

An Analysis of Kindergarten Teachers' Attitudes towards Early Childhood Sexual Education based on Azwar's Attitude Theory

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ABSTRACT

Early childhood sexual education is an essential preventive effort to protect children from sexual violence and to form body awareness and a sense of security from an early age. Kindergarten (TK) teachers play a strategic role in delivering this education, but its implementation in Indonesia still faces obstacles, especially due to the ambivalent to negative attitudes of teachers. This study aims to analyze the attitudes of kindergarten teachers towards early childhood sexual education through a systematic literature study approach. A total of 15 national and international scientific articles were reviewed using a thematic approach based on Azwar's attitude theory, which includes three dimensions: cognitive, affective, and conative. The results of the study showed that in the cognitive dimension, teachers still have a wrong and limited understanding of the concept of sexual education. In the affective dimension, teachers showed feelings of discomfort, shame, and fear, which were influenced by cultural and religious values. While in the conative dimension, teachers tended to be passive and avoided sexual topics in learning. However, several

interventions such as training and the use of educational media have been shown to improve teacher readiness. This study emphasizes the importance of systematic training, policy support, and contextual pedagogical approaches to strengthen teachers' attitudes towards early childhood sexual education as a whole.

Introduction

Early childhood sexuality education is gaining increasing attention in global discourse as a strategy for preventing sexual violence and as part of strengthening children's character from an early age. This education addresses not only biological aspects, but also awareness of body awareness, personal boundaries, and the right to safety. UNESCO (2018) explicitly states that *"comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) should begin in early childhood, laying the foundation for age-appropriate information about the body, relationships, and safety"*. Similarly, WHO (2010) affirms that early sexuality education is necessary *"to empower children with skills that help them avoid abuse, make informed decisions, and build respectful social interactions"*.

Amidst the rise in cases of child sexual abuse, both within families and institutions, the urgency of integrating sexuality education into the early childhood education curriculum is becoming increasingly urgent. Data from the National Commission on Violence Against Women (2023) indicates that more than 45% of child sexual abuse victims occur in their immediate environment, which should be a safe space. In this context, kindergarten teachers play a strategic role as educational figures who

shape children's values, attitudes, and understanding. As Goldfarb and Lieberman (2021) state, *"teachers are not just content deliverers; they are critical agents in shaping children's values, emotional literacy, and social norms, particularly on topics as sensitive as sexuality"*.

However, the reality on the ground shows that the implementation of early childhood sexuality education faces various challenges, especially in countries with conservative cultures like Indonesia. Sexuality is still considered taboo, even in educational contexts. Khairini (2022) notes that *"teachers feel afraid and awkward discussing sexuality for fear of being considered vulgar or contrary to prevailing religious and social norms"*. Yasinta's (2025) research also shows that many teachers *"leave the topic of sexual education entirely to parents because they do not feel confident enough and do not receive proper training"*.

On the other hand, there is no national curriculum that explicitly includes sex education as part of early childhood education. Teachers are often confused about the limits of what can be presented. Adikusuma and Maharani (2023) found that *"most teachers lack clear guidelines or guidelines for addressing sexual issues, so they prefer to avoid them"*. This situation suggests that teachers' personal attitudes are a key determinant of the success of delivering sex education at the kindergarten level.

Attitude itself, according to Azwar (2015), consists of three main components: *"cognitive component (belief or perception of an object), affective component (accompanying feelings), and conative component (tendency to act"*

towards the object)". By understanding these three components separately, we can get a more complete picture of the structure of teachers' attitudes towards early childhood sexual education.

Although there is a wealth of literature on children's sexuality education, much of it focuses on parental perspectives, curriculum, or social impacts. Studies specifically examining teachers' attitudes, particularly kindergarten teachers' attitudes, within a conceptual framework are still very limited. As Felicia and Pandia (2017) noted, "*teachers tend not to understand that sexuality education encompasses understanding the body, boundaries, and safety, and is not solely about reproductive education*".

Furthermore, contextual research in conservative urban-cultural areas like Tasikmalaya is still rare. This sociocultural context can significantly influence teachers' perceptions and attitudes. Rakhmawati et al. (2024) found that "*teachers in religious areas tend to avoid discussions about the body and sexuality, fearing they will conflict with religious values and local norms*".

Taking into account the gaps in the literature, both substantially, theoretically, and geographically, this study aims to analyze in depth the attitudes of kindergarten teachers towards early childhood sexual education based on three dimensions of attitudes. This study not only maps attitudes descriptively but also identifies which attitudinal components require intervention, whether in the form of training, policy, or curriculum development. It is hoped that the results of this

study can provide an empirical basis for strengthening the professional capacity of kindergarten teachers in addressing sensitive yet essential issues, as well as encouraging more comprehensive early childhood education reforms that are responsive to the protection of children's rights.

Methods

This study used a systematic literature review approach to examine kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward early childhood sexuality education. This systematic literature review approach was chosen because it allows researchers to identify, evaluate, and synthesize findings from various relevant studies in a systematic and structured manner (Snyder, 2019). This section should be clearly and concisely written. It provides practical information concerning the research methods, procedures, tools, materials, or instruments. The method section describes how the study was conducted. Such a description enables the reader to evaluate the appropriateness of methods and the reliability and validity of the results. Please bear in mind that readers must be able to recreate your study from the level of detail that you give.

Scientific articles were collected from online databases such as Google Scholar, DOAJ, ScienceDirect, ResearchGate, and national journal portals such as Garuda and Sinta. Keywords used in the search included: "*teachers attitudes toward early childhood sexuality education*," "*early childhood sex education*," "*early childhood sex education*," "*teachers'*

attitudes toward sexuality education," and "components of early childhood teacher attitudes" in both Indonesian and English. The search focused on articles published between 2015 and 2025, with the aim of capturing the latest literature relevant to the context and development of early childhood sexuality education issues.

1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria used in article selection were:

- a. Primary research (quantitative/qualitative) that focuses on the attitudes of kindergarten or early childhood education teachers towards children's sexual education.
- b. Studies that include attitudinal dimensions (cognitive, affective, conative), both explicitly and implicitly.
- c. Articles are published in peer-reviewed journals and are available in open access or fully accessible.
- d. Articles in Indonesian or English.

Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria include:

- a. Studies that only discuss parents, students, or curriculum without addressing teacher attitudes.
- b. Opinion articles, non-academic essays, and policy documents without empirical data analysis.

- c. Duplications or studies that do not include clear methodological information.

2. Data collection technique

The selection process involved three main stages:

- a. Initial screening of titles and abstracts to identify relevant studies based on topic.
- b. Full-text review to ensure methodological suitability and study focus for the research objectives.
- c. Data extraction, which involved gathering key information from each article, such as publication year, research location, methods, focus of the attitudes studied, and key findings related to the dimensions of teacher attitudes.

3. Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis based on Azwar's (2015) theoretical framework of attitudes, which encompasses three main components:

1. Cognitive: teachers' information, perceptions, or knowledge about children's sexuality education.
2. Affective: feelings, emotional beliefs, or evaluative attitudes toward the topic.

3. Conative: teachers' behavioral tendencies, commitment, or intentions in implementing sexuality education.

Result and Discussions

1. Cognitive Dimension: Teachers' Understanding of Sexuality Education

Most studies have found that kindergarten teachers' knowledge of early childhood sexuality education is still low and unstructured. Teachers often equate sexuality education with reproductive education, thus deeming this material inappropriate for young children (Felicia & Pandia, 2017; Fadhillah, 2023). In research by Magta et al. (2025), teachers also expressed confusion in understanding age limits and appropriate content for early childhood, due to the lack of clear national standards.

Adikusuma and Maharani (2023) in their study of 93 kindergarten teachers showed that only 40% of teachers had adequate knowledge, and most did not understand the basic principles of child development-based sexuality education. Meanwhile, Rakhmawati et al. (2024) noted that teachers' lack of literacy on sexuality issues left them unprepared to answer children's questions related to the body and privacy.

This problem is also reinforced by data from Santi (2022), which shows that teachers do not know the difference between sexuality, sex, and sexual violence, and are not familiar with the concept of "bodily

privacy” which is appropriate to the child's cognitive development stage. You must explain the important points of your results so that there is a correlation with the discussion. The analysis of the paper must be clear and comprehensive. The author must be explained the results in the specific sub-topic. Strengthen statements or your results with data evidence from the data collection techniques used. The result section summarizes the data collected and the statistical or data analytical treatments used. Report the data in sufficient detail to justify the conclusions. Mention all relevant results. If the result contains the form of tables, graphs, verbal descriptions, or a combination of the three, so they should not be too long and too large.

2. Affective Dimension: Teachers' Feelings and Emotional Responses

Literature studies also show that teachers' affective attitudes toward sex education remain negative or ambivalent, dominated by feelings of fear, discomfort, shame, and anxiety about societal judgment (Khairini, 2022; Yasinta, 2025). These fears are often influenced by the dominant cultural and religious values in the communities where teachers work, particularly in conservative areas such as Garut, Ciamis, and Tasikmalaya (Khairini, 2022).

Trinita et al. (2023) revealed that most teachers avoid delivering sex education material for fear of being perceived as impolite or vulgar by parents. In the context of Islamic schools, teachers also feel burdened by

religious norms that do not explicitly address sex education in the formal curriculum (Rakhmawati et al., 2024).

Santi's (2022) study also found that teachers' discomfort is exacerbated by their unpreparedness to handle personal or sensitive questions from children.

The absence of formal training in teacher education curricula contributes to emotional attitudes that tend toward defensiveness and avoidance (Felicia & Pandia, 2017).

3. Conative Dimension: Teacher Behavioral Tendencies

In terms of concrete actions, the majority of teachers exhibit passive and avoidant tendencies when dealing with the topic of sexual education (Fadilah & Muthmainah, 2023; Yasinta, 2025). Teachers tend to leave the matter entirely to parents, arguing that sexual education is not part of their responsibilities at school (Yasinta, 2025). Some teachers stated that they would only discuss the issue if it occurred cases or reports from children (Fadhillah, 2023).

Research by Situmorang (2020) shows that some teachers choose not to address sexual topics because they feel they lack appropriate pedagogical strategies, even when children show signs of sexual exploration. On the other hand, several training-based interventions have shown promising results. For example, the "I Love Myself"

program (Al Farouqi et al., 2023) successfully increased teachers' readiness to address the themes of bodily privacy and self-protection in children. Similarly, the use of images (Amseke et al., 2024) and educational puppets (Suci et al., 2024) have been shown to increase teachers' confidence in addressing sensitive topics.

Conclusion

In general, the results of this systematic literature study indicate that kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward early childhood sexual education remain low to moderate, with a tendency toward ambivalence or negativity. These attitudes are formed through the interaction of three main components: cognitive, affective, and conative, as explained in Azwar's (2015) theory of attitudes. In the cognitive dimension, teachers tend to have an incomplete or erroneous understanding of the concept of early childhood sexual education. Many teachers equate sexual education with reproductive education or free sex, thus considering it inappropriate for early childhood. The lack of national standards, lack of training, and limited sexual literacy leave teachers feeling confused and insecure in conveying material related to the body, self-limitation, and child protection. In the affective dimension, most teachers exhibit negative emotional responses, such as discomfort, shame, fear, or awkwardness. These attitudes are strongly influenced by strong cultural norms and religious values in society, particularly in conservative areas. Teachers also worry about judgment

from parents, colleagues, and the educational institution itself, so they tend to avoid discussing sexual issues, even if they are educational. Meanwhile, in the conative dimension, teachers tend to be passive and do not take concrete action in implementing sexuality education. Many teachers delegate this responsibility entirely to parents or only discuss it when urgent. However, several studies have shown that child development-based training, as well as the use of educational media such as puppets or pictures, can significantly improve teachers' readiness and confidence in delivering this sensitive topic. Therefore, it can be concluded that kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward early childhood sexuality education do not fully support effective and sustainable implementation, and strengthening is needed across all three attitudinal dimensions through systematic training, supporting policies, and approaches sensitive to the local sociocultural context.

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