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## SEX-EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL: BETWEEN TABOO AND URGENCY

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### Abstract

Child friendly education contains sexual education that can prevent sexual violence on children. Sex-education has always been discussed as a thing of doubt between taboo and urgency. This study discusses the taboo and urgency of sex-education on children in primary school. The aim of this study is to find out: (1) students' perception about understanding of sexual knowledge; (2) students' perception about their interactions with others; (3) students' perceptions of the changes that occur to them both physically and socially; and (4) teachers' perceptions about sex-education in primary school. This study collecting data by means of questionnaires and interviews. The interviews done to teachers and school principals. While the questionnaires addressed to teachers and students. This research was conducted in four primary schools in the province of Yogyakarta, Indonesia. This research involved 2 principals, 15 teachers and 116 students in four primary schools. The students that involved are in grade four and six. The results show that the student were still confused in caring for and maintaining their health, aware of the change in themselves refers to puberty, the fourth grade students admit to respecting friends and knowing how to behave to others, and at sixth grade students feel confident with the changes that occur on them. However, it is found that the teacher assumes that sex-education is indeed important to be taught to elementary school students, but is still considered taboo. Limitation and future research are discussed.

**Keywords:** child friendly education, sexual violence in children, sex education in primary school

### INTRODUCTION

Schooling is one of the most valuable experience children have to prepare for their future. Therefore, schools are required to create a good learning environment for each student. A good learning environment is a part of the child-friendly school. Either facets of child-friendly school are protective environment. Protective environment is not just a matter of a conducive learning but also safe and healthy interaction, which is not allowed to happen to violent behavior both physical as well as psychological (UNICEF, 2006). The violent behavior is meant as abuse, bullying, and sexual exploitation.

Sexual exploitation and sexual violence is a term that covers a variety of behaviors that are harmful and wrong sexually (Delaney & ECPAT Internasional, 2006). In Indonesia, based on the data found 218 cases in the year 2015 by KPAI, 2016 found as many as 120 cases, and the year 2017 as much as 116 cases of sexual violence on children reported ([www.kpai.go.id](http://www.kpai.go.id)).

Meanwhile in Yogyakarta province, based onto data of BPPM/FKP2PA Yogyakarta (Badan Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Masyarakat Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, 2016), In the year 2014 recorded 455 cases of violence that occurred in

children where 280 (61.5%) of these cases is a type of sexual violence cases that occur in children, while in 2015 going 404 cases of violence that occurs to children, where 202 or 50% of the total cases of violence on the child is sexual violence. In 2016 there were 509 cases of child abuse, which is 34% or 173 were cases of sexual violence that occurred in children (Badan Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Masyarakat Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, 2017). The data shows that cases of sexual violence to children in Yogyakarta dominate cases of violence that occur in children.

Sex has a sense of the difference between the body of men and women or commonly called by gender, matters relating to gender is called sexuality, which deals with the psychological aspects, social, biological, and cultural (Nugraha & Wibisono, 2016). Dimensions of sex and sexuality is further incorporated in the sex-education. Sex-education enhances students' understanding of themselves and their health trough teaching about sexual development, decision-making, and relationships (Burlingame, 2003). Sex-education is a lifelong learning which includes a vast realm, in which an individual learns about themselves both in terms of physical, moral or emotional.

This study discusses about: (1) students' perception about understanding of sexual knowledge; (2) students' perception about their interactions with others; (3) students' perceptions of the changes that occur to them both physically and socially; and (4) teachers' perceptions about sex-education in primary school. The parties involved in this research are principals, teachers and students.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

This research aims to find out students' perception of understanding of sexual knowledge and teachers' perceptions of sex-education. Questionnaires were conducted which contained questions about sex-education to teachers. Students are also given a questionnaire to find out sexuality, namely the extent to which they know about the changes that occur physically and psychically to them. In order to support this research, interviews were conducted for teachers and principals about sex education in primary schools. Questions asked about their knowledge about sex education and how to present it to students.

This research was conducted in four primary schools in the province of Yogyakarta, Indonesia. This research involved 2 principals, 15 teachers and 116 students in four primary schools. The students that involved are grade four and six.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1 summarizes the result of the questionnaire given to students about the knowledge of fourth and sixth grade students relating to sex-education. This questionnaire contains two statements, the first statement is about students' knowledge of how to care for and maintain their body. The second statement regarding the knowledge of students about the changes that occur to them.

Table 1. Result of student questionnaire n (%)

Q	Y	No	C	NA	M	Std
Q1	55 (47.4)	0 (0)	60 (51.7)	1 (0.9)	2.46	0.54
Q2	66 (56.9)	5 (4.3)	43 (37.1)	2 (1.7)	2.49	0.66

Q = question; Y = yes; No = no; C = confuse; NA = no answer; M = mean; Std = standard deviation.

Q1 = I know how to take care and maintain my own body's health

Q2 = I know the changes that happen to me

The data onto table 1 indicates that more than half of the students who completed the questionnaire

(51.7%) were still confused in caring for and maintaining their health, this aspect is one of the goals of sex-education. Table 1 also indicates that 56.9% of students are aware of the change in themselves, this aspect refers to puberty that will be experienced by students as one of the things discussed in sex-education.

Table 2 summarizes the result of the questionnaire given to grade 4 students about their interactions with others. This section contains three statements, the first statement about how students behave to others, whether to older people, peers, and younger people. The second and third statements are about the relationship of students with peers.

Table 2. Result of questionnaire of grade 4 n (%)

Q	Y	No	C	NA	M	Std
Q1	47 (92.2)	0 (0)	4 (7.8)	0 (0)	2.92	0.27
Q2	30 (58.8)	15 (29.4)	6 (11.8)	0 (0)	2.29	0.90
Q3	31 (60.8)	12 (23.5)	8 (15.7)	0 (0)	2.37	0.84

Q = question; Y = yes; No = no; C = confuse; NA = no answer; M = mean; Std = standard deviation.

Q1 = I know how to behave to a sibling, parent, family, friends, teachers, older people and younger

Q2 = I can appreciate the opinions of friends when different opinions.

Q3 = I prefer to choose friends while playing.

The data onto table 2 shows that the 4th grader admits to respecting friends and knowing how to behave to others. The data also shows that 60.8% students like to choose friends while playing.

Table 3 summarizes the result of the questionnaire given to grade 6 primary school students. Statements from the table 3 show about the effects posed regarding the changes that exist on them.

Table 3. Result of questionnaire of grade 6 n (%)

Q	Y	No	C	NA	M	Std
Q1	59 (90.8)	3 (4.6)	3 (4.6)	0 (0)	2.86	0.46
Q2	21 (32.3)	36 (55.4)	8 (12.3)	0 (0)	1.76	0.91
Q3	1 (1.5)	55 (84.6)	9 (13.8)	0 (0)	1.16	0.41

Q = question; Y = yes; No = no; C = confuse; NA = no answer; M = mean; Std = standard deviation.

- Q1 = I'm confident on what I have  
 Q2 = I am ashamed to speak in front of the crowd  
 Q3 = I often feel inadequate against the ability of other people

The data onto table 3 indicates that grade 6 students feel confident about the changes that occur to them (90.8%). They don't feel inadequate or embarrassed over the changes that occur to them.

Table 4 summarizes the result of the questionnaire given to teachers in four elementary schools. The statement from table 4 contains the understanding of teachers on sex-education, appropriate stages of child development and the giving sex education to their students.

Table 4. Result of teacher questionnaire n (%)

Q	Y	N	Av	M	Std
Q1	9 (60)	6 (40)	0 (0)	2.20	1.01
Q2	4 (26.7)	1 (6.7)	10 (66.7)	2.20	0.56

Q = question; Y = yes; N = no; Av = Average; M = mean; Std = standard deviation.

Q1 = I have been giving sex-education in accordance with the stages of child development

Q2 = I understand the sex-education that fits the stage of child development

The data onto table 4 shows that the teacher admitted enough understands (66.7%) about sex education, appropriate stages of child development. As many as 9 of the 15 teachers also claimed to have given sex-education in accordance with the stage of development of the child.

In order to support the data, interviews were conducted with teachers and principals in the four primary schools. Interviews conducted to two principals and two teachers said that basically sex-education in primary schools is very important. It is associated with the development of technology and the information very quickly. So it needed a program to protect children by sex-education. The implementation of sex-education in primary schools requires a reference system and in accordance with the stage of development of the child. Nonetheless, sex-education in schools is only given explicitly when it has relationships in learning such as reproductive organs. This occurs due to the absence of provisions for sure in conveying sex-education to students. In addition, teachers are also worried if the provision of sex-education is too far to be discussed at the elementary school level will be bad at students.

Based on these statements, the teacher assumes that sex-education is indeed important to be taught to elementary school students, but is still considered taboo. The teacher's perception of sex-education in schools is that teachers consider the importance of sex education in schools, but teachers still see that sex education is still taboo to discuss (Panjaitan, Djuanda, & Hanifah, 2015).

In developed countries, sex-education is recognized as being important for all children (Tsuda, Hartini, Hapsari, & Takada, 2017). The fundamental reason for the importance of sex-education in primary school age is that the child's natural instinct of great curiosity, during the primary school age is the time when children experience early puberty in certain children, early preparation before entering puberty, avoiding or preventing children from possible sexual violence by providing knowledge about what others can and should not touch, informing about self-respecting practices by maintaining overall body health and reproductive organ health in particular (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development of Australia, 2011).

Teachers as learning facilitators, play an important role in sex education. Teachers handle the subject of sex whenever it becomes relevant, regardless of the subject they are teaching (Santröck, 2014). Some important things in providing sexual education in children include: how to deliver it should be reasonable and simple, do not look hesitant nor embarrassed; the content of the description submitted must be objective, the contents of the description must be tailored to the needs and with the stage of child development; sexual education should be given personally because the extent of the narrow knowledge of the slow pace of development is not the same for every child; conversation should not be confined to biological facts, but also about values, emotions and souls; preschool children also need to know how to protect against sexual deviations and violence perpetrated by adults (Safita, 2013).

Sex-education provides benefits related to decisions about a relationship and interaction with others, realizes situations that endanger themselves, find information about sexuality from appropriate sources, and where to seek help (Dyson, 2010). In addition, sexual education can help students develop themselves into knowledgeable and confident adults (BC Teachers' Federation, 2015).

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

We can find out the urgent matters that make sex education an urgency to be taught in primary school. We also know the various myths that accompany sex-education and make it as taboo to be

given to elementary school age children as well as actual facts.

Based on this research, it is known that students actually already know about the changes that occur especially on their body. Even so, students do not understand and confused about how to take care and maintain the health on their body specifically as a part of self-protection. Hence, the result of this research show that the fourth grade student know how to respecting friends and knowing how to behave to others. The result of this research also show that sixth grade students feel confident with the changes that occur on them. They don't feel inadequate or embarrassed over the changes that occur to them.

From teachers' perspective, the result of this research shows that the teacher admitted enough understand about sex education, appropriate stages of child development and also claimed to have given sex-education in accordance with the stage of development of the child. But, the teachers are also worried if the provision of sex-education is too far to be discussed at the elementary school level will be bad for students.

As a research suggestion, both the school and the authorities should make evidence-based programs related to the sex-education, in which not only contains guidance on sex-education materials in accordance with the stage of child development but also provide training for teachers in teaching sex-education according to the child's developmental stage. In addition, the program should also involve the participation of parents and communities in sex-education learning so that in the future a clear sense occurs and does not cause a controversial thing on the part of parents and the community.

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