

Early Childhood Sex Education in an Islamic Perspective

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the importance of sex education for early childhood in the Islamic perspective, as a preventive effort against deviant behavior and as a foundation for character building from an early age. The method used is a literature review by analyzing relevant sources, including the Qur'an, Hadith, as well as the views of scholars and Islamic education experts. The results indicate that sex education for young children should be provided gradually, in accordance with their developmental stages, and delivered through approaches that align with Islamic values. In Islam, sex education is not merely biological knowledge, but also encompasses moral, ethical, and spiritual aspects. In conclusion, Islamic-based sex education provides a comprehensive foundation to preserve children's natural disposition (fitrah), protect them from negative environmental influences, and instill an awareness of self-respect from an early age. The implication of this study is expected to serve as a reference for parents, educators, and educational institutions in designing early childhood sex education strategies based on Islamic principles.

Keywords: Sex Education, Early Childhood, Islam

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Introduction

Sex education for early childhood is a crucial issue in shaping understanding of the body, boundaries of social interaction, and protection against potential sexual abuse [1], [2]. In many societies, this topic is often considered taboo or ignored, so that children can grow up with a poor understanding of what is acceptable and unacceptable in relation to the body and privacy [3].

From an Islamic perspective, sex education (or in Islamic terms: *tarbiyah jinsiyah*) has moral-ethical, spiritual, and social dimensions that not only provide factual information, but also instill religious values, self-control, and awareness of human nature [4], [5]. For example: children are taught to recognize their *aurat*, guard their gaze, and understand the rights and obligations of their bodies within the framework of Islamic law and morals [6].

Through an Islamic perspective, sex education for young children should not be merely technical (e.g., body organs or reproduction) but holistic: an integration of science, morality, and spirituality. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the question: how can sex education for young children be permitted and optimized from an Islamic perspective? What are the key components, and what is the relevant methodology? The objectives of this study are: 1. To examine the conceptual framework of early childhood sex education from an Islamic perspective (covering sources from the Qur'an, Hadith, and the thoughts of scholars). 2. To describe implementation methods (approaches, materials, media) that are appropriate for early childhood in an Islamic context. 3. To review the obstacles and challenges as well as strategic recommendations for Islamic-based sexual education practices for early childhood.

Literature Review

Sex education in early childhood from an Islamic perspective has been extensively discussed in literature as a preventive measure against sexual deviations, violence, and abuse among children. A review of the paper titled "Sex Education at an Early Age in The Perspective of Islam" highlights that the Qur'an and Hadith provide moral and normative guidelines for sex education for children from an early age. These guidelines encompass the cultivation of modesty (*haya*), proper etiquette for interactions between males and females, the concept of *mahram*, awareness of *aurat* (intimate parts of the body), as well as education on cleanliness and appropriate dressing. These teachings suggest that Islamic sex education is not merely biological but also ethical, moral, and spiritual in nature, promoting the overall character development of children [1].

Empirical research on the perceptions of Islamic early childhood education teachers indicates that most teachers regard early sex education as highly essential and urgent. However, a survey of 45 early childhood teachers in West Java revealed a tendency to rely on Western theories, with the integration of Islamic values still insufficient. This finding points to a gap between the ideal normative framework and actual practice — an aspect that must be considered when implementing Islamic-based sex education effectively in formal educational settings. This discrepancy highlights the challenge of aligning Islamic principles with pedagogical practices in the classroom [2].

Several contemporary studies have attempted to develop a sex education curriculum for early childhood based on Islamic values that aligns with children's developmental stages and is morally safe. One example is a study that utilizes the Dick and Carey instructional design model to create a curriculum for early childhood sex education in the context of Islamic preschools. The curriculum includes cognitive, psychomotor, and attitudinal aspects — with themes such as "Appropriate Reactions to Verbal Harassment and Inappropriate Touching" and "Maintaining Cleanliness and Hygiene of Sensitive Body Parts" [3]. Approaches like this show that Islamic sex education can be systematized and tailored to suit children's developmental needs while combining social skills and protection against abuse risks.

Practical implementation of Islamic-based sex education has also been tested. A recent 2025 study applied a flipped learning approach that integrates animated media with parental

involvement to teach early childhood sex education. The results indicated that the experimental group, which used this learning model, showed a significant increase in scores compared to the control group using conventional methods like picture books [4]. This provides empirical evidence that early childhood sex education based on Islamic teachings is not only theoretically sound but also practically effective when systematically designed, contextually relevant, and involving the child's immediate environment, particularly the family.

In terms of child protection and the prevention of sexual violence, early childhood sex education from an Islamic perspective is also viewed as a crucial preventive strategy. The article titled "Prevention of Violence and Sexual Abuse in Early Childhood Through Implementation of Sex Education in the Perspective of Sunnah" demonstrates that implementing sex education based on the Sunnah can help reduce the risk of abuse as children are taught from an early age about body boundaries, aurat, and normative interactions in accordance with Islamic teachings [5]. Thus, literature supports the view that Islamic sex education is not only about biological education but also a holistic approach to moral and social protection for children.

Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research method. Data were obtained from primary and secondary literature: the Qur'an, Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, monographs on tarbiyah jinsiyah, and national journal articles related to early childhood sex education in Islam [1], [3], [4], [5].

The stages of the research are as follows:

1. Identification and selection of literature: selecting relevant articles, journals, and books that discuss early childhood sex education from an Islamic perspective.
2. Text analysis: conducting a hermeneutic study of relevant verses from the Qur'an and Hadith (e.g., teachings on modesty, self-control, interaction between the sexes, children's rights) and the thoughts of contemporary scholars. Examples include a study of QS. An-Nūr ?, or a study of Hadith related to early childhood education. [6]
3. Synthesis and categorization: grouping the results into components such as "moral/ethical values," "educational material," "learning methods," "the role of parents/teachers," and "implementation challenges."
4. Data validation: although no field surveys were conducted, the researchers ensured internal validity through literature triangulation (more than one source) and peer-reviewed journals.

Results

4.1 Conceptual Framework of Islam

Sexual education in the Islamic perspective emphasizes that humans have a natural disposition, that the body is a trust, and that there is an obligation to maintain purity (tahārah, aurat) and ethics in social and reproductive relationships [4]. For example, a study of the Hadith states that early childhood sex education must be carried out so that children understand what is permissible and what is not, in order to prevent sexual abuse [3]. From the study of the Qur'an and Hadith, it was found that children need to be introduced early on to the concepts of aurat, guarding their gaze, and the limits of interaction between non-mahram members of the opposite sex [5]. Therefore, sex education must teach children to recognize the boundaries of their own and others' bodily privacy and the importance of respecting these boundaries in accordance with Islamic law [4], [5].

In the context of the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, there are many guidelines that provide a basis for children's sexual education, including the need to guard one's gaze and avoid actions that could lead a person to commit despicable acts, such as adultery. QS. An-Nur: 30-31, for example, teaches men and women to guard their gaze and lower their eyes as a form of protection for human nature. In addition, the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW also

teaches the importance of giving children an early understanding of the need to protect their honor and modesty, as well as the boundaries of interaction with the opposite sex [6]. From this perspective, sex education for children is not merely about providing technical knowledge about the body's organs, but also about shaping a character that respects the sanctity of their bodies and protects themselves from things that can damage them.

Furthermore, sex education in Islam is not limited to knowledge about the body, but also includes the moral and ethical development of children. For example, in Islamic teachings, children are taught to respect their parents, teachers, and peers in a kind and polite manner. The concept of ethics in interactions between men and women outside of marriage, for example, must be taught in a subtle manner appropriate for their age. This includes teaching about the importance of protecting oneself from temptation and avoiding unhealthy relationships. Therefore, sex education in the Islamic perspective is broader than just teaching about anatomy or reproduction, but also about shaping children into individuals who can maintain their self-respect and be responsible in social interactions [7].

4.2 Educational Materials

Based on the literature, relevant materials for early childhood (e.g., ages 3–8) include:

1. Learning about their own and other people's body parts in simple terms, as well as understanding the correct terminology;
2. Learning about the concept of privacy and children's rights over their bodies (e.g., "my body is mine," parts of the body that cannot be touched by others without permission) [1];
3. Moral values such as maintaining modesty, respecting each other, and rejecting inappropriate touching;
4. An initial understanding of biological differences between the sexes in simple terms, not in the context of sexualization;
5. Integration of Islamic values such as morals, trust in God, preserving one's nature, and personal responsibility.

Sex education materials for young children from an Islamic perspective must be designed with consideration for children's developmental stages and in accordance with religious principles. Education about the body and its boundaries should begin at an early age, with simple and easy-to-understand teaching. For example, at the age of 3-6 years, children can be taught to recognize the parts of their bodies that must be kept private, such as the aurat area. This is important for teaching children about the concept of privacy, which will later help them avoid potential sexual abuse. In Islam, teachings about privacy and modesty are taught with great care, using examples that are easy for early childhood to understand, such as stories or parables from everyday life [4], [5].

Furthermore, at the age of 7-10 years, sex education material can be expanded by introducing children to the concepts of gender differences and bodily rights in Islam. At this age, children are beginning to understand simple concepts about male-female relationships and the importance of maintaining personal purity. For example, children can be given explanations about how to guard their gaze, what is meant by aurat, and why they must respect other people's bodies. Sexual education for young children in Islam is not just about providing biological information, but also instilling moral values about the importance of protecting oneself from actions that can damage one's honor and bodily integrity. Learning about maintaining modesty, guarding one's gaze, and avoiding actions that are not in accordance with Islamic values is very important to be applied at this stage [6], [7].

4.3 Learning Methods

The proposed methods in accordance with early childhood development are: gradual learning, learning through play, and involving parents as primary educators. Research in early childhood education institutions indicates that early childhood educators have implemented Islamic-based sex education using methods such as observation, documentation, and

reinforcement of values through daily activities [2]. It is also important to use child-friendly learning media and Islamic contexts, as well as involving parents as key partners. Religious approaches (e.g., stories of prophets, stories of Islamic values) can facilitate the internalization of values.

4.4 Implementation Challenges

Several obstacles identified in the literature include social taboos surrounding discussions of sexuality with young children, a lack of knowledge among parents/teachers, and concerns that discussing sex education will "influence" children (causing them to learn about sex too early) [7]. In addition, there is a lack of Islamic-based media and a lack of training for early childhood teachers on this issue. Sometimes, teaching methods are not adapted to children's cognitive and emotional development. These obstacles are important to address in practical designs.

Conclusion

Based on a review of the literature, it can be concluded that early childhood sex education from an Islamic perspective requires a clear framework: integration of simple information about the body and reproduction, understanding of privacy and children's rights, and moral and religious values. The material and methods must be adapted to the child's stage of development and the Islamic context: gradual, contextual, using a play-based approach, and involving the family.

The main challenges are social taboos and the lack of preparedness among parents/teachers, which requires training and appropriate Islamic-based media. Practical recommendations: development of Islamic-based tarbiyah jinsiyah learning modules for early childhood education (ages 3-8), training for early childhood teachers/instructors and parents, and further empirical research involving children, parents, and educators to measure effectiveness.

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