

Implementation of Sexuality Education in Preschool: Challenges and Obstacles

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Abstract

Sexuality education in preschool was implemented in 2017 through Reproductive and Social Health Education (PEERS) in the Pillar of Physical Support and Health Care. Sexuality education is crucial to be implemented and applied gradually according to the children's age to shape their noble personalities, and provide them understanding. It can equip them with sensitivity and concerned about their sexual health in the future. The role of various parties, especially teachers, is comprehensible in delivering sexuality education to children effectively. Thus, this concept paper elucidates on the challenges of implementing sexuality education among preschool teachers from the aspect of teacher readiness encompassing knowledge, skills and attitudes. Based on the review, teachers' knowledge about sexuality education is at a moderate level. In addition, teachers also lacked skills in sexuality education. They are unconfident, uncomfortable and timid to share and deliver sexuality-related topics to children. Lack of specific modules, weaknesses in the implementation of the existing curriculum, parents' perceptions, cultural diversity and media influence are also challenges to teachers' readiness for effective implementation of sexuality education in preschools. Several suggestions for improvement are also presented involving various parties, such as teachers, parents, community and media, to realize the implementation of sexuality education in preschools.

Keywords: Sexuality Education, Teaching, Preschool Teachers, Readiness, Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes

Introduction

Sex-related issues are a controversial topic in the global community (Brues & Greenbag, 2009). It carries a negative connotation in the minds of the community as sex is described as behavior that is not accepted by the religion, values and culture of the community. Stigma about sex as a taboo issue makes sexuality education also debated. Various questions have been raised about sexuality education, including what content should be taught? who should teach? what are the appropriate teaching methods? and many more (Howard-Barr et al., 2005). As a result, the implementation of sexuality education is less effective in curbing sexual problems, especially among children.

The terms sex education and sexuality education are also still vague and disputed in the community. Sex education focuses more on reproductive, protection and physical safety (Ang

& Lee, 2016). Meanwhile, sexuality education is more comprehensive on physical, spiritual, affective, values and culture (Sinkinson, 2009). The Sex Information and Educational Council of The United States (SIECUS) defines sexuality education as an effort to deliver sexual information in terms of knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, values and behavior of an individual. Aspects included in sexuality education are the anatomy, physiology and biochemistry of the sexual response system as well as roles, identity and personality, thoughts, feelings, behavior and relationships (SIECUS, 2009). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) also outlines the main goal of sexuality education which is to equip children and adolescents with knowledge, skills and values related to this topic in making wise and responsible choices about their sexual and social relationships in the world affected by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) (UNESCO, 2018).

Sexuality education is crucial to be applied since childhood to provide information, and build values, interpersonal skills and responsibility as every human being has instincts and sexual desire (Tambi, 2010). Children who do not receive sexuality education are potentially vulnerable to coercion, abuse and exploitation (Raphael, 2015). In Malaysia, sexuality education has existed in schools through Reproductive and Social Health Education (PEERS) in several subjects including Physical and Health Education, Language, Science, Biology, Islamic Education and Moral Education. The Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) has implemented PEERS since 1989 in secondary schools and started at the primary school level in 1994. The implementation of PEERS has been expanded specifically for children in Ministry Preschools, Department of National Unity and Integration (JPNIN) and the Department of Development Society (KEMAS) through the Pillar of Physical Development and Health Care in 2017 (Curriculum Development Section (BPK), MOE, 2017).

The term 'Sex Education' is not used in any case in the context of Malaysian education as it gives a negative connotation in society. Thus, the term PEERS was used following the government approval on 20 December 2006 to replace 'Family Health Education' (1989 - 2002) and 'Sexuality Education' (2003 - 2005) which were formerly used (Eshak & Zain, 2017). PEERS includes knowledge of biological, sociocultural, psychological and spiritual towards the practice of healthy behavior in life and not only on sexual issues (Health Education Unit, MOE, 2014). Sexuality education contained in PEERS in accordance with the National Preschool Standard Curriculum (KSPK, Revised 2017) emphasizes the introduction of body parts, correct definition and terminology of genitalia, difference between male and female body parts, proper care of genital hygiene as well as the introduction of safe touch, unsafe touch and comfortable touch.

Problem Statement

Although the subject of sexuality education has been introduced at an early stage to preschool children through PEERS since 2017, sexual crimes still show an increasing trend every year from 2018 until 2020 (The Royal Malaysia Police (PDRM), 2021). In an effort to raise awareness of the importance of sexuality education in countering sexual crimes among children, preschool teachers have a great responsibility to deliver knowledge of sexuality education specifically to preschool students according to the PEERS syllabus (KSPK Revised 2017).

However, Ihwani et al (2015) argued that sexuality education in schools may be considered ineffective. Apart from the fact that there is no specific subject, the teachers are reluctant to teach this topic as they are not prepared in terms of knowledge and skills as well as not trained to deliver it properly. Ihwani et al (2015) also asserted that the effective

delivery of sexuality education with proper techniques requires teachers to be exposed to the knowledge and skills to meet the needs, desires and provide solid understanding to the students. Based on the studies of MCKee (2012); Ihwani et al (2016), the lack of solid knowledge related to the sexuality topic and embarrassment among teachers to discuss sex-related matters were among the obstacles to sexuality education. Consequently, the teacher's delivery related to this subject was ambiguous and the students were unable to understand it, making teaching less effective. A study on preschool teachers in Tawau District by Shim (2018) unveiled that there were still few preschool teachers feeling awkward about teaching sexuality education to students. Since this topic is quite sensitive among the Malaysian community, the delivery and teaching related to this topic must be conducted with prudence and wisdom. Therefore, solid knowledge can help teachers deliver this topic effectively using proper techniques and language that facilitates children to understand it. It is vital for a teacher to possess relevant knowledge in ensuring the readiness and effectiveness in teaching this topic.

Eshak & Zain (2019) also agreed that the implementation of sexuality education at the preschool level was still less effective as the teachers were not specially trained to teach the topic. According to Amsah (2018), since KSPK was used as the national standard for teaching and learning in preschool in 2010, there have been no courses related to sexuality education organized to ensure that preschool teachers really have the knowledge and understanding to teach the topic in preschool. The lack of intensive training for teachers on sexuality education has affected teachers' confidence in delivering this topic effectively. This is also supported by Brouskeli & Sapountzis (2017) that sufficient theoretical and practical training can help early childhood education teachers to motivate and increase their self-confidence in the delivery of sexuality education topic. In fact, it will also improve their skill level in delivering this topic effectively to the students.

The readiness of teachers from the aspect of attitude is also another obstacle in the implementation of effective sexuality education for children and adolescent in this country. This problem was also expressed by the Secretary of the National Union of the Teaching Profession (NUTP) who stated that teachers have doubts, uncomfortable to discuss the topic, not clear with what can and cannot be discussed, and have difficulty explaining and answering student questions on sexuality. This statement is supported by Said (2017) that teachers were still less comfortable and conservative in conveying information related to sexuality to students, and various reasons were given to avoid teaching sexuality. Among the reasons were lack of knowledge and skills and conflicting feelings to teach the topic. As a result, teachers experienced anxiety and tension and subsequently unable to convey this topic effectively. Thus, this concept paper elucidates on the issues and challenges of the implementation of sexuality education in preschool in terms of teacher readiness covering the aspects of knowledge, skills and attitudes of teachers as well as the role of parents and stakeholders.

Issues of Sexuality Education Implementation

Since the implementation of sexuality education through PEERS in preschools in 2017, there have not been any courses or workshops conducted to train teachers on this topic. This makes it difficult for some preschool teachers to deliver sexuality education. Support needs to be given to preschool teachers to ensure they are ready to deliver this topic to students. Among other challenges that affect the readiness of teachers in implementing sexuality education in preschools are the weakness of curriculum implementation, parents' attitudes and

perceptions, multicultural society in Malaysia as well as lack of community awareness and involvement in implementing sexuality education.

Lack of Readiness among Preschool Teachers

Several studies have indicated that teachers with more academic preparation about human sexuality and are positive about sexuality education teach more effectively (Said, 2017). A study by Martin et al (2020) on 80 preschool teachers in Tehran, Iran found that training related to sexuality education could improve the knowledge of these teachers in the delivery of sex education for preschool children. The study also concluded that knowledge is more important than the teacher's attitude in teaching sexuality education to preschool children. Knowledge can foster an attitude of acceptance among teachers in delivering sexuality topics which may require a relatively long time and a deeper intervention. George et al (2019) agreed that the level of teachers' knowledge about the theme and content of sexuality education is an important factor in shaping their competence for lesson delivery. Teachers should be a reliable source for providing information about sexuality education to children. However, their lack of awareness and knowledge about the significance of this topic has become an obstacle to deliver it effectively to children (Collier-Harris & Goldman, 2017).

The results of a questionnaire conducted by Amsah (2018) revealed that the training on sexuality education for preschool teachers in Malaysia was last held in 2001, and the duration of the training was only 2 hours. In addition, since KSPK was used as the national standard for teaching and learning in preschool in 2010, courses related to sexuality education to ensure that preschool teachers really have the knowledge and understanding to teach the topic in preschool have not been organized. Training given and obtained through courses and workshops can improve teachers' skills to deliver the content of lessons related to sexuality effectively (Said, 2017). Limited skills have also become one of the problems for teachers to deliver issues related to sexuality education (Tsuda et al., 2017). Teachers also have problems dealing with the sexual behavior of students. This is because teachers lack exposure to sexuality education and also lack the skills to convey relevant information (Said, 2017). A study regarding the need for sexuality education modules for preschool teachers was conducted by Yip and Yunus (2021) and discovered that the level of knowledge and skills of teachers was at a moderate level. As a result, preschool teachers cannot help children to understand the appropriate concept and information of sexuality.

Previous studies have also shown that some early childhood education teachers have lack of confidence and are uncomfortable in implementing sexuality education. According to Balter et al (2016), children at the kindergarten level began to demonstrate curiosity about sexuality. However, teachers did not have the appropriate methods and were still psychologically unprepared to discuss sexuality issues with kindergarten children. Balter, van Rhijn, and Davies (2016) also found that some early childhood education teachers in Canada were uncertain and skeptical about sexuality-related information to be shared with young children. Said (2017) reported that teachers were less comfortable and conservative in delivering information related to sexuality to students. Various reasons were also given to avoid teaching this topic. This point is also supported by Brouskeli and Sapountzis (2017), where some early childhood education teachers in Greece were not fully prepared and embarrassed to teach children about sexuality. Cheung et al. (2020) reported that pre-service early childhood education teachers in Hong Kong had the lowest confidence level to deliver topics related to male and female sexual organs, and how babies are conceived and born. Accordingly, teachers should equip themselves with solid knowledge and skills as well as high

self-confidence to ensure that the implementation of sexuality education can be delivered effectively to students at the preschool level.

Absence of Specific Modules and Weaknesses in Existing Curriculum

Sexuality education implemented in Malaysia at present includes topics related to reproductive organ anatomy, physical aspects related to puberty and STD/AIDS prevention. However, some argue that the syllabus is still incomplete, and requires further revision. One of the important contents that is not emphasized is a comprehensive explanation of sexual relations; where, when and with whom to have sexual intercourse, preventive measures for early sexual debut, preventive measures for pregnancy and implications of sexual intercourse (Razali et al., 2019).

There are various modules introduced to overcome sexual education issues. For example, the United Nation Population Fund (UNFPA) which was supported by the Ministry of Education Malaysia and used to strengthen the Family Health Education Program in Malaysia. However, there were target groups that benefited less from the module. According to Ang (2014), this module gave less attention and emphasis to children and only focused on teenagers. Thus, it failed to prevent sexual behavior problems in children.

For preschools in Malaysia, the main challenge in the implementation of sexuality education is the absence of modules or guidelines for formal integration of sexuality education in schools. Preschool teachers only implement sexuality education based on PEERS content of KSPK Revised 2017 and only use teaching materials provided by MOE to deliver sexuality education (Said, 2017). This statement is also supported by Eshak & Zain (2019) and Tsuda et al (2017) that the main problem for preschool teachers in implementing sexuality education is the absence of specific guidance modules and the lack of teaching resources related to sexuality education. In addition, teachers also face problems in implementing sexuality education as there is no specific syllabus in the existing curriculum (Ang & Lee, 2013). As a result, preschool teachers are unaware of the importance of sexuality education elements for preschool students and indirectly expose children to sexual abuse and exploitation victims.

Attitudes and Perceptions of Parents

Andari et al (2019) stated that parents' knowledge, attitudes, and behavior have an effect in preventing the increase in child sexual abuse cases. Therefore, sexuality education from parents can improve sexual health, gender identity, and interpersonal relationships (Breuner & Mattson 2016). Amaliyah & Nuqul (2017) conducted a phenomenological study on five mothers in Ambesari District, Indonesia, and found that parents did not agree with sex education. It is considered a taboo subject which make parents oppose sex education. Parents perceive that sex education will trigger children's curiosity with matters related to sexuality, and is a worrisome if their children imitate sexual behavior.

Generally, parents in Malaysia lack awareness and are uninvolved with their children's sexual behavior and development. They spurn to understand the sexual needs and education for their children. In another study, Khalaf et al (2014) exposed that respondents who were parents were unwilling to understand their children's sexual behavior and also refused to discuss sexuality issues. The responsibility of delivering sexuality education is placed on schools, health bodies and relevant ministries as the sexuality issue is considered sensitive and negative in Malaysian society. Hasmadi et al (2022) examined the perspective of parents on early sexual education for children. Various methods are available to educate children, but

few parents in Malaysia were not comfortable to educate their own children at home about sexuality. Among the main factors that trigger parents' discomfort is due to their lack of confidence to disclose sexual issue to their young children at home. Some parents have no knowledge about sexual education and may use inappropriate method.

In Saudi Arabia, children were aware of their parents' lack of understanding and unwillingness to discuss the topic of sexual education. They were also concerned that their parents most likely would react negatively if the issue of sexual education was raised due to lack of understanding (Othman et al., 2022).

Multicultural Society as an Obstacle to National Sexuality Education

The existence of different views on sexuality education and socio-cultural constraints also play an important role in the implementation of sexuality education in Malaysia. Since Malaysia consists of a multi-racial society, with different religions, cultures and socio-economic backgrounds, an integrated approach for sexuality education may challenge the socio-cultural values of the society. The direction of sexuality education implementation has become uncertain due to moral and religious issues.

Most of the rejection of sexuality education is due to differences in perspectives that consider it incompatible with eastern values (Dawi, 2007). Cultural constraints also affect the quality of sexuality education by restricting the distribution of precise information. In a study conducted by the Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH), all respondents emphasized the importance of sexuality education implementation as a component of preventive health care programs, but there were still great concerns about its content due to socio-cultural and religious constraints in society (Khalaf et al., 2014).

Influence of Media in the Implementation of Sexuality Education

In this modern age, all forms of information, education and entertainment can be found at the fingertips. Technology becomes a crucial medium, and society's dependence on technology is also extravagant. Children are no exception as they spend a considerable amount of time browsing social media, playing games and so on.

As children, they have an incredible ability to absorb everything they learn and incorporate it into their thoughts, behaviors and emotions. Therefore, positive media content or internet resources are needed as one of the learning mediums for children. However, there is also media content that is inappropriate for children that can disrupt their social and emotional development. Misleading media content about the understanding of sex, pornography, extreme violence and life that deviates from culture and religion indirectly interfere with children's development which will be evident through behavior and personality (Hamizah, 2021).

Recommendations for Improving the Implementation of Sexuality Education

Based on the issues and challenges in implementing sexuality education in preschools as reported by previous studies, there are several suggestions for improvement to provide an overview to teachers and relevant parties as follows:

Planning Sexuality Education Program/ Workshop/ Course for Teachers

Teachers need training, support and acceptance to the subject of sexuality education and high motivation to teach it. They should be confident and comfortable to teach and present this topic to students. The involvement of teachers in the development of relevant

teaching materials will ensure that their needs are achieved. In addition to teachers' readiness to conduct lessons in sexuality education, it is important to consider teachers' attitudes towards sexuality. This statement is supported by Depauli & Plaute (2018) that an important prerequisite for successful teaching is the willingness of educators to reflect on their own attitudes towards sexuality.

A study conducted by Abidin et al (2022) on the readiness of secondary school teachers in the delivery of PEERS demonstrated that teachers must be knowledgeable about the field of pedagogy, subjects and students' learning needs. In addition, teachers not only need to be knowledgeable about the curriculum content but also need to display a positive and open-minded attitude in providing a positive impact on effective and meaningful student learning (Veloo et al., 2015). The knowledge and attitude of teachers towards the PEERS curriculum should be improved to ensure its successful implementation. In this regard, teachers must take a smart approach to delivering their lessons, have solid curriculum content knowledge, and be very creative to create a conducive learning environment.

On the other hand, Khalaf et al (2014) postulated that the issue of sexuality was considered negative in Malaysian society. Respondents of their study realized the important role of schools to administer sexual education to their children. They suggested that sexual education should be one of the independent subjects and teachers should have appropriate training and expertise about this subject. UNESCO (2018) stated that teachers responsible for delivering sexuality education need training on specific skills required to deal with sexuality accurately and explicitly as well as the use of active and participatory learning methods.

Cooperation between Experienced and New Teachers

The role, readiness and training of teachers is vital to ensure the delivery of high-quality sexuality education. Stakeholders in education such as the District Education Office (PPD), State Education Department (JPN) and MOE could implement several programs to provide opportunities for new and experienced preschool teachers to work together. Apart from being able to reduce workload and pressure, the cooperation and sharing of ideas between new and experienced teachers from the same option could also increase the effectiveness of planning or preparing curriculum for sexuality education for preschool children (Yip & Yunus, 2021).

According to Walker and Milton (2006), when implementing sexuality education, teachers are often unsure about what to teach under certain topics, how to talk to children about those topics, and how to approach those topics. Thus, more experienced teachers need to discuss and share more tips with new teachers about the breadth and depth of sexuality knowledge that children need to learn and how to answer related questions as well as cooperate in preparing more teaching aids such as teaching kits, picture books, video clips and activity plans (Cheung et al., 2021).

More experienced teachers can also share about the benefits and needs of effectively delivering sexuality education to children. Various methods can be implemented in an effort to provide more understanding to trainee teachers about the values of sexuality education to face children's questions and curiosity about sexuality. Among them include explaining some case studies from previous sources, acting and sharing relevant empirical evidence (Oswalt et al., 2015).

Cheung et al (2021) in their study also found that embarrassment was an obstacle faced by trainee teachers to deliver sexuality education to students effectively. The trainee teachers always avoid all the questions asked by the students. The teachers may also be irritated by

the negative reaction by parents in teaching this topic to their children. Therefore, more experienced teachers could implement and plan more role play activities as training for trainee teachers to talk broadly and comfortably about sexuality with children and their families.

Designing Specific Sexuality Development Modules

Based on the findings of Yip and Yunus (2021) in their study regarding the need for a sexuality education module for pre-school teachers, it was suggested to develop a module focusing on mitigating sexuality problems in early childhood. Therefore, the development of a sexuality education module for preschool teachers for long-term use is very necessary. Teachers need to be involved in the planning process of guidance module that is relevant to their duties for effective teaching. Studies of sexuality education module requirement for preschool teachers are necessary to identify the level of knowledge and skills of teachers in sexuality education, and further identify the sexuality education module requirement for preschool teachers in Malaysia. The purpose is to meet the needs in the preparation of modules specific to preschool teachers as a guide to achieve comprehensive sexuality education goals among preschool children.

Owing to the diversity of races, religions and culture in Malaysia, the development and implementation of sexuality education modules must involve the aspects of religion, values and culture (Said, 2017). According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2021), Islam is the most widely practiced religion in Malaysia (61.3%), followed by Buddhism (19.8%), Christianity (9.2%) and Hinduism (6.3%). Based on these statistics, the majority of Malaysians are Muslim Malays. Therefore, it is vital to take into account aspects of Islamic teachings in planning and implementing sexuality education modules. In fact, the aspects of values and culture also need to be considered as sexuality education will fail without relying on these two aspects as faced by United States of America in the 1990s (Said, 2017).

Role of Parents

In general, in the process of early childhood education, the role of parents is more important than the role of school or community (Ma et al., 2015). Knowledge about sexuality must commence as early as possible from home through the role of parents before children are exposed to outside influences through the advancement of online media, internet, telephone, radio and so on (Khalaf et al., 2014). Parents become role-models in providing understanding to children about healthy behavior through discussion and storytelling (Nadeak et al., 2020, Helmi & Paramastri, 2015).

Families have responsibility and awareness in understanding children's sexual development without being queried by their children beforehand (Güder & Alabay, 2018). In a study conducted by Rakhmawati et al (2021), it was found that parents as respondents have different perspectives in terms of the children's age level to prepare for sexuality education. Open-minded parents perceived and realized that the understanding related to sexuality education should be explicitly conveyed according to the appropriate age level. At an early age, children are able to absorb and process information quickly.

Children have an extremely high sense of curiosity. Matters associated with their body, organ functions and also the differences in their body parts are among the topics that are often queried by children. Therefore, two-way communication between parents and children is vital for sexuality education, and open discussion about sexuality-related problems is also demanded (Rakhmawati et al., 2021). In addition, parents should monitor children's activities,

control the use of gadgets and know their children's friends to prevent misleading information related to sexuality (Walsh & Brandon, 2011).

In an effort to provide effective sexuality education to children, parents need to take the initiative to attend parenting courses and so on. Parents with solid and sufficient skills and knowledge related to sexual education in terms of content, media, and strategy are able to provide the best sexuality education for their children (Nghipondoka-Lukolo & Charles, 2016; Guo et al., 2019). The involvement of parents in courses or workshops related to sexuality can stimulate the discussion of sexual education content with their children (Kenny, 2010).

Cooperation between parents and schools is also necessary. Schools and families need to share responsibility in providing sexual health education and psychological well-being of children (Pop & Rusu, 2015). Sexuality education at school needs to be strengthened and continues to be reinforced at home via casual storytelling with children while introducing important sexual education contents (Ahmad Hasmadi et al., 2022). Therefore, children's understanding on sexuality knowledge will be solid and explicit.

Media

Digital media has a great influence on the sexual development of children and adolescents and can have negative and positive effects depending on the discretion of the user. A survey conducted by Malaysians Against Pornography (MAP) in 2018 revealed shocking data when approximately 80% of children between the ages of 10-17 had watched pornography on purpose. Pornography can be addictive, leading to the normalization of rape, violence, promiscuous sex and unsafe sex. In this case, parents need to play an important role in the issue by monitoring the use of the internet by children and guiding them so that they know the etiquette of interacting in cyberspace.

On average, Malaysians spend three hours a day on social media, placing the country among the top 10 in the world. A survey by The Global State, Hootsuite was conducted involving 239 countries to find out the latest trends of social media users around the world in 2018 as show in Figure 1 (Data Reportal, 2018). According to the report, social media users in Malaysia have recorded an increase to 9 percent. Therefore, social media and television stations can also plan and display interesting advertisements and short videos related to safe and unsafe touching, and how to say 'no' to suspicious situations. Through this effort, children and teenagers can protect and prevent themselves from becoming victims of sexual crimes as well as deliver sexual education digitally (Hasmadi et al., 2022).

To shape the morals of today's young generation, mass media can be used as an effective tool to motivate them. According to Ahmad (2006), the media is categorized as the best way to invite people to empower and apply the teachings and values of Islam in a planned and thorough manner through the program implemented. The use of media in preaching will be easy in a wide scope. Preaching via the media can be performed through messages in dramas, documentaries, children's educational programs, advertisements, social media such as *TikTok*, *Facebook* and *Instagram* and many more by channeling elements of reminder, admonition, advice and reflection. This approach is beneficial as a large audience can be reached quickly. In fact, it is easier for the community and the young generation in particular to participate and understand the morality behind the material displayed compared to conventional preaching methods.

Advertisements and information of Talian Kasih created by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (KPWKM) also can be broadcast to deal with the issues of child and women abuse, counseling services, reproductive health services and others for mutual benefit in monitoring cases of sexual abuse and harassment involving children in particular.

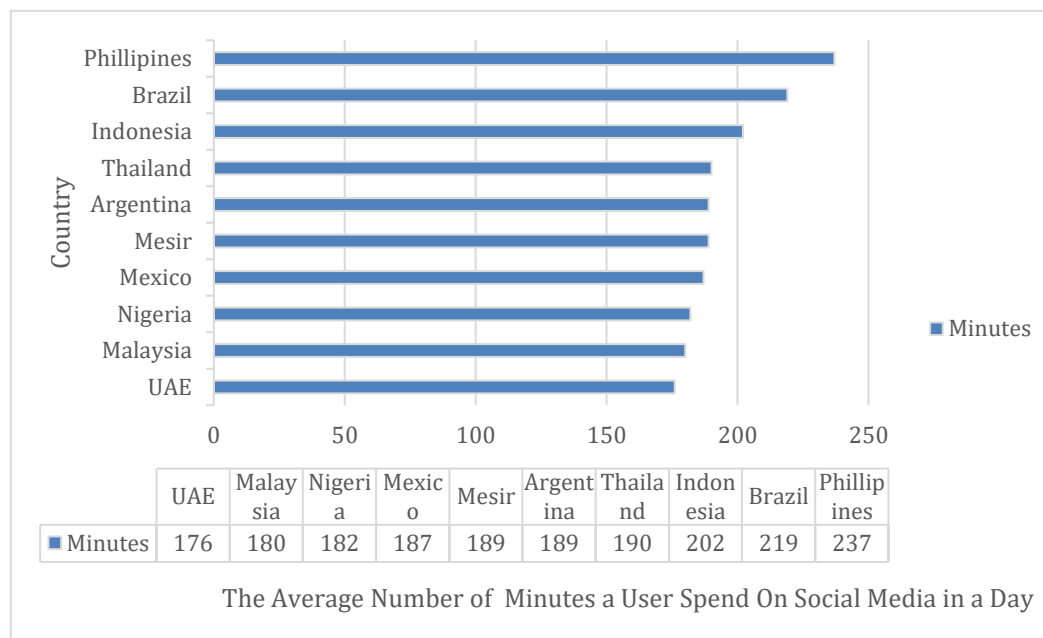


Figure 1: The Average Number of Minutes a User Spend on Social Media in a Day

Source: Data Reportal (2018)

Support from Various Parties

The exposure of sexuality education to children is important for their survival in the future which is more challenging depending on the children's age. Sexuality education at primary level is considered important by parents and teachers but very challenging topic. To provide a responsible and satisfying sexual life for young people, cooperation among all parties should be established not limited to teachers and parents only.

The role of schools in providing sexuality education is a moral responsibility for the development of students. Schools need to work towards creating a collaborative and open approach with parents regarding the sexual health curriculum at all primary and secondary school levels. This approach can give awareness to parents to play their role in cultivating children's sexual attitudes and behaviors. The schools can also create collaboration with Ministry of Education (MOE), Ministry of Health (MOH) and non-governmental organizations by planning and organizing campaigns and workshops for the preparation of teaching materials/aid kits, and enhance understanding and confidence of teachers, parents and children about the sexuality topic (Hasmadi et al., 2022). In addition, Venketsamy & Kinear (2020) viewed that teachers need to be empowered with knowledge and understanding of the sexuality education content so that students are more sensitive to their surroundings, make appropriate decisions, aware of sexual abuse and communicate effectively when they experience sexual abuse.

Balter et al (2016) claimed that support from school administrators can increase the motivation of early childhood education teachers to talk explicitly with children about

sexuality. However, the lack of training and negative reactions received from parents and society about sexuality issues affect their readiness and confidence to do so. Therefore, teachers should not be obliged by schools to deliver this topic, instead teachers need to be stimulated and given encouraging support. Quality training can help teachers to prepare sufficiently, and the provision of suitable teaching materials will facilitate their work (Depauli & Plaute, 2018). Moreover, schools and relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should play their role in achieving high quality sexuality education by providing standards, curricula, programs and classroom resources that are developmentally, culturally and age appropriate, and based on best practices (Sorace, 2010). The lack of coordination between the central government, local government and NGOs also causes poor implementation of sexuality education programs (Sarah et al., 2018). Therefore, program evaluation is important to acquire good results. According to Sarah et al (2018), comprehensive quality monitoring and teaching of sexuality education is rarely done. The implementation of the impact assessment on the sexuality education program by the relevant parties can indirectly determine and guarantee the success of students and sexuality education program.

Overviews findings on recommendations for improving the implementation of sexuality education are summarized in the Table 1 below.

Authors	Findings
Abidin et al (2022)	Teachers must be knowledgeable about the content in the field of pedagogy, subjects, and students' learning needs.
Veloo & khalaf	Appropriate training about this topic will help teachers to master the curriculum content and provide a positive attitude to PEERS Curriculum.
Yip & Yunus (2021)	The cooperation and sharing of ideas between new and experienced teachers will help increase the effectiveness of preparing curriculum for sexuality education.
Walker and Milton (2006)	Teachers need solid skills to deliver sexuality education confidently.
Cheung et al (2021)	Sharing from experienced teachers will support new teachers in delivering this topic well and comfortably.
Oswalt et al (2015)	More experienced teachers can share about the benefits and needs of effectively delivering sexuality education to children through various methods.

Yip and Yunus (2021)	The development of a sexuality education module for preschool teachers for long-term use is very necessary.
Ma et al (2015)	The role of parents is more important in the process of early childhood education.
Nadeak et al (2020); Helmi & Paramastri (2015)	Parents become role-models in providing understanding to children.
Güder & Alabay (2018)	Families have responsibility and awareness in understanding children's sexual development.
Rakhmawati et al (2021)	Effective communication is very important between parents and children in discussing sexuality.
Walsh & Brandon (2011)	Parents are responsible for controlling the use of gadgets and children's social activities.
Nghipondoka-Lukolo & Charles (2016); Guo et al (2019)	Parents need knowledge and skills to provide the best sexuality education for their children.
Kenny (2010)	Knowledge and skills can help parents discuss this topic better.
Hasmadi et al (2022)	Sexuality education at school needs to be strengthened and continues to be reinforced at home through various methods.
Ahmad (2006)	The media is the best way to empower and apply the teachings and values of Islam.
Hasmadi et al (2022)	Television stations can also plan and display interesting advertisements and short videos related to safe and unsafe touching, and how to say 'no' to suspicious situations.
Hasmadi et al (2022)	The implementation of various campaigns related to sexuality by various parties to increase the knowledge and confidence of teachers and parents.

Balter et al (2016)	Support from school administrators can increase the motivation of teachers to teach sexuality.
Sorace (2010)	Schools and relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should play their role in achieving high quality sexuality education.
Sarah et al (2018)	The lack of coordination between the central government, local government and NGOs also causes poor implementation of sexuality education programs.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this concept paper discusses the issues and challenges faced by preschool teachers in the implementation of sexuality education. Sexuality education implemented in 2017 through Reproductive and Social Health Education (PEERS) in the Pillar of Physical Support and Health Care (KSPK Revised, 2017) is one of the crucial topics to be learned, delivered accurately and applied from the preschool level to increase awareness and avoid various crime and sexual misconduct incidents against children.

Teachers need to equip themselves and always be prepared with knowledge and skills related to sexuality education to ensure that teaching can be delivered effectively to preschool students. Solid knowledge and skills related to this topic will increase the teachers' confidence level in delivering knowledge related to sexuality education explicitly and in easy-to-understand language, especially to the young children. The existing curriculum needs to be improved in line with the production of a specific module for sexuality education that is appropriate to the child's development level. In addition, the role of parents, local community and mass media can also help the effectiveness of sexuality education implementation in preschool.

This concept paper is expected to provide an overview to various parties about the significance of effective sexuality education implementation in preschool. This helps increase children's knowledge related to this topic and further help reduce sexual misconduct cases against children.

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