



## The Development of Early Childhood Sex Education Materials for Early Childhood Education (ECE) Teachers

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### Abstract

The objective of this research was to create early childhood sex education materials for Early Childhood Education Teachers. The research was initiated by conducting need assessment in the form of identification of the needs of sex education materials that appropriate for early childhood and the role of teachers and parents in the sex education. The subjects were chosen by using the purposive technique. The subjects of this study were 28 Early Childhood Education teachers in Sleman Regency. The data collection in this research was using a questionnaire. The data analysis technique was using quantitative descriptive techniques. The results of the research provided a description that the materials about the skills to protect themselves from sexual violence is the most needed matter of Early Childhood Education teachers. Further, respectively according to the level of need, the material that needs to be included in a Early Childhood Sex Education is the introduction of the gender, the introduction of self-identity, the relationship of men and women and ways to maintain the health, and the introduction of reproductive organs and functions. Materials product is expected to be a guideline and reference in providing early sex education.

**Keywords:** sex education materials, early childhood, early childhood education teachers

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### INTRODUCTION

It is important to guide the growth and development of the qualified generation since their childhood. Each individual, during their lifetime, needs to achieve the development tasks in each period (Havigurst in Hurlock, Istiwidayanti, Sijabat, & Soedjarwo, 2009). However, many education problems are still unfinished. The problems always appear and need attention and involvement from all parties. One of the problems that need serious attention is the sex education for children. It is related to the increasing case of immoral behavior like free sex, sexual harassment, fornication, and even

students 'pregnancy caused by the minimum sex education they get.

The minimum understanding of sex education gives the harmful effect on the children deviant sexual behavior. It is the same as stated by Zenik & KIM (Wirawan, 1997, p. 184) that teenagers who get the sex education do not tend to have sexual intercourse more often than those who do not understand the sex education that leads them to experience the unwanted pregnancy. Therefore, children with no sexual education are higher in the percentage of doing immoral behavior of sexual intercourse, while children with sex education are lower in the percentage of doing the unethical behavior.

The previous opinion shows that the sex education is an important thing to give to the individual since their childhood as the preventive action of doing immoral behavior happening now. It is also supported by Havigurst (Hurlock et al., 2009, p. 10) that the development task that should be achieved by children during their childhood period is to learn about gender and its procedure.

Giving sex education for children is the responsibility of all parties: parents, teachers, societies, and government. The preventive action can be applied is by providing the children sex education since they are childhood especially in Early Childhood Education or Kindergarten schools. Early Childhood Education teachers are the vanguard in initiating sex education in the lowest level of education. Based on the interview conducted on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016 to the teachers of TK Perintis Pakem, Sleman Regency, they stated that they need more sex education materials which can be used by the teachers as the reference and knowledge. The sex education materials should be appropriate with the characteristics of early childhood needs. The teachers should also equip themselves with the knowledge and understanding of the proper learning method to deliver sex education based on children cognitive level. Early Childhood Education teachers expect to have the materials of sex education which can be the guideline in providing sex education to children.

Based on the previous phenomena, it is essential to develop materials of sex education for Early Childhood Education teachers to improve their professionalism related to sex education in early childhood. By seeing the immoral behavior of the students today, it is essential to do the preventive action to create the qualified generation who can achieve their potencies optimally.

Based on the description, this article produces the materials of sex education for teachers of Early Childhood Education.

## **METHOD**

This research was conducted through Research and Development approach, a

series of research activities followed by developing materials of sex education for Early Childhood Education teachers. The module development in this research refers to the model design of Gall, Gall, & Borg (2007, p. 570). In this research, the first step was started by doing the need assessment and then continue to produce sex education materials for Early Childhood Education teachers.

The subjects involved in this research were Early Childhood Education teachers in Sleman regency. This research used the purposive technique to decide the sample. The consideration used to choose the subjects of the study are: (1) the teachers in this study were those who teach in kindergarten schools, both in A and B class, (2) male or female, (3) they teach in kindergarten schools in Sleman regency. 28 teachers had completed the questionnaire of need assessment of sex education in early childhood.

Data collecting techniques used in this research was through the questionnaire. The arrangement and development of data collection tool were explored from the need assessment by identifying the need of sex education materials which are appropriate for early childhood, and also the role of parents and teachers in giving sex education for children.

Data analysis technique used in this research was descriptive quantitative technique. The result of the data analysis explained the previous need assessment in the form of sex education materials and the role of parents and teachers in sex education.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

### **Finding**

Sex education for early childhood is conducted by identifying the materials which are appropriate with the children characteristics. Sex education materials for early childhood are developed to help Early Childhood Education teachers to facilitate the learning process and to give clear insights of personal aspects, especially on the sexual development. Those materials are related to the introduction of self-identity, introduction of gender, friends/ male and

female relationship, the introduction of reproductive organ and its function, how to maintain healthiness and skills to protect themselves from sexual violence. These materials development is aimed to give insight, preventive action, and development of children who are expected to be the mentally and physically healthy generation to achieve the optimum growth.

Based on the design/plan by Gall, Gall, & Borg (2007, p. 570) this research and development are initiated by the need assessment of the portrayal or profile of Early Childhood Education teachers to the materials development of sex education for early childhood.

Based on the data analysis, it stated that all subjects of the research give the various opinion about the importance of sex education materials for early childhood. The portrayal of materials needs related to sex-education for early childhood can be described quantitatively in the following Table 1.

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that Early Childhood Education teachers need sex education materials for early childhood which consists of six kinds of materials. Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that skills to protect themselves from sexual violence is the most-needed material with the percentage of 67, 86% (19 people). Next, according to the order of the needs, sex education materials needed for early childhood are introduction of gender of 57, 14 % (16 people), introduction of self-identity of 46,43% (13 people), male and female relationship and how to maintain healthiness of 42,86 % (12 people), and introduction of reproductive organ and its function of 28,57% (8 people).

The next research results will be analyzed qualitatively based on Early Childhood Education teachers' opinion as summed up in Table 2.

The Early Childhood Education teachers' opinion on sexual education materials is explained concretely through the topic materials that are adjusted to the needs and characteristics of early childhood. Topics of

sex education materials for early childhood are the introduction of sexual identity, self-identity, reproductive organ, male and female relationship, how to maintain healthiness, and how to protect themselves from sexual violence.

The materials needed by Early Childhood Education teachers can be classified into two parts, materials in the form of insight of the knowledge and introduction of physical aspects of self-identity and reproductive organ, and knowledge of healthy sexual psychology. The next part is the materials that equip the children with skills and behavior to protect themselves from the sexual violence.

The research findings show that based on the Early Childhood Education teachers, the material of introducing self-identity needs to be described into some topics as the following: (1) Introducing that males and females are different. For example,, the woman wears skirts and jewelry while the men do not, (2) Explaining the name of gender, parts of bodies, their functions and how to keep them healthy, (3) Explaining the apparent difference of concrete self-identity, (4) Introducing self-identity through physical characteristics and the different gender.

Next, on the material of introducing gender, based on the Early Childhood Education teachers, needs to be described into some topics as the following: (1) Introducing sex by giving clear example that can be easily understood by early childhood, (2) Explaining the difference of male and female through specific characteristics for example: for Muslim men, their hair is shorts and not wearing hijab, for Muslim women, their hair is long and wearing veil, (3) Explaining the shape and form of male and female sexual organ, (4) Introducing the name of genital organ with the real name and not the fake one.

On the material of male and female relationship, based on the Early Childhood Education teachers, needs to be described into a topic as the following: explaining the proper relationship between male and female based on the norms.

Table 1. The Portrayal of the Material Needs of Sex Education for Early Childhood

No.	Materials	Numbers of Subjects	Percentage (%)
1.	Introduction of self-identity	13	46,43
2.	Introduction of gender	16	57,14
3.	Male and female relationship	12	42,86
4.	Introduction of reproductive organ and its function	8	28,57
5.	How to maintain healthiness	12	42,86
6.	Skills to protect themselves from sexual violence	19	67,86

Table 2. Early Childhood Education Teachers' Opinion on Sex Education Materials

No	Suggested Materials
<b>Topic 1. Introduction of self-identity</b>	
1	Introducing that males and females are different. For example, woman wears skirts and jewelry while men do not.
2	Explaining the name of gender, parts of bodies, their functions and how to keep them healthy
3	Explaining the apparent difference of concrete self-identity to children.
4	Introducing self-identity through physical characteristics and the different gender.
<b>Topic 2. Introduction of gender</b>	
1	Introducing gender by giving clear example that can be easily understood by early childhood
2	Explaining the difference of male and female through specific characteristics for example: for Moslem men, their hair is shorts and not wearing hijab, for Moslem women, their hair is long and wearing hijab
3	Explaining the shape and form of male and female sex
4	Introducing the name of the genital organ with the real name and not the fake one.
<b>Topic 3. Male and female relationship</b>	
1	Explaining the proper relationship between male and female based on the norms.
<b>Topic 4. Introduction of reproductive organ and its functions</b>	
1	Explaining sexual organ and its functions to children and stressing parts of body that can be touched and cannot be touched by other
2	Introducing parts of body including the genital organ clearly
<b>Topic 5. How to maintain healthiness</b>	
1	Explaining how to take care of themselves, wash hands before eating, take a bath, and brush the teeth and so on.
2	Telling the children that their clothes are covered, and they are equipped with self-protection, take a shower regularly, and eat nutritious food.
3	Explaining how to keep the genital organ safe and healthy
<b>Topic 6. Skills to protect themselves from sexual violence</b>	
1	Explaining to children if there is someone who annoys them they should give resistance.
2	Children should understand which parts of the body that can be touched and cannot be touched by other people even they are the family members.
3	Children are asked to watch film about self-protection (to protect themselves if there is someone who touches their parts of body or takes them away)
4	Explaining to children always to tell stories about what happens and ask them to scream if they do not feel comfortable.
5	Telling children to recognize the inappropriate sexual behavior conducted by others.
6	Showing posters, pictures, or films that can be easily understood by children.

Next, on the material of introducing reproductive organ and its functions, based on the Early Childhood Education teachers, needs to be described into some topics as the following: (1) Explaining sexual organ and its functions to children and stressing parts of body that can be touched and cannot be

touched by other, (2) Introducing parts of body including the genital organ clearly.

On the material of how to maintain healthiness, based on the Early Childhood Education teachers, needs to be described into some topic as the following: (1) explaining how to take care of themselves, wash

hands before eating, take a bath, and brush the teeth and so on, (2) telling the children that their clothes are covered, and they are equipped with self-protection, take a bath regularly, and eat nutritious food, (3) describing how to keep the genital organ safe and healthy.

Next, on the material of skills to protect themselves from sexual violence, based on the Early Childhood Education teachers, needs to be described into some topic as the following: (1) Explaining to children if there is someone who annoy them they should give resistance, (2) Children should understand which parts of body that can be touched and cannot be touched by others even they are the family members, (3) Children are asked to watch film about self-protection (to protect themselves if there is someone who touches their parts of body or take them away, (4) Explaining to children always to tell stories about what happens and ask them to scream if they do not feel comfortable, (5) Recognizing the inappropriate behavior (sexually) by others, (6) Showing posters, pictures, or films that can be easily understood by children.

### Discussion

This research produces the materials and matter of topics of early childhood sex education for Early Childhood Education teachers. Sex education for early childhood is essential to be given when the children are at the kindergarten level. It gives the impact to the needs of material development and matter of topics that are appropriate and beneficial for early childhood. The importance of sex education for early youth is influenced by some reasons as presented by Zahrulianingdyah (2015, p. 184) as the following: (a) Children will grow up, and they do not know about the education of reproductive organ healthiness because the parents still consider it too taboo to discuss, therefore the parents feel that they do not have the responsibility to give the sex education and the healthiness and anatomy of reproductive organ to children, (b) Children sometimes misconcept about sex education and sexual organ healthiness due to the wrong information they get. The

impact of their misconception creates the negative perception about sex out of marriage, unwanted pregnancy, and sexual infectious disease, and so on.

Furthermore, Ilmawati (2013, Zahrulianingdyah, 2015, p. 185) stresses that sex education must be given to early childhood because it will influence their life when they are teenagers. During this time, sex education is still considered taboo by the society. The society, in general, argues that sex education is not appropriate for early childhood, though it will influence their life when they are teenagers. Children will be more careful to react others' lousy behavior like sexual harassment. During their childhood, children tend to be curious about everything. Therefore, parents should answer their children questions. One of the ways to answer their questions is by giving the precise answer and using subtle language so that children can understand it well. However, it does not mean that parents should respond children questions in detail since it will make them confused.

The previous argument is supported by many opinions and research findings as explained by Blackburn (2009, p. 4) that sex education is needed in order to protect the healthiness of teenagers' reproductive organ. Teenagers should protect themselves from the wrong information about sex. The comprehensive sex education program can effectively reduce the rate of teenagers' pregnancy, HIV infection, and sexual deviation. The role of parents, schools, and government to give sexual education in the form of communication in the family, school curriculum and government policy is vital as supported by the teaching of moral and religious value.

According to Raqib (2008, p-4), sex education is an effort to transfer knowledge and values of genetic-physics and its function related to the sex of male and female. Sex education is an effort of teaching, enlighten, and explaining the sexual problem for early childhood, as a way to protect children from harmful (non-Islamic) behavior and to close all the possibilities of doing prohibited sexual activity. The clear briefing and insights of healthy sex can be

reviewed from physical, psychological, and spiritual aspects.

The next relevant research is conducted by Zhina & Dingchu (2013, p. 14) that sex education is a lifelong education and should be started since childhood. Sex education is intended to be an enlightenment to living a healthy and reasonable life during the childhood to adult period. The same the previous statement, Lovegrove & Sherwin (2013, p. 2) states that sex education is an integral part of lifelong learning, started from the childhood and continue to the adult period.

Warnaen also explains Warnaenit, 1976 (Roqib et al., 2008, p. 12) that sex education forms the attitude of emotional mature toward sex. The purposes of sex education are as the followings: (a) sex education must give clear and appropriate information to minimize the wrong myth and misconception, (b) sex education must show the tolerance and help individual to accept others who have different perception and attitude toward sex, (c) sex education must be designed to solve social problems like sex before marriage, pregnancy out of wedlock, or unwanted pregnancy, sexual infectious disease, abortion, and planned family, and (d) sex education must be an open communication that helps the relationship of people with different sex.

The finding of this research supports the previous study that sex education since early childhood answers all the needs of the early childhood in the effort to finish their development tasks. It is also strengthened by Havigurst (Hurlock et al., 2009) that the development tasks that must be achieved in early childhood are to learn the different sex and its procedure.

Furthermore, it is explained by Havigurst (Hurlock et al., 2009, p. 10) that every people during the lifetime need to achieve the development tasks in each period.

The research finding shows that the material about skills to protect themselves from sexual violence is the most needed material as stated by Early Childhood Education teachers with the percentage of 67,86 (19 people). Next, based on the order

of the needs, sex education materials needed for early childhood are: introduction of gender of 57,14% (16 people), introduction of self-identity of 46,43% (13 people), male and female relationship and how to maintain healthiness of 42,86% (12 people), and introduction of reproductive organ and its function of 28,57% (8 people).

The research finding of the most necessary sex education material is skills to protect themselves from sexual violence with the percentage of 67,86% (19 people). It shows that it is essential to do the preventive action to protect children from sexual abuse and sexual harassment. It supports the research conducted by Furstenberg, Moore, & Peterson (1985, p. 1331) that sex education can efficiently reduce teenagers' sexual activity. Following the opinion of Zhina & Dingchu (2013, p. 14) the content of sex education for early childhood are physical knowledge and cultivating the healthy sexual psychology. The healthy psychosexual has the purpose to help children in forming the positive attitude toward sex, eliminating the mystery or the fear of sex, preventing sexual depression and sexual crime, identifying their gender, and learning about gender role based on the social norms. Sex education should be delivered in subtle and simple language so the children will understand easily.

This finding also strengthens the reasons why the research is conducted that there are many sexual deviation phenomena happens today like fornication, sexual harassment, rapes, free sex, and pregnancy out of marriages of the teenagers. Therefore, the skills to protect themselves from sexual violence since early childhood is expected to prevent the problem of sexual deviation behavior. It is also described by Wight (2011, p. 67) that sex education which is designed appropriately and at the exact time can significantly reduce sexual risks.

Topics on the materials of skills to protect themselves from sexual violence can be meant in two ways: the insights of preventive action and protection strategy from sexual violence. Based on the previous description, Early Childhood Education teachers should apply effective method and

techniques to deliver the material of how to protect themselves from sexual violence.

Methods and techniques to deliver skills to protect themselves from sexual violence are described in the research by Zahrulianingdyah (2015, p. 184) through modeling and the use of teaching media like playing the movie "Damar Wulan" for children. The learning of sex education using audiovisual is expected to provide materials of sexual healthiness systematically and optimally. It is also the same as the topics presented by Early Childhood Education teachers that children should be asked to watch the movie about self-protection (to protect themselves if there is someone unknown who touches them or takes them away). The next method used to introduce the skills to protect themselves from sexual violence is through posters or pictures that can be easily understood by the children. Another way is completed by Zhina & Dingchu (2013, p. 14) who states that the method used to give sex education for early childhood is through discussion, games, demonstration, perception experience, and so on.

Finally, sex education materials for early childhood can contribute positively to equip children to reach the emotional mature toward sex and how to keep their reproductive organ healthy. The skills to protect themselves from the sexual violence is an important step for children to be spared of sexual violence conducted by the adults surrounding. Those efforts need the attention and roles of teachers and parents. It is also stated by Zhina & Dingchu (2013, p. 14) that basically there is participation and cooperation from parents or family, schools, and society to make the development and sex education for early childhood become successful.

All the parties should to contribute together to give sex education for early childhood. It is in accordance to the research conducted by Dyson (2010, p. 5) that explains that: (a) parents expect that their children should get the right information from school about sex education, sex healthiness, and the relationship of males and females, (b) parents also expect that the

teachers can be the educators who has skills and good working performance in delivering sex education for early childhood with their differences and unique characteristics, (c) schools also need the active role of parents to keep the communication so sex education for early childhood can run well. It proves that both parents and teachers have the same need, expectation, and goal in giving the appropriate sex education so the children can reach the optimum growth and development. Therefore, sex education for early childhood become the responsibility of all related parties.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research finding and discussion, it can be concluded that Early Childhood Education teachers need the materials of sex education for early childhood. Materials on skills to protect themselves from sexual violence are the most needed material as mentioned by Early Childhood Education teachers. Next, based on the rank of the order of the needs, the materials that should be included in the module are the introduction of gender, the introduction of self-identity, the relationship of males and females and how to maintain healthiness, and the introduction of reproductive organ and its functions.

Materials of skills to protect themselves from sexual violence need to be described into some material topics: (1) explaining to children that if there is something annoys them they should reject or give resistance, (2) children should be told about which parts of body that can be touched and cannot be touched by other people though it is the family members, (3) children are sked to watch movie about self-protection (to protect themselves if there is someone who touches their parts of body and takes them away), (4) children are asked to tell about what happens or to scream when they feel do not comfortable, (5) identifying the inappropriate sexual behavior of others, (6) showing children posters or pictures about sex education.

Based on the conclusion, it is suggested to some parties that: (a) Early Childhood Education teachers can integrate the

material of sex education into the thematic-based curriculum for early childhood, (b) Early Childhood Education teachers can use the simple and honest language when they explain about sex education. In this case, it is important to build good communication to children about sex education, (c) Early Childhood Education teachers and parents can improve their sensitivity to see the sexual deviation symptoms of the children, (d) Parents should accompany their children to access media and the use of information technology so they can filter the accessed information (like pornography or porno action).

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