

The Relationship Between Parents' Knowledge And Perception Towards Sexual Education Behavior Towards Early Childhood: Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Cases of sexual violence against children in Indonesia continue to show an increasing trend, necessitating effective prevention efforts, one of which is through providing sexual education from an early age. In this regard, parents play a crucial role, influenced by their level of knowledge and perceptions regarding sexual education. This study aims to analyze the relationship between parental knowledge and perceptions and behavior in providing sexual education to early childhood. The method used was a systematic literature review, which searched articles in Google Scholar, PubMed, and ScienceDirect databases using relevant keywords. The inclusion criteria included articles published between 2015 and 2024, in Indonesian or English, and available in full-text format. The initial search identified 45 articles, and after a selection and screening process, 11 articles met the criteria for analysis. The results showed that most studies reported a significant relationship between parental knowledge and perceptions and behavior in providing sexual education to children. Parents with a good level of knowledge and positive perceptions tend to be more capable of providing appropriate sexual education to their children. Therefore, increasing knowledge and forming positive perceptions among parents is very necessary to support the provision of early sexual education as a step to prevent sexual violence against children.

Keywords: Early childhood, sexual violence, sex education, parental knowledge, parental perception

INTRODUCTION

Every year, the number of cases of sexual violence in Indonesia continues to increase, including against children.(Ivo, 2015). Based on 2022 data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI), 4,683 complaints were received directly and indirectly online. The "Special Protection for Children" (PKA) cluster

had the largest number of complaints, with a total of 2,133 cases. Of these cases, 834 involved child victims of sexual crimes. (KPAI, 2023) This case often makes headlines and provides strong evidence that sexual violence does occur, especially against minors, with the perpetrators often coming from the victim's own family or even strangers. (Nurchahyati & Legowo, 2022).

As the next generation of the nation, children should be given rights and needs according to their age. They should not be made the target of arbitrary actions or inhumane treatment by any person or party. (Permatasari & Adi, 2017). Seeing that children are weak individuals, it is necessary to provide protection to children to ensure their growth and development and protect them from various threats of crime, in accordance with Child Protection Law Number 35 of 2014. (Azizah & Zulfiani, 2024).

According to (Hertinjung, 2009) Several factors contribute to the rise in sexual violence against minors. These factors include the perception that children are weak and unable to protect themselves, low moral standards in society, especially among perpetrators of sexual violence, and a lack of parental awareness and control in carrying out their responsibilities to prevent crimes against children. Furthermore, the impact of information globalization, poverty and unemployment, the provision of age-inappropriate sex education, and inadequate religious education also contribute to this problem. (Justicia, 2017). Sexual crimes can also occur when the perpetrator's sexual desire is too strong so that the perpetrator channels his sexual desire towards children. (Syahputra, 2018).

Sexual violence can significantly impact a child's survival, both in the short and long term. In the short term, children are at risk of various health problems, including physical injury, sexually transmitted infections, and unplanned pregnancy. Meanwhile, in the long term, the impact of sexual violence on children can increase the risk of various serious problems, such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, drug or alcohol addiction, and even suicide. (Permatasari & Adi, 2017).

Seeing this problem, providing sexual education is one way to prevent sexual violence. (Halimatuzzuhrotulaini, 2021) Sex education is not just information about sexual activity, but also provides age-appropriate understanding of the genitals and

their functions, how to care for and maintain them, and helps children recognize the signs of sexual violence.

Several studies from around the world demonstrate the importance of parental involvement in education as a primary preventative measure for children. Children who are educated by their parents acquire sound knowledge and self-protection skills regarding sexual violence prevention, such as learning that touching another person's sensitive areas is not allowed and that only they themselves are allowed to touch their sensitive areas while others are not allowed to touch theirs. (Rudolph & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2018). Research by Putinah et al. (2024) shows that good parental knowledge is related to efforts to prevent sexual violence against children with a p-value of 0.008. (Putinah et al., 2024) Although parents play a crucial role in preventing sexual violence by providing education to children, most parents still fail to understand how serious the problem is.

However, in practice, many parents still experience difficulties in providing sex education to their children. This is influenced by various factors, one of which is parents' perceptions of sex education. Some parents still consider discussing sexuality a taboo or sensitive topic to discuss with their children. This perception makes parents feel uncomfortable or even avoid discussing sex education. (Solehati, Septiani, et al., 2022) This kind of mindset can lead to sex education being seen as something pornographic and negative. (Astri Yanuarita et al., 2023).

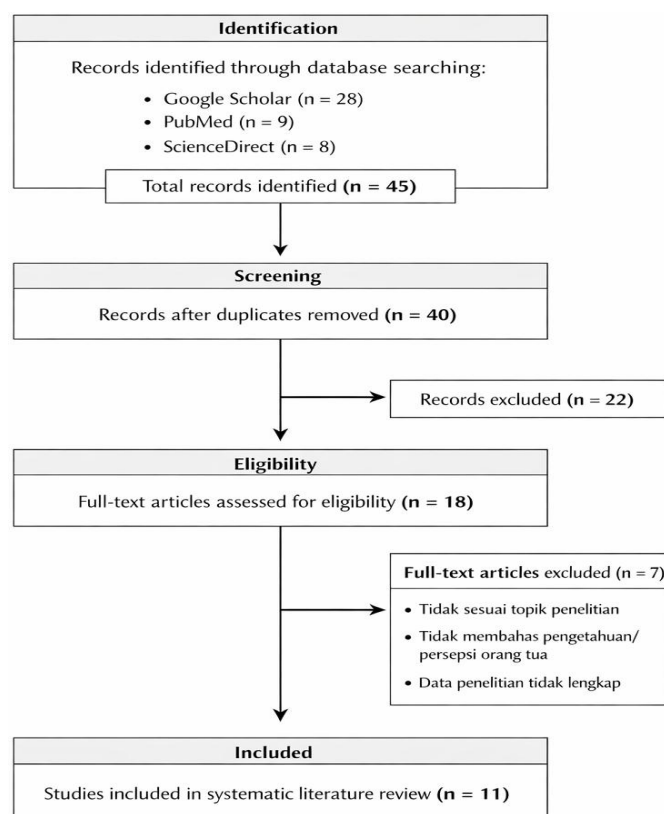
Previous research has shown that parental perceptions are related to the behavior of providing sexual education to children. Salamah and Zaitun's (2023) study showed a significant relationship between parental perceptions and the provision of early sexual education, with a p-value of 0.003 ($p < 0.05$). Parents with positive perceptions tended to be more open to providing sexual education to their children compared to parents with negative perceptions. (Salamah & Zaitun, 2023) Although numerous studies have been conducted, the findings are scattered across studies with varying approaches and results, thus not providing a comprehensive picture of the relationship between parental knowledge and perceptions regarding the provision of sexual education to children. Furthermore, there is limited research that specifically integrates these results through a systematic literature review. This indicates a research gap that requires further analysis to gain a more comprehensive

understanding of the factors influencing parental behavior in providing sexual education to early childhood. Therefore, this study aims to analyze and synthesize various research findings related to the relationship between parental knowledge and perceptions and the provision of sexual education to early childhood through a literature review method. The results of this study are expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of the role of parental knowledge and perceptions and serve as a basis for developing educational programs to support efforts to prevent sexual violence against children.

METHOD

This study uses a systematic literature review to identify, evaluate, and synthesize research results related to the relationship between parental knowledge and perceptions of the behavior of providing sexual education to early childhood. Three electronic databases, namely Google Scholar, Pubmed, and Science Direct, were used as sources for the literature search. Keywords used included "knowledge," "perception," "parent," "early sex education," and their Indonesian equivalents combined with the Boolean operators AND and OR. Inclusion criteria included original research articles published between 2015 and 2024, written in Indonesian or English, examining parental knowledge and perceptions of early childhood sex education, and available in full-text format.

Meanwhile, exclusion criteria included irrelevant articles, review or opinion articles, inaccessible or not available in full text form, were excluded from the study. The article selection process was conducted using the PRISMA approach, which includes identification, screening, and eligibility stages. After screening based on title, abstract, and full text, 11 articles met the criteria for analysis. The analysis results were then extracted into a table containing information such as author, title, objectives, year, sample, methods, and a summary of the results or findings.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Literature Review Search Results The Relationship Between Parents' Knowledge and Perceptions Regarding Sex Education Behavior in Early Childhood

Writer	Research Title	Objective	Year	Sample	Method	Results
Knowledge						
Syerli Virgi Tamara, Pipit Feriani	The Relationship Between Parents' Level of Knowledge About Sexual	To determine the relationship between the level of parental knowledge about sexual	2020	79 parents of students of Al-Jawahir Kindergarten,	Descriptive correlation with cross sectional approach	There is a relationship between the level of parental knowledge and

	Education and Early Childhood with Sexual Violence Prevention Behavior Kindergarten Al Jawahir Samarinda	education for early childhood and behavior in preventing sexual violence against children at Al-Jawahir Kindergarten, Samarinda.		Samarinda		behavior prevention of sexual violence against children (p-value = 0.000)
Ami Linda Kustati, Kartika Adyani, Friska Realita	The Relationship Between Knowledge and Parental Behavior in Children's Sex Education	To determine the relationship between knowledge and parental behavior in providing sex education to children in Kesambi Hamlet, Prupuk Selatan Village, Margasari District, Tegal Regency.	2024	62 parents	Quantitative with a cross-sectional approach	There is a relationship between knowledge and parental behavior in providing sex education to children (p-value = 0.00) with a value (OR = 28.889)
Hartati Deri	The Relationship	Knowing the relationship	2021	30 parents	Observational analytics	There is a significant

Manila, Aprima Yona Amir, Masdalen a, Marisa Lia Anggraini, Ade Nurhasanah Amir	p Between Knowledge and Mothers' Behavior in Providing Education Sex in Early Childhood	between knowledge and behavior mother provides sex education to child	(mothers)		with a cross-sectional approach.	relationshi p between knowledge with maternal behavior in providing sex education to children (p-value=0.001)
Arum Dwi Anjani, Devy Lestari Nurul Aulia	Relationshi p between Working Mothers' Knowledge and the Provision of Education Early Sex in Children Aged 3-6 Years and Its Implementa tion	Know relationship between working mothers' knowledge about early sex education for children aged 3-6 year with its implementatio n	2017 34	parents (mother)	Quantitative with cross-sectional approach	There is a relationshi p between mother's knowledge and applicatio n early sex education for children (p-value=0.029)
Dewi Zolekhah , Elvika	Parental Knowledge Level and	Knowing the picture of parents'	2021 67	parents	Descriptive analytic with cross	There is a relationshi p between

Fit Ari Shanti	Educational Behavior Sex Children	knowledge regarding sex education in early childhood at TKIT Alhamdulillah, Kasihan Bantul Yogyakarta.			sectional study approach	the level of knowledge and the behavior of providing sex education. in early childhood (p value=0.014)
Dionisia Mayola, Isfaizah	The Relationshi p Between Parents' Knowledge of Sex Education and the Implementa tion of Sex Education for Preschool Children	To determine the relationship between parental knowledge about sex education and the implementatio n of sex education for children at St. Theresa Kindergarten in 2021.	2021	96 parents	Correlative analysis with a cross-sectional approach	There is a significant relationshi p between knowledge of sex education and implement ation of sex education (p-value = 0.010) with grades (OR 0.311)

Elisa Murti Puspitani ngrum	The Relationship Between Knowledge and Mothers' Attitudes Towards Early Childhood Sex Education For Children at Unggul Sakti Kindergarten in Jambi City	To find out the relationship between knowledge and mothers' attitudes towards early childhood sex education for children at the superior Sakti Kindergarten in Jambi City	2018	43 parents	Quantitative	There is a relationship between knowledge with the mother's attitude towards early childhood sex education for children (p-value=0.001)
Apri Sulistiani ngsih, Wahyu Widayati	The Relationship Between Knowledge and Mothers' Behavior in Providing Education Sex in Children	Knowing the relationship between knowledge and the behavior of mothers in providing sex education to their children child	2016	32 parents (mothers)	Analytic observation with a cross-sectional approach	There is the relationship between knowledge and the behavior of mothers in providing sex education for

							children ($\rho=0.001$)
Perception							
Uci Ciptiasri, Aida D. Astarie	Parents' Perceptions and Roles in Providing Education Sexuality in Children	To determine the relationship between parents' perceptions and roles in providing sexual education to children.	2020	91 parents	Quantitative with analytical survey method with cross sectional design		There is a relationship between perception and the role of parents in providing sexual education to children (p-value = 0.001) with a value (OR 6.341)
Salamah, Olive	The Relationship between Parental Perceptions and the Provision of Early Childhood Sex Education at RA Darussa'dah	To determine the relationship between parental perceptions and the provision of early childhood sex education at RA Darussa'dah Kindergarten, Glumpang	2023	33 parents	Analytical with a cross-sectional approach		There is a relationship between parental perceptions and the provision of early childhood sex education at RA Darussa'dah

Kindergarten, Glumpang Tiga District, Pidie Regency	Tiga District, Pidie Regency					h Kindergarten, Glumpang Tiga District, Pidie Regency (p-value 0.003)
Junita Dwi Wardhani, Rokhana Nur Solikhah	People's Perceptions of Sex Education in Early Childhood In Tawang Village, Weru District Sukoharjo Regency	Knowing the level of parents' perception of sex education for early childhood in Tawang Village, Sukoharjo	the of	2015	45 parents	Quantitative descriptive with survey approach There is a relationship with parents' perceptions of sex education in early childhood correlation coefficient score 0.664

The Relationship Between Parental Knowledge and Sexual Education Behavior in Early Childhood

Knowledge is the result of sensing something. Knowledgeable parents can be both educators and motivators for their children.(Notoatmodjo, 2010). Adequate parental knowledge can protect children from negative things, one way is by teaching children what they should and shouldn't do.

According to Tamara and Feriani's (2020) research, of all parents surveyed, 64.6% had good knowledge, 15.2% had moderate knowledge, and 20.3% had sufficient

knowledge about sexual education. The Spearman Rank test showed a strong correlation between parental knowledge about early childhood sexual education and behavior in preventing child sexual violence (p-value <0.05) with a correlation value of $r = 0.898$. This finding indicates that the better the level of parental knowledge, the better their behavior in preventing sexual violence against children.(Tamara & Feriani, 2020). This finding is in line with research by Kustati, Adyani and Realita (2024) which showed that 43 (69.4%) respondents had good knowledge and 44 (71.0%) respondents had positive behavior. Parents who have a good understanding of the topic are 28.9 times more likely to have a positive attitude in teaching their children about sexual health, according to the results of the Chi-Square test obtained a p-value of 0.00, so it is clear that there is a causal relationship between parental knowledge and the behavior of providing children with sex education.(Kustati et al., 2024)These results support previous research showing that knowledge levels play a significant role in shaping parental behavior in providing sexual education to children.

These results are also consistent with research by Anjani and Aulia (2017) which found that more than half of the respondents had good knowledge about the implementation of early sex education (19 respondents (88.2%) and less than 15 respondents (44.1%). The results of the Chi-Square test showed a relationship between maternal knowledge and the implementation of early sex education in children with a p value of 0.029 ($p < 0.05$). This finding indicates that a good level of knowledge allows parents to provide understanding to children about acceptable and unacceptable behavior, as well as helping children understand how to convey or discuss matters related to sexuality with their parents.(Anjani & Aulia, 2017)These findings align with research by Manila et al. (2021), which demonstrated a relationship between maternal knowledge and behavior in providing sexual education to children, with a p-value of 0.001 and a correlation coefficient of 0.578. The study's results indicate that knowledge contributes 33.4% to maternal behavior in providing sexual education to children. This indicates that the better the parents' knowledge, the greater their readiness to provide appropriate sexual education to their children.(Manila, et al. 2021).

Research conducted by Elisan (2018) found that 20 respondents had sufficient knowledge (46.5%), 14 respondents had good knowledge (32.6%), and 9 respondents had insufficient knowledge (20.9%). Based on the Chi-Square test, mothers' knowledge and attitudes toward early childhood sex education were correlated (p -value = 0.001). The sufficient level of knowledge among respondents indicates that they understand the importance of early sex education.

This education helps children learn about what can and cannot be touched, develops a sense of shame at a young age, teaches them which body parts should only be touched by those closest to them, introduces them to new parts of their body, and helps them understand the differences between the sexes.(Elisan, 2018)This finding strengthens the research results of Anggraini (2018) and Ahmad (2017) that sex education is introducing children to take care of their body parts, for example teaching children about which body parts can be touched and which body parts should not be touched, and by using simple language to describe these body parts.(Anggraini, 2018;Ahmad, 2017).

Ambarwati's research (2019) also found that there was a correlation between mothers' knowledge about sexuality education applied to children (at SBI Kroyo Kindergarten, Karangmalang, Sragen)(Ambarwati et al., 2019)The study showed that parents who have a good understanding of sex education tend to be better prepared to provide it to their children from an early age. Sex education provided from the age of 3–4 is considered crucial because at this stage, children begin to interact with a wider social environment, requiring an understanding of the boundaries of safe behavior.

In line with research by Dionisia and Isfaizah (2021), it was found that the majority of parents' knowledge of sex education was good (59.4%), and the implementation of sex education was also good (61.6%). Parents with good knowledge tended to implement sex education effectively compared to those with adequate knowledge. Therefore, based on the study, parental awareness of sex education and the implementation of sex education for children are significantly related, according to the chi-square test ($p = 0.010$, $OR = 0.311$).(Dionisia Mayola & Isfaizah, 2021)This finding is consistent with research by Sulistianingsih & Widiyati (2016) that found a strong correlation between knowledge and behavior in providing sex education.

Statistical test results showed a p-value of 0.001 with an r value of 0.578, supporting this finding. This study explains that parents with good knowledge tend to have good behavior in providing sex education to their children.(Sulistianingsih & Widayati, 2016).

However, several studies have shown that good knowledge is not always followed by optimal behavior in providing sexual education to children. Research by Zolekhah and Shanti (2021) showed that some parents with high levels of knowledge still do not provide optimal sexual education to their children. This finding demonstrates the differences in research results, indicating that in addition to knowledge, other factors influence parental behavior, such as culture, social norms, and perceptions of sexual education.(Zolekhah & Shanti, 2021).

The Relationship between Parental Perceptions and the Behavior of Providing Sex Education to Early Childhood Children

Perception, in this case, relates to how a person sees something or communicates their understanding of the results of their thinking. Perception is linked to external factors responded to through the five senses, memory, and mental faculties. The new knowledge a person acquires about the world and their environment is known as perception. These parental perceptions should be used as a basis for providing sex education to early childhood to reduce deviant behavior.(Nisa et al., 2023).

Research by Ciptiasrini and D. Astarie (2020) showed that of the 38 respondents with negative perceptions, 44.7% demonstrated poor behavior in providing sexual education to children. Conversely, of the 53 respondents with positive perceptions, 88.7% demonstrated good behavior. The results of the statistical test showed a p-value of 0.001, indicating a relationship between parental perceptions and behavior in providing sexual education to children. These findings indicate that parents with negative perceptions are 6.341 times more likely to demonstrate poor behavior in providing sexual education to children. It is crucial to eradicate negative parental beliefs, such as viewing sex as a taboo topic, so that parents can openly discuss sex education with their children.(Ciptiasrini & D. Astarie, 2020).

These results align with research by Salamah and Zaitun (2023), who revealed that of the 20 participants with negative perceptions, the majority had inadequate early

sex education. Specifically, 16 of the 20 (80.0%) respondents had poor early sex education, while 10 of the 20 (76.7%) respondents had good early sex education. A p-value of 0.003 ($p < 0.05$) was obtained through a Chi-Square statistical test conducted at a 95% confidence level. These results indicate a relationship between parental views and the implementation of the sex education program for children at RA Darussa'dah Kindergarten in Glumpang Tiga District, Pidie Regency. Parents with positive perceptions tend to be more open in discussing the topic of sex education with their children compared to parents with negative perceptions. This indicates that parental perceptions play an important role in determining their openness in providing sex education to children.(Salamah & Zaitun, 2023). Furthermore, research conducted by Wardani and Solikhah (2015) found that parents' views on the importance of sex education for early childhood varied. Among parents, 35.5% had a high score, 22.2% had a medium score, and 20.0% had a low score.

With a correlation coefficient of 0.664, data analysis also revealed that parents' perceptions of sex education for young children are related to educational elements. Many parents still have a limited understanding of the importance of sex education for young children. Many parents believe their children should not be given sex education.(Wardhani & Solikhah, 2015).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of the literature review, it can be concluded that parental knowledge and perceptions are significantly related to the behavior of providing sexual education to early childhood. Parents with good knowledge and positive perceptions tend to be more open and able to provide appropriate sexual education to their children. These findings indicate that increasing knowledge and establishing positive perceptions in parents are important factors in supporting the provision of early sexual education as an effort to prevent sexual violence against children. Therefore, educational and outreach programs for parents are needed to increase understanding and reduce the perception that sexual education is a taboo topic to discuss with children. Furthermore, further research is expected to examine other factors that influence parental behavior in providing sexual education to children.

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