cheema, M. K., & Zameer, S. 2021. Perceptions of Muslim parents and teachers towards sex education in Pakistan. *Sex Education*, 21(1), 106–118.
- Ott, K., & Stephens, D. W. 2017. Embodied learning: Teaching sexuality and religion to a changing student body. *Teaching Theology & Religion*, 20(2), 106–116.
- Pratiwi, H., Ismail, M., & Haida, R. N. 2023. Sexuality Education for Early Childhood: Themes, Methods, and Perceptions of Raudhatul Athfal (RA) Educators. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan*, 8(1), 35–55.
- Rassool, G. H., & Khan, M. A. 2020. *Sexuality Education from an Islamic Perspective*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

- Razali, S., Ramli, N. A. F., Hanafia, S. S., Abd Rahman, N. N., Md, K. N., Rani, M. A. M., & Ariffin, A. 2017. Are Malaysians ready for comprehensive sexuality education. *Journal of Advanced Research in Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 9(1), 14–28.
- Robinson, K. H., & Davies, C. 2017. Sexuality education in early childhood. In *The Palgrave handbook of sexuality education* (pp. 217–242). Springer.
- Robinson, K. H., Smith, E., & Davies, C. 2017a. Responsibilities, tensions and ways forward: Parents' perspectives on children's sexuality education. *Sex Education*, 17(3), 333–347.
- Robinson, K. H., Smith, E., & Davies, C. 2017b. Responsibilities, tensions and ways forward: Parents' perspectives on children's sexuality education. *Sex Education*, 17(3), 333–347.
- Romeo, K. E., & Kelley, M. A. 2009. Incorporating human sexuality content into a positive youth development framework: Implications for community prevention. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 31(9), 1001–1009.
- Rouhparvar, Z., Javadnoori, M., & Shahali, S. 2022. Parents' approaches to sexuality education of their adolescent boys: A qualitative study in Ahvaz, Iran. *Reproductive Health*, 19(1), 69.
- Saputra, M. A. 2016. Penanaman nilai-nilai agama pada anak usia dini di RA DDI Addariyah Kota Palopo. *Al-Qalam*, 20(2), 197–210.
- Sciaraffa, M., & Randolph, T. 2011. "You Want Me to Talk to Children about What?": Responding to the Subject of Sexuality Development in Young Children. *YC Young Children*, 66(4), 32.
- Singh, M. M., Parsekar, S. S., & Nair, S. N. 2014. An epidemiological overview of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*, 3(4), 430.
- Smith, A., Schlichthorst, M., Mitchell, A., Walsh, J., Lyons, A., Blackman, P., & Pitts, M. 2023. *Sexuality education in Australian secondary schools 2010: Results of the 1st national survey of Australian secondary teachers of sexuality education*. La Trobe.
- Sprague, J. R., & Walker, H. M. (2021). *Safe and healthy schools: Practical prevention strategies*. Guilford Publications.
- Stoltenborgh, M., Van Ijzendoorn, M. H., Euser, E. M., & Bakermans-Kranenburg, M. J. 2011. A global perspective on child sexual abuse: Meta-analysis of prevalence around the world. *Child Maltreatment*, 16(2), 79–101.
- Tabatabaie, A. 2015. Childhood and adolescent sexuality, Islam, and problematics of sex education: A call for re-examination. *Sex Education*, 15(3), 276–288.
- Tabatabaie, A. 2015. Constructing the ideal Muslim sexual subject: Problematics of school-based sex education in Iran. *Sex Education*, 15(2), 204–216.
- UNESCO. 2015. *Emerging evidence, lessons and practice in comprehensive sexuality education: A global review*.
- Weatherred, J. L. 2015. Child sexual abuse and the media: A literature review. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 24(1), 16–34.
- World Health Organization. 2006. *Defining sexual health: Report of a technical consultation on sexual health, 28-31 January 2002, Geneva*. World Health Organization.
- World Health Organization. 2007. Report of the technical meeting of building school partnership for health, education achievements and development. *Vancouver, Canada: WHO*.
- World Health Organization. 2010. Who Regional office for Europe and BZgA- Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe: A framework for policy makers, educational and health authorities and specialists. *Cologne: Federal Centre for Health Education*.
- Zulu, J. M., Blystad, A., Haaland, M. E., Michelo, C., Haukanes, H., & Moland, K. M. 2019. Why teach sexuality education in school? Teacher discretion in implementing comprehensive sexuality education in rural Zambia. *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 18, 1–10.