



## The Influence of Knowledge and Perception of Educators' Attitude in Early Childhood Sex Education in Yogyakarta

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### Abstract

Early childhood sex education in Indonesia has become urgent due to rising cases of child sexual violence reported by authorities. Despite its proven role in preventing abuse and supporting healthy development, implementation remains limited, hindered by cultural taboos, lack of educator training, and insufficient institutional support. This study analyzed how early childhood educators' knowledge and perceptions influence their attitudes toward sex education in Bantul Regency, Yogyakarta. Using a quantitative correlational approach and simple random sampling, 99 kindergarten teachers responded to an online questionnaire. Multiple linear regression showed knowledge and perception positively and significantly affected attitudes, contributing 36.1% simultaneously. However, many teachers still exhibit hesitant or unsupportive attitudes, influenced by cultural factors and lack of training and support. Limitations include the sample restricted to Bantul teachers, reliance on questionnaires without qualitative data, and focus only on knowledge and perceptions. Future research should expand geographic scope and methods, testing structured training and parental involvement programs. Educational institutions are advised to provide routine training based on local context and guidelines, while schools should engage parents and community leaders to reduce stigma and enhance effective early childhood sex education implementation.

**Keywords:** Early Childhood, Sex Education, Teacher.

### Introduction

Cases of sexual violence against children in Indonesia show a very alarming upward trend. According to data from the Online Information System for the Protection of Women and Children (SIMFONI-PPA), from January 1, 2025, to the present, there have been 5,490 cases of violence, with 62.9% of the victims being children (Kemenpppa, 2025). This situation places Indonesia in a state of emergency regarding sexual violence against children, as also highlighted by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, which emphasizes the need for serious action from various parties, including families and educators (Kominfo, 2015; Mukti, 2018). At the regional level, a similar situation is also occurring in Yogyakarta. According to a report by the DIY DP3AP2, sexual abuse was the highest form of child violence by the end of 2024, with 36 victims, the majority of whom were children who had not yet completed elementary school. Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta City, and Bantul Regency are the areas with the highest number of sexual violence cases in the

province (Bappeda.jogjaprov, 2025). This data underscores that young children are a highly vulnerable group at risk of becoming victims of sexual violence.

The high incidence of sexual violence against children underscores the importance of comprehensive sexuality education from an early age as an effective preventive measure. Comprehensive, evidence-based, and age-appropriate sexuality education helps children understand their bodies, recognize personal boundaries, and develop self-protection skills (Santrock, 2011; UNESCO, 2018; WHO, 2010, 2017b). This education is not merely an introduction to reproductive organs but also equips children with awareness of maintaining their health, well-being, and dignity. The material must be tailored to the child's developmental stage, covering cognitive, emotional, physical, and social aspects, and integrated into the curriculum with a holistic approach that supports the development of life skills and healthy behavior, in accordance with international standards.

The implementation of sex education in Indonesia faces significant challenges because the topic is still considered taboo by society and early childhood educators, leaving many teachers feeling uncomfortable or lacking confidence in discussing it (Felicia & S. Pandia, 2017; Lakshita, 2019; Nurhidayati et al., 2019). Similar challenges also occur globally, where the roles of educators and parents are crucial in addressing stigma and fostering open communication regarding early childhood sex education (Suhasmi & Ismet, 2021). Low levels of educators' knowledge about sex education impact their ability to provide accurate and relevant information (Adikusuma & Maharani, 2023; Oktavia et al., 2019). However, good knowledge is essential to ensure that the material is age-appropriate, helping children understand their bodies, personal boundaries, and how to protect themselves from harm (Chairilsyah, 2019; Kumar et al., 2017; Shin et al., 2019). The increasing data on child sexual violence demands comprehensive sex education from an early age. Sex education not only protects children from violence but also fosters healthy behavior and positive social relationships (Harianti, 2016; Santrock, 2011). Therefore, enhancing educators' knowledge, perceptions, and positive attitudes is crucial to ensure children receive protection and education appropriate to their developmental stage.

Implementing sex education for young children in Indonesia faces complex challenges from both society and educators. One of the main challenges is the strong taboo against sex education in early childhood education settings and society. Many teachers and parents consider discussions about sexuality inappropriate for children, so they are often overlooked in learning (Felicia & S. Pandia, 2017; Lakshita, 2019; Nurhidayati et al., 2019). This negative perception is rooted in cultural values and social norms that associate sex education with pornography or vulgarity (Nadar, 2017; Zolekhah & Barokah, 2021). As a result, early childhood educators often feel uncomfortable, hesitant, and lack confidence in teaching sex education, despite recognizing the importance of the subject matter in preventing sexual violence against children (Kursistin, 2016; Mukti, 2018).

The lack of educators' knowledge about the concepts, objectives, and content of early childhood sex education is also a major barrier. This knowledge includes body anatomy, gender differences, personal boundaries, and how to maintain bodily hygiene and safety

(Harianti, 2016; Ismiulya et al., 2022; Oktavia et al., 2019). Teachers with good knowledge tend to be more confident and open in conveying information to children (Adikusuma & Maharani, 2023; Nurhidayati et al., 2019; Shin et al., 2019). Conversely, educators who lack understanding of the subject matter often feel uncomfortable and awkward answering children's questions about sexuality (Abduh & Wulandari, 2019; Kursistin, 2016). This situation is exacerbated by the lack of specialized training that equips early childhood educators with the skills to teach sex education appropriately and effectively (Astuti, 2017; Pratiwi et al., 2024).

Educators' perceptions are crucial in the implementation of sex education, specifically their views and beliefs regarding the importance of sex education for young children (Felicia & S. Pandia, 2017; Panjaitan et al., 2015). International studies indicate that good knowledge and perceptions enhance educators' readiness to deliver effective sex education (Balter et al., 2016; Ekowati et al., 2017). Educators with positive perceptions are more likely to be prepared to integrate sex education content into their teaching (Adikusuma & Maharani, 2023; Rachmasari et al., 2023). However, negative perceptions due to social stigma and lack of understanding make many educators reluctant to discuss sexuality issues openly (Pangestuti et al., 2021; Safitri & Mahmudah, 2015).

Educators' attitudes, namely their readiness to support or reject sex education, are greatly influenced by their knowledge and perceptions (Adikusuma & Maharani, 2023; A. N. Sari, 2018). Positive attitudes encourage educators to be more proactive and responsive, while negative attitudes hinder learning and reduce children's opportunities to gain important knowledge to protect themselves (Lakshita, 2019; Shin et al., 2019). Therefore, improving educators' knowledge and changing their perceptions are key to overcoming the challenges of implementing sex education in early childhood education so that children receive comprehensive education appropriate to their developmental stage (Chairilisyah, 2019; Gerda et al., 2021).

Research on early childhood sex education in Indonesia indicates a knowledge gap, as most studies have focused on the perspectives of parents or adolescents, leaving the role of early childhood educators particularly regarding their knowledge and perceptions under-examined (Aji et al., 2018; Hakim et al., 2022). However, educators' knowledge and perceptions significantly influence their attitudes toward teaching sex education, which impacts the effectiveness of learning and the protection of children from sexual violence (Adikusuma & Maharani, 2023; Lakshita, 2019). Research examining the influence of early childhood educators' knowledge and perceptions on their attitudes toward sex education remains limited (Nurhidayati et al., 2019; Shin et al., 2019). Understanding these dimensions is important for curriculum development, educator training, and sex education policies that are responsive to children's needs. This study aims to analyze how educators' knowledge, including concepts, objectives, and sex education materials appropriate for children's development, as well as their perceptions and beliefs about the importance of sex education, influence their attitudes toward teaching practices (Harianti, 2016; Siva et al., 2021). The

attitudes measured include readiness to support or reject sex education cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally (Kumar et al., 2017; M. Sari, 2020).

The research findings are expected to contribute meaningfully to the development of curriculum, training, and policies for early childhood sex education in Indonesia. By understanding the factors influencing educators' attitudes, educational institutions and policymakers can design targeted interventions, such as knowledge-enhancement training, perception-changing initiatives, and comprehensive, contextually appropriate sex education guidelines (Farantika et al., 2024; Kumar et al., 2017; Shin et al., 2019; Siva et al., 2021). Additionally, these results can serve as a reference for further research examining the role of educators in various regions. This study fills a gap in the literature while providing evidence-based recommendations to improve the quality of sex education and child protection in Indonesia, particularly in Yogyakarta.

## Literature Review

Studies on early childhood sex education emphasize the importance of an introduction and learning process that is tailored to the child's stage of development, with the aim of equipping children with basic knowledge about the body, personal boundaries, and skills to protect themselves from unwanted actions. Freud's psychosexual development theory states that sexuality develops from infancy through specific stages, so sex education must be provided according to the child's age and developmental stage Freud in (Santrock, 2011). However, Freud's theory has been criticized for being too focused on biological aspects and neglecting social-cultural factors, so it needs to be combined with theories of children's cognitive development.

Piaget's cognitive theory shows that young children are in the preoperational stage, where symbolic thinking abilities develop but remain concrete. Educators' knowledge of this stage is important so that sex education material can be presented in a simple and clear manner. Good knowledge and perception on the part of educators will foster a positive attitude toward teaching sex education effectively (Nurhidayati et al., 2019; Shin et al., 2019).

The relationship between educators' knowledge, perceptions, and attitudes can be explained through the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which emphasizes that behavior is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and self-perceived control (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of sex education, good knowledge forms positive perceptions that influence educators' attitudes and behavior. However, TPB has been criticized for not adequately considering the influence of culture and social norms, which are highly significant factors in the acceptance of sex education in Indonesia.

Studies in Indonesia indicate that educators' knowledge of sex education remains limited and is often influenced by societal stigma that views the topic as taboo (Adikusuma & Maharani, 2023; Lakshita, 2019). Educators with good knowledge tend to have positive attitudes, but the majority remain hesitant to teach this material due to social pressure and concerns about parental perceptions. International studies have also found a positive correlation between knowledge, perceptions, and teachers' attitudes toward sex education,

such as in Nigeria (Adogu & Nwafulume, 2015), South Korea (Shin et al., 2019), and India (Kumar et al., 2017; Siva et al., 2021).

The approach to early childhood sex education remains controversial. The WHO and UNICEF recommend comprehensive sex education from an early age to prevent sexual violence, but many countries, including Indonesia, still view it as taboo and often misunderstand it (Nadar, 2017; WHO, 2017a; Zolekhah & Barokah, 2021). Criticism of sex education that is too early or explicit arises from concerns that it may cause confusion or accelerate sexual exploration, although studies show that appropriate sex education actually delays risky behavior and enhances self-protection (Kirby, 2001). Thus, educators' knowledge and perceptions are crucial in shaping attitudes toward early childhood sex education. However, its implementation still faces challenges such as stigma, cultural resistance, and lack of training. Research on the influence of knowledge and perceptions on educators' attitudes is highly relevant to enrich the literature and provide effective policy recommendations.

## Methods

This study used a correlational quantitative approach with Simple Random Sampling technique. The study population consisted of 1,482 kindergarten teachers in Bantul Regency, whose data was obtained from the Education Office website. All members of the population were assigned serial numbers based on subdistrict and kindergarten name, then 99 respondents were randomly selected using the random.org application to achieve a 95% confidence level and a 10% margin of error. Data collection was conducted online via Google Forms distributed through social media, the IGTK group, and the Bantul Regency kindergarten teachers' group from March to May 2025. Inclusion criteria included being an active early childhood/kindergarten educator in Bantul, having at least two years of teaching experience, and being willing to be a respondent. The research instrument consisted of a structured questionnaire with three sections: knowledge (modified from Lakshita, 2019, 30 items, Guttman scale), attitude (modified from Azwar, 2007, 30 items, Likert scale 1–4), and perception (modified from Felicia & S.Pandia, 2017, 33 items, Likert scale 1–4). Content validity was tested by experts, construct validity through EFA on 30 teachers, and reliability using Cronbach's alpha (knowledge 0.801, perception 0.749, attitude 0.816; all >0.6).

Before multiple linear regression analysis (SPSS 26), data normality was tested (Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Sig. 0.214 > 0.05), multicollinearity (tolerance X1/X2: 0.678 > 0.1; VIF: 1.034 < 0.05; X2: 0.334 < 0.05), indicating that the assumptions were met. Ethical considerations were maintained through informed consent, data confidentiality, and respondents' right to withdraw at any time. Data were used solely for research purposes and were not published individually. H1: There is a positive and significant influence between educators' knowledge of early childhood sex education and their attitudes.

Table 1. Hypothesis Formulation

H1	There is a positive and significant influence between educators' knowledge about early childhood sex education on educators' attitudes.
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H2	There is a positive and significant influence between educators' perceptions of early childhood sex education on educators' attitudes.
H3	Knowledge and perceptions simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on educators' attitudes about early childhood sex education.
H4	There is no significant influence between knowledge and perceptions about early childhood sex education on educators' attitudes.

## Result

After the data from the respondents was collected, it was analyzed to identify the characteristics of the research sample. The sample demographic data obtained is presented as follows,

Table 2. Overview of Respondent Characteristics (N=99)

Variable	Category	Total	Percentage (%)
Age	20-30 years	34	34.34
	30-40 years	22	22.22
	>40 years	43	43.43
Length of service	2-5 years	29	29.29
	6-10 years	19	19.19
	>10 years	51	51.52
Last education	SMA	20	20.20
	D3	6	6.06
	S1	65	65.66
	S2	8	8.08

The study respondents consisted of 99 kindergarten teachers in Bantul Regency, evenly distributed across 5 of the 17 subdistricts, meeting the established sampling criteria. Based on age, the majority of teachers were over 40 years old (43.43%), followed by those aged 20–30 years (34.34%) and 30–40 years (22.22%). In terms of teaching experience, 51.52% of teachers have been teaching for more than 10 years, 29.29% for 2-5 years, and 19.19% for 6-10 years. The majority of respondents hold a Bachelor's degree (65.66%), followed by high school graduates (20.20%), Master's degree (8.08%), and Associate's degree (6.06%). This data shows an even distribution of respondents, all of whom meet the research criteria. After collecting demographic data, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted for the variables of knowledge (X1), perception (X2), and attitude (Y) of teachers regarding early childhood sex education. These results form the basis for understanding the relationship between variables in the context of sex education in PAUD in Bantul Regency.

Table 3. Overview of Educators' Knowledge, Perceptions and Attitudes related to Early Childhood Sex Education (N=99)

Variables	N	(%)
Knowledge		
Less	16	16.16
Enough	63	63.64
Good	20	20.20
Perceptions		
Negative	58	58.59
Positive	41	41.41
Attitudes		
Not Supporting	65	65.66
Supporting	34	34.34

Of the 99 kindergarten teachers, 16.16% had insufficient knowledge, 63.64% had adequate knowledge, and 20.20% had good knowledge. A total of 58.59% of teachers had negative perceptions, while 41.41% had positive perceptions. An unsupportive attitude was found in 65.66% of teachers, and a supportive attitude in 34.34%. This data highlights challenges in teachers' knowledge, perceptions, and attitudes toward early childhood sex education.

Table 4. Partial Significance Test (t-test) (N=99)

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients		
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	56.465	5.777		8.312	.000
X1	-.297	.024	-.489	.431	.017
X2	.017	.058	.030	.290	.023

a. Dependent Variable: Y

The research sample consisted of 99 subjects with an alpha of 0.05 and a t-table of 1.660. The t-test showed that X1 had a significant positive effect on Y (t-count 0.431 < t-table 1.660; Sig 0.017 < 0.05), so H1 was accepted. X2 also has a significant positive effect on Y (calculated t-value 0.290 < t-table 1.660; Sig 0.023 < 0.05), so H2 is accepted.

Table 5. Simultaneous Significance Test Results (F Test) (N=99)

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	16.218	2	463.109	6.043	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	7006.106	96	72.980		
	Total	7012.323	98			

a. Dependent Variable: Y

b. Predictors: (Constant), X2, X1

Table 6. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Test Results

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.530 <sup>a</sup>	.361	.247	8.543

a. Predictors: (Constant), X2, X1

The research sample of 99 with  $F_{table}(2;97) = 3.93$  at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The F test shows that X1 and X2 have a significant effect on Y with  $F_{count} 6.043 > F_{table} 3.93$  and  $Sig\ 0.000 < 0.05$ , so H3 is accepted. The R value of 0.530 and Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> of 0.361 indicate that X1 and X2 together influence Y by 36.1%. Additional analysis of control variables such as age, length of service, and highest level of education was also conducted to examine their influence on educators' attitudes.

Table 7. Partial Significance Test of Control Variables (t-test) (N=99)

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients		
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	50.657	4.760		10.643	,001
Age	-.325	.095	-.336	-.091	.227
Last education	-.113	1.239	-.009	.556	.027
Length of service	.283	.017	.052	.394	.048

The research sample consisted of 99 subjects with an alpha of 0.05 and a t-table of 1.660. The t-test showed that age did not have a significant effect on Y (calculated value - 0.091 > 0.05). The level of education has a significant positive effect on Y (calculated t-value 0.556 < t-table 1.660; Sig 0.027 < 0.05), as does the length of teaching experience, which also has a significant positive effect on Y (calculated t-value 0.394 < t-table 1.660; Sig 0.048 < 0.05). The research found that educators' knowledge and perceptions play a crucial role in



shaping their attitudes toward providing sex education to young children. Teachers who have better understanding and more positive views about sex education tend to be more supportive and open to teaching it in early childhood settings. However, many educators still feel hesitant or less supportive, mainly because of cultural taboos, lack of training, and limited support from their institutions. These barriers make it challenging for teachers to confidently and effectively deliver sex education, even though they recognize its importance in protecting children from sexual violence and promoting healthy development.

## Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that knowledge has a positive effect on educators' attitudes toward early childhood sex education. This is consistent with the results of studies by Lakshita (2019) and Nurhidayati et al. (2019), which state that educators with a good level of knowledge tend to have more positive and open attitudes when delivering sex education material to children. Adequate knowledge enables educators to feel more confident and capable of answering children's questions in language that is easy to understand (Adikusuma & Maharani, 2023; Shin et al., 2019). Lesmanawati et al., (2024) also proved that teacher knowledge significantly affects teacher attitudes in private primary schools in Serang Regency. The knowledge in question includes pedagogical understanding, subject matter, practical experience, and understanding the educational context. This knowledge becomes an important foundation in shaping professional attitudes and effective teaching behaviors, which ultimately have an impact on school quality. Another study on ABA kindergarten teachers in Medan City also showed that higher levels of education, especially those with a background in teaching, were associated with higher levels of education.

Early childhood education has a positive impact on teachers' knowledge of sexuality education for young children. This improved knowledge then influences teachers' attitudes, making them more supportive of implementing sexuality education appropriately according to the children's age (Raniyah & Yuris, 2024). Agustin & Alindawati, (2020) in their research showed a significant relationship between teachers' knowledge and attitudes. Statistical test results indicate that teachers' knowledge has a significant influence on their attitudes. The better the knowledge teachers possess, the better the attitudes they demonstrate in the learning process and interactions with students. Teachers' knowledge is also considered a crucial cognitive domain in shaping an individual's actions or behavior, including attitudes. According to Notoatmodjo, (2012), individuals with good knowledge tend to exhibit good behavior and attitudes, while a lack of knowledge tends to result in poor attitudes. This finding reinforces that knowledge is a crucial factor in shaping educators' attitudes, thereby necessitating teacher training and capacity development to enhance the quality of early childhood sex education (Raniyah & Yuris, 2024).

This study also proves that perceptions have a significant influence on educators' attitudes toward early childhood sex education. This is supported by previous research finding that teachers' perceptions of children's sex education greatly influence how they interpret and implement sex education. These perceptions are influenced by teachers' educational

backgrounds, experiences, and social interactions, which shape their attitudes toward teaching sex education appropriately and in line with children's needs (Felicia & S. Pandia, 2017; Larasaty & Purwanti, 2016; Rachmasari et al., 2023). Other research also shows that negative or taboo perceptions of sex education cause teachers to feel awkward and less confident in delivering the material, resulting in less supportive attitudes toward sex education for young children (Kursistin, 2016). Prabowo et al., (2020) found that teachers' perceptions of the curriculum and school environment greatly influence their attitudes and readiness to carry out their teaching duties. Positive perceptions of educational policies and the environment encourage teachers to demonstrate more proactive and responsible attitudes.

The results of this study show that simultaneously, educators' knowledge and perceptions have a positive and significant influence on their attitudes towards teaching early childhood sex education. This finding indicates that increasing knowledge and forming the right perceptions are very important to form educators' attitudes that are supportive and proactive in implementing early childhood sex education. This is in line with the Health Belief Model (HBM) theory which states that a person's attitude and behavior are influenced by their knowledge and perception of the benefits, risks and barriers of an action (Felicia & S. Pandia, 2017; Mukti, 2018). One of the main factors influencing the research results is the local culture and social norms in Yogyakarta that still view sex education as a sensitive and taboo issue. Strong religious values and customs often limit the room for maneuver educators to openly discuss sexuality issues in the classroom (Kursistin, 2016; Nadar, 2017). Many teachers are worried that they will be rejected by parents or the community if they discuss this topic, so they prefer not to teach sex education despite realizing the importance of the topic. Another barrier is the lack of training and socialization on developmentally appropriate sex education. Most educators have never received specialized training, so they feel unconfident and awkward when they have to answer children's questions about sexuality (Nurhidayati et al., 2019; Setyowati et al., 2018). In addition, support from school institutions and local government policies related to early childhood sex education is still very limited, so educators do not have clear guidelines or protection in implementing sex education in the classroom.

Educators' knowledge of early childhood sex education acts as the main foundation that shapes their attitudes. Teachers who have adequate knowledge tend to be more confident and open in delivering sex education materials, so their attitudes become more positive (Lesmanawati et al., 2024). Lakshita (2019) found that teachers with good knowledge have a greater chance of having a supportive attitude towards early childhood sex education. However, research also shows that obstacles such as taboos and lack of parental trust can be barriers to the implementation of sex education, even though teachers realize the importance of the material. Therefore, sufficient knowledge must be accompanied by positive understanding and perception so that educators' attitudes can be optimally developed.

Educators' perceptions of early childhood sex education also determine their attitudes. Research by Cipta, (2023) revealed that neutral to positive teacher perceptions of the importance of sex education contributed to a more supportive attitude towards the implementation of sex education in schools. These perceptions are influenced by cultural

factors, experiences and social interactions that shape teachers' perspectives on sex education. Conversely, negative perceptions or taboo perceptions can lead to hesitant and less supportive attitudes towards early childhood sex education, as found in research in Buleleng district which showed that more than 50% of teachers had negative perceptions of early childhood sexual education. Therefore, shaping appropriate perceptions through training, socialization and effective communication between teachers and parents is essential to support positive attitudes of educators (Magta et al., 2018)

The practical implication of these findings is the need for educator capacity building programs that focus not only on increasing knowledge but also on forming positive and open perceptions towards early childhood sex education. Training and workshops involving teachers, parents and other stakeholders can help remove stigma and taboos and build a common understanding of the benefits of early sex education. Thus, educators' attitudes will increasingly support the implementation of sex education that is in accordance with the needs and development of children. In addition, good communication between teachers and parents is key to the success of early childhood sex education. The importance of emphasizing effective communication parents understand and support children's sex education, so that negative perceptions that have been an obstacle can be reduced. With parental support, educators' attitudes in teaching sex education will be stronger and more consistent (Insiyah & Hidayat, 2020; Nugraheni et al., 2024; Sayekti & Sayekti, 2024). Overall, the results of this study confirm that educators' knowledge and perceptions are key factors that simultaneously influence their attitudes towards early childhood sex education. Therefore, interventions that target these two aspects simultaneously will be more effective in improving the quality of sex education at the early childhood education level. This research also opens up opportunities for further studies that examine other factors such as institutional support, learning media and local culture that may influence educators' attitudes.

This study has several limitations that need to be criticized. First, the use of questionnaires as the main instrument has the potential to cause social bias, where respondents may give answers that are considered "safe" or according to the expectations of the researcher, not the actual answers. Second, the quantitative correlational research design was unable to explore in depth the psychological dynamics or subjective experiences of educators related to sex education. Third, the scope of the study, which only involved kindergarten teachers in Bantul Regency, limits the generalizability of the results to the whole region of Yogyakarta or Indonesia. In addition, other important variables such as the influence of the family environment, the role of the principal, or personal experience with the issue of sexual violence have not been specifically analyzed. Finally, the qualitative data obtained from open-ended comments on the questionnaire is very limited and has not been systematically analyzed.

In the context of Yogyakarta, potential bias can also arise due to strong social and cultural pressures. Teachers who feel watched by the social environment tend to refrain from expressing their true attitudes or experiences. In addition, the implementation of sex education in early childhood education schools still faces obstacles such as the lack of appropriate teaching materials, lack of training, and the absence of optimal cooperation between schools

and parents. In fact, parental involvement is very important to create a conducive learning environment and prevent resistance or misunderstanding in the community.

The findings of this study have important practical implications for policy development and educational practice in early childhood education. First, improving educators' knowledge and perceptions can be done through regular training and developing contextualized and culturally appropriate sex education modules. Second, schools need to build more intensive communication with parents through seminars, group discussions, or joint socialization in order to create a common understanding of the importance of early sex education. Third, local governments and education agencies can formulate clear policies and provide official guidelines and legal protection for educators who implement sex education in schools. In addition, collaboration with religious leaders and local communities can help reduce stigma and resistance to sex education in the school environment.

Future research is recommended to adopt a mixed methods approach by combining quantitative surveys and in-depth interviews to further explore educators' experiences, challenges and strategies in teaching sex education. Research could also focus on the effect of digital-based training or social interventions, such as parenting programs with parents and teachers, to see their effectiveness in improving educators' attitudes and skills. In addition, a comparative study between urban and rural areas in Yogyakarta or other provinces could provide a more comprehensive picture of the dynamics of early childhood sex education in Indonesia.

## Conclusion

This study shows that early childhood educators' knowledge and perceptions strongly influence their attitudes toward teaching sex education in Bantul, Yogyakarta. Better knowledge and perceptions tend to foster more positive attitudes, although many educators remain hesitant or less supportive. These findings highlight the need for interventions that improve knowledge, shift perceptions, and strengthen social and institutional support. However, the study has limitations: the sample was limited to 99 kindergarten teachers in one district, restricting generalizability; data collection relied solely on questionnaires without qualitative insights; and only knowledge and perceptions were examined, leaving out other factors like family support or leadership roles. Social desirability bias may also affect responses. Theoretically, this research enriches sex education literature by linking educators' knowledge, perceptions, and attitudes within Indonesian cultural contexts, extending the Theory of Planned Behavior to early childhood sex education. It also fills a gap regarding the role of Indonesian early childhood educators in this field. Based on these results, it is recommended that educational institutions and local governments provide regular training and develop culturally relevant sex education modules for PAUD teachers. Schools should engage parents and community leaders to reduce stigma and foster collaboration. Future research should apply mixed methods, broaden the study area, and evaluate interventions like digital training or joint parenting programs to enhance educators' attitudes and skills.

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