



Guiding with wisdom: a model for early childhood sexual education classroom management

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ABSTRACT

Effective sex education plays a crucial role in providing children with a healthy understanding of sexuality, yet there persist various issues related to sex education in kindergarten. Classroom management challenges also represent significant obstacles that need to be addressed for the successful implementation of sex education. Within educational institutions like Ceria Timoho Kindergarten, the role of teachers in delivering sex education remains pivotal. This research aims to identify classroom management patterns used in providing sex education to children at Ceria Timoho Kindergarten through a qualitative approach involving observation, documentation, and interviews. Data analysis employed qualitative analysis methods. The research results reveal that the classroom management model for sex education emphasizes student-centric approaches that consider individual needs, holistic strategies encompassing emotional, social, and ethical aspects, the selection of age-appropriate teaching methods, the importance of effective communication, and the necessity for thorough evaluation to ensure age-appropriate understanding. These findings offer valuable insights into the significance of effective sex education in helping children comprehend and respect their sexuality, fostering emotional and physical awareness, and promoting overall well-being.

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Introduction

The increasing cases of sexual violence and pornography related to the internet and social media have created an alarming situation (Mustika, 2017). Graphic data reveal worrying facts regarding cases of sexual violence against children. This condition demands effective preventive measures to protect children from these risks. Therefore, sex education that starts early is key in efforts to prevent cases of sexual violence against children (A. Hasanah, 2021). Sexuality education at an early age also positively impacts children's moral development and helps prevent promiscuous behavior in the future (Kurdi & Afif, 2021). However, the approach to sex education in the Indonesian community, especially for young children, is still considered

taboo. However, the truth is that proper sexuality education can provide an appropriate understanding of the child's developmental stage about the body, personal boundaries, and healthy sexual relationships (Solihin, 2015).

Sex education for early ages is a topic that is receiving increasing attention in various countries worldwide (Hawrylak et al., 2022; Martínez-Abarca & Martínez-Pérez, 2021; Zulu et al., 2019). This is an approach that provides knowledge and understanding of the body, relationships, and sexuality to children from a young age. In this introduction, we will outline why early sex education is very important and its positive impact on children's development. Sex education for early ages is highly relevant in today's society (Muchlis & Nurjannah, 2022). First, sex education starting at an early age helps reduce the uncertainty and fear that often accompanies children's growth. Information provided accurately and at the right time can help them understand the physical changes occurring in their bodies, which are often a source of confusion. Second, early sex education allows children to understand fundamental concepts about sexual intercourse, consent, and how to protect themselves from potential abuse or exploitation. This is essential to create children who are better able to protect themselves and understand their rights in relationships.

Another positive impact of early sex education is the potential to reduce teenage pregnancy rates, the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and enhance the quality of interpersonal relationships (Margaretta & Kristyaningsih, 2020). With a better understanding of their bodies and sexuality, children are more likely to make informed decisions regarding their sexuality. Therefore, sex education should be introduced as early as possible, even in kindergartens, to support children's holistic development (Afnita & Latipah, 2021). However, the implementation of sex education in kindergartens often encounters challenges, such as some children's lack of awareness about personal boundaries and distinguishing between appropriate and inappropriate physical contact (Sari, 2020). In the quest for more effective and inclusive sexuality education, classroom management plays a crucial role. Teachers must possess professional skills to effectively organize and manage classes in order to optimize learning objectives (Nurulloh et al., 2020)(Oci, 2019). As managers, teachers should follow managerial stages and exhibit strong communication skills to create a conducive learning environment (Andra Ningsih, 2019).

One positive example is the approach taken by TK Ceria Timoho in Yogyakarta, which specifically adopts a sex education curriculum for early childhood. The importance of age-appropriate sexuality education for early childhood and effective classroom management is the primary basis of this research. The problem statement in this research is how to implement learning management in sexuality education for kindergarten. To provide direction for this

research, research questions were prepared as follows: (1) How is sex education planned in kindergarten? (2) How is sex education organized in kindergarten? (3) How to implement sex education in kindergarten? (4) How to supervise sex education in kindergarten?

Method

The research method employed in this study is grounded theory, a qualitative approach aimed at generating new insights or refining existing methodologies (Wiesche et al., 2017). The research process commences with the collection of data from various qualitative sources, including interviews, observations, and written documents. Subsequently, the gathered data is analyzed through techniques such as data reduction, comparison, and categorization, leading to the development of interconnected categories or concepts. Once these categories or concepts are established, a more systematic and detailed theory is derived from the data analysis. In our study, we utilize primary data collection methods involving observations and interviews, as well as secondary data obtained through documentation. Qualitative data analysis is conducted following the approach outlined in Ridder *et al.* (Ridder et al., 2014). The data analysis process is illustrated in Fig. 1 (Chun Tie et al., 2019).

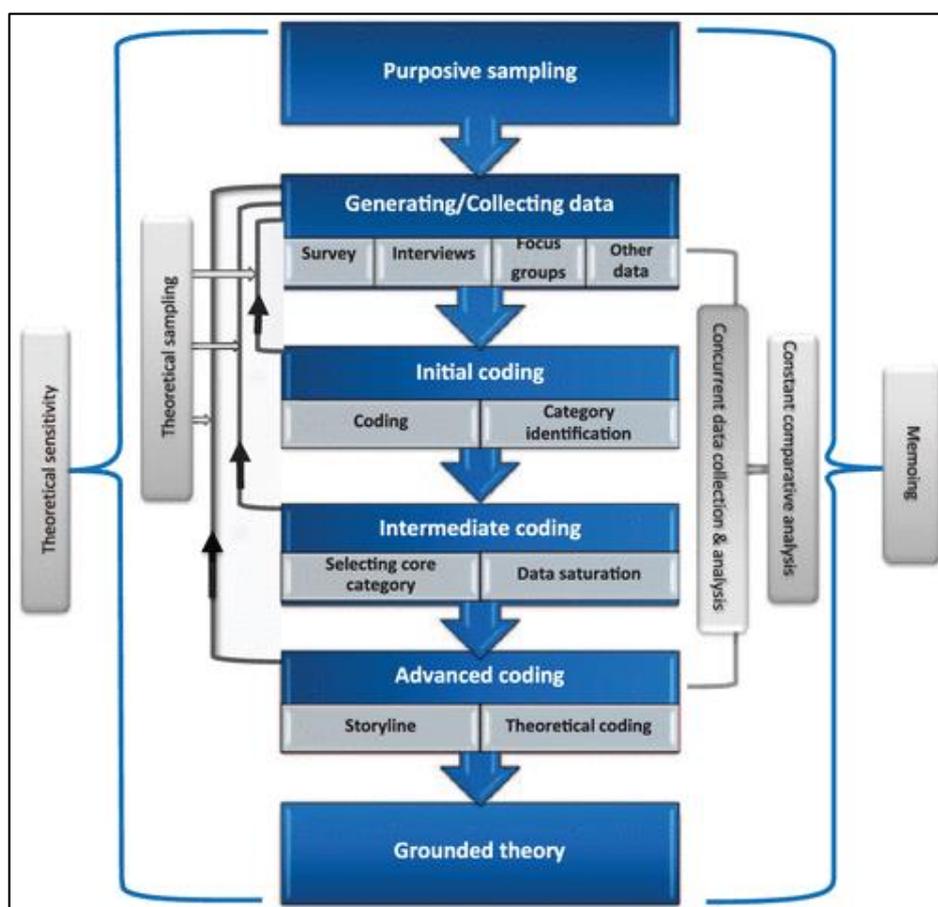


Fig. 1. Research design framework: summary of the interplay between the essential grounded theory methods and processes

Results and Discussion

Based on the data analysis results, it is known that the management of sex education generally reflects in three management steps, which are planning, implementation, and evaluation, as follows:

1. Planning Classroom Management Models of Sexuality Education in Early Childhood

Based on the results of the informants' statements, when a teacher wants to make a class plan to deliver sex education to early childhood, there are important things that need to be considered in order to achieve effective learning goals, namely:

a. Student-centered learning

According to the teachers' statements, the primary key to successfully designing sex education in the classroom is that teachers develop lesson plans based on students' needs. Planning involves developmentally appropriate approaches, adjustments to children's characteristics, learning styles, and positive and safe environments, as well as various methods such as fun learning, visuals, simulations, and game-based learning. In detail it is explained as follows:

1) Approach Appropriate Physical and Cognitive Development

The following is the teacher's statement regarding the approach to sexuality education on the theme "Healthy and Safety" to achieve the goals of early childhood sexuality education:

Actually, it also depends on the theme, sis. I understand the curriculum and competencies specifically for young children. So, I designed the learning objectives to be simple and appropriate for children. Incidentally, for our sexuality education we have the theme Healthy and Safety, so the contents are teaching them about body parts, emotions, and privacy. (G1, lines 5-10).

Teacher 2 explained:

I also think about how the curriculum should suit their level of development and have realistic goals, such as teaching them the same body part recognition, expressing feelings, and respecting gender differences. (G2, lines 6-10)

2) Adjustment of Children's Characteristics and Needs

Adjustment of the characteristics and needs of children in learning is important to achieve learning goals. Every child is unique and has different learning needs. Teachers need to understand this and adjust learning methods accordingly. Teacher 2 says:

Defining appropriate learning goals and achieving them is an important step in teaching early childhood sexuality education. I understand that learning objectives must be appropriate to the level of development and understanding of young children (G2, lines 30-33).

Teacher 2 adds that the characteristics and learning needs of children include cognitive, physical, social and emotional development, as stated in his statement:

I understand that every child has their own level of understanding and uniqueness, so it is necessary to adapt in the right way. I try to get to know students well through interaction and observation. I observe their level of development in terms of physical, cognitive, social, and emotional. By understanding students' needs and abilities, I can plan appropriate and relevant lessons (G2, lines 51-57).

3) Accommodating Student Learning Styles

Accommodating student learning styles is important in effective learning. Teachers need to understand each student's learning style to adjust learning methods, as conveyed by Teacher 1:

Because sexuality education, which is included in the theme of health and safety, is integrated with the curriculum, that's why I always refer to the curriculum and learning guidelines set by the government in compiling learning materials. I also consider student needs when selecting learning materials and resources. I make sure that the learning materials and resources I choose can accommodate students' learning styles. (G1, lines 82-88)

4) Visual Method

In teaching young children, it is important to adopt a developmentally appropriate approach. G1 creates engaging learning experiences with play and visual elements, such as G1's statement on sexuality education: "I prepare teaching materials that are playful and visual because young children learn better through direct experience and seeing real objects. (G1, lines 10-12)"

G1 exemplifies using baby toys like body parts for a more concrete approach. Children can see and touch physical objects and understand their function, according to statement G1:

There are also baby toys that look like real sex, so the kids know what their function is. So they will know what the tool is for and should not carelessly touch or use it. (G1, lines 243-245).

G1's statement is supported by G2. Visual media helps children understand sensitive concepts without direct demonstrations, avoiding awkwardness. Interview data supports: I prefer to use pictures or videos so they can understand without having to see a live demonstration (G2, lines 221-222).

5) Simulation Method

One teacher also stated that he was always looking for interactive and effective ways to convey material to students. One method that has been proven to give positive results is the simulation method. the following statement from G2:

I use various teaching methods, such as role-playing, picture stories, or pictures that are relevant to the topic of sex education. When teaching, I provide opportunities for students to actively participate and talk about what they know and feel (G2, 57-61).

6) Fun Learning Method

This method makes it possible to integrate the concept of sex education into activities that are interactive, creative and entertaining. By combining elements of games, challenges, and group-based activities, it can create a learning environment full of enthusiasm and enthusiasm, so that students can easily understand and remember the concepts being taught. The following statements are relevant to G2: "I know that children like to learn through games, so I make learning interesting and fun for them (G2, lines 5-6)"

7) Game-Based Learning

Teachers choose creative approaches to deliver sex education with songs, stories, and interactive games. Music, stories, and games are effective tools for a fun and memorable experience. G1 statement about game-based learning: 'I like to talk about the topic of sexuality education through songs, stories and interactive games (G1, lines 15-16)'

8) Positive Learning Environment

A positive learning environment is important for learning effectiveness and joy. A large impact was seen on student motivation and engagement. Teachers need to create a friendly atmosphere, constructive feedback, and emotional support that accommodates the needs and interests of students, including in sexuality education (G1): 'The point is, I believe that implementing lesson plans that are tailored to the needs of students can make the learning environment more effective and beneficial for all students (G1, lines 59-61)'

b. Safe Environment

A safe environment is very important in the learning process. A safe environment can provide students with a sense of comfort and security so they can focus on the learning process. The following is Teacher 2's statement that provides a sense of comfort and security in delivering sex education:

I always strive to create a safe, positive, and child-friendly learning environment. This helps children feel comfortable asking questions, talking, and participating in the learning process. (G2, lines 41-44).

Teacher 2 also added that not only creating a positive, safe, and child-friendly environment, but also a pleasant atmosphere. The following is an additional statement from Teacher 2: "When teaching, I make the class atmosphere cool and relaxed so that children can learn in a fun atmosphere (G2, lines 12-13)".

2. Organizing Model Classroom Management of Sexuality Education in Early Childhood

In early childhood sexuality education, organizing the classroom management model becomes important. A holistic approach is used to create a safe and engaged environment, enabling effective, developmentally appropriate learning. A holistic approach to child sexuality education involves physical, emotional, moral, spiritual, and relationship aspects. The goal is to understand sexuality in a positive way, build self-confidence, and involve parents and teachers. Here is a more detailed explanation.

a. Class Design

In an effort to plan and implement organizational aspects of sex education for early childhood, creating a comfortable and safe learning atmosphere for children is one of the main priorities. A positive and supportive learning environment plays a very important role in facilitating understanding and effective interaction in the context of a sensitive topic such as sex education. This statement is relevant to G1's statement during the interview as follows:

For a lesson on sex education, our theme is "health and safety", so I made the class like that so I could connect with that theme. There are four choices of activities that must be carried out according to the independent curriculum, so I created a class setup that focuses on those four activities (G1, lines 110-112).

b. Positive Relations with Students

The importance of facilitating active interaction and participation of children in the learning process, through effective arrangements so that teachers can create an environment that encourages children to interact, discuss, and be actively involved is also emphasized by the statement of the Kindergarten Class A Teacher during the following interview:

I always have a good relationship with students. So, students can feel familiar with me and can be open to stories. I also often chat with students, so they feel more connected and responsible for maintaining a calm and orderly classroom environment (G1, lines 153-156).

c. Interactive Relations with Students

The following is G1's statement regarding giving rewards and positive reinforcement for the good behavior shown by students: "Apart from that, I also reward students who behave well, for example helping other students or listening carefully to me when narrating instructions (G1, lines 161-163)".

d. Caring and Responsive Teachers

In the context of teaching about sexuality education to children, organizing has an important role in facilitating active interaction and participation of children in the learning process. Through an effective setting, teachers can create an environment that encourages

children to interact, discuss, and be actively involved in learning about sensitive topics. The following is a statement from one teacher: "I also like two-way communication, so that children can talk, ask questions, and share their thoughts and feelings related to the topic being studied. (G1, lines 468-470)'.

e. Collaboration with Parents

In early childhood sexuality education, teachers should establish effective communication with parents to ensure alignment between school teachings and home values. This fosters a consistent learning experience, clarifies objectives, and addresses concerns. Parental involvement supports holistic learning, aiding teachers in achieving their goals. The following is a statement from one teacher:

I also communicate with parents or guardians of students about the delivery of sex education, so they have the same perception. This communication is a form of support that helps me achieve my learning goals (G1, lines 325-328).

3. Implementation of Briefing of Classroom Management Models of Sexuality Education in Early Childhood

It is very important to direct sex education through effective communication, given the sensitivity and complexity of the topic (Baik et al., 2019). As an educator, the teacher tries to create an open and comfortable environment for students, where they feel safe to ask questions, talk about their feelings, and express their thoughts on the topic of sexuality.

a. Effective Communication

In the context of sex education, effective communication has a very important role in ensuring good and positive understanding for students. During the teacher's experience, they considered that a communication approach with open questions and answers, encouraging a deeper understanding of sexuality education, using language appropriate to early childhood, and maintaining the correct use of words was key in dealing with such a sensitive topic. The following will be explained in more detail.

b. Using Appropriate Language

When discussing sensitive topics like sexuality with children, a teacher emphasizes using simple, clear, and appropriate language. This approach prevents confusion and ensures children comprehend the information without distress. The teacher consciously avoids complex terms to maintain effective communication and understanding. The following is G1's statement regarding the importance of explaining in easy language:

So indeed when discussing sexuality with children it is necessary to pay attention to the style of language used so that all children can understand, which is definitely not complicated. (G1, lines 436-438)

He also added in his statement regarding the use of appropriate language in answering questions related to sex education. the following are relevant G1 statements: 'Use age-appropriate language, avoiding words or terms that might confuse them or feel ambiguous. If someone asks, I will answer it with a simple answer (G1, lines 205-208)'.

c. Maintaining Correct Language Use

In teaching sexuality education to children, I pay great attention to the use of appropriate language. I realized that words have great power to shape their understanding and perception of this sensitive topic. Therefore, I try very hard to use language that is appropriate for their age and level of understanding. The following statements state that the teacher has maintained the correct use of words:

Simply put, before class starts, I always make a list of material that I want to cover and immediately tell students what it is about. So that everything is clear, I use real examples and ask questions, so students really understand. I also avoid words that are not clear. In my opinion, giving clear and detailed instructions is very important so that students understand the material well and their performance in class can increase (G1, lines 189-194).

d. Open Questions

In every teaching session, an interactive and participatory approach is always my main focus. I give students ample opportunity to participate actively, talk about their knowledge and understanding of sexuality education. I believe that through open and positive dialogue, they can feel more comfortable talking about things they may know or feel. The following are relevant statements:

When teaching, I provide opportunities for students to actively participate and talk about what they know and feel. I always maintain a positive dialogue and am open to answering any questions or concerns that may arise (G2, lines 59-63).

The following is a statement from G1:

If there are questions or comments from children that are surprising or different from what I expected, I am always ready to respond wisely and provide answers according to their level of understanding (G1, lines 305-308).

e. Encourage Deep Understanding

When teaching sexuality education to young children, in experience teachers focus on looking for signs of their understanding and awareness of important aspects such as body respect and privacy. Teachers see it as an important step in forming a positive understanding of themselves and others. The following is a statement regarding the importance of understanding sexuality education:

After teaching the material, I take the time to observe their interactions inside and outside the classroom. I'm looking for signs of understanding and awareness of the importance of body respect and privacy. (G2, lines 114-117)

4. Supervision of Classroom Management Models of Sexuality Education in Early Childhood

a. Evaluation of Whole and Holistic Learning

In the experience of teachers teaching sex education in early childhood, it is important for them to carry out comprehensive and holistic learning evaluations. This evaluation is a means to measure the extent of their understanding and awareness of the concepts being taught, while still considering their comfort and suitability for their age. Overall and holistic learning evaluation includes Performance-Based Evaluation; Comprehension Evaluation; Maintain Class Norms and Rules. Here's a detailed explanation.

1) Performance-Based Evaluation

In teacher experience, evaluation can be done in a way that is interesting and relevant to children. One way that is considered effective is to see how they apply what they have learned in real-world situations. Teachers tend to take a hands-on approach to evaluation. The following are relevant teacher statements:

In my opinion, evaluating student sexuality education can really be carried out by seeing how they practice what they have learned, for example how to speak correctly and understand which part of the body is meant by pointing or mentioning. Anyway, we can see them practice in the real world. From there I can also find out what mistakes or questions arose and give them feedback so they can understand better. That's it, so later you can know if you need to provide additional material or more practice time or not. (G1, lines 100-107).

2) Comprehension Evaluation

In the process of evaluating student learning outcomes after early childhood sexuality education lessons, in experience teachers prefer to apply an observational approach and analyze their attitudes and behavior. This approach allows me to gain deeper insight into their understanding of the concepts being taught and how they respond to them in everyday life. The following is a statement from one of the teachers:

When evaluating students' learning outcomes after sexuality education lessons, I prefer to use an observational approach and an analysis of their attitudes and behavior (G1, lines 393-395).

Other teacher statements also support that through the application of an evaluation approach that focuses more on observation and student attitudes and behavior, the teacher seeks to get a deeper view of the impact of sex education in early childhood on their interactions and views on matters related to sexuality. The following:

With a more observational evaluation approach that focuses on students' attitudes and behavior, I hope to see how sexuality education has influenced the way they interact with others, respect personal boundaries, and better understand gender differences (G2, lines 117-121).

b. Maintain Class Norms and Rules

In the experience of teachers, Committed to being a good example for children in the context of sexuality education at an early age. Teachers are aware that children tend to learn from what they observe in their surroundings. Therefore, try to always show polite behavior, respect and show respect to their friends. The following are relevant statements:

I try to be a good example for children. So, I always show polite behavior and respect my friends. Kids learn from what they see, right? (G1, lines 262-264).

The themes that emerge from the results of the construction of planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising the classroom management model for early childhood sexuality education can be visualized as shown in Fig. 2.

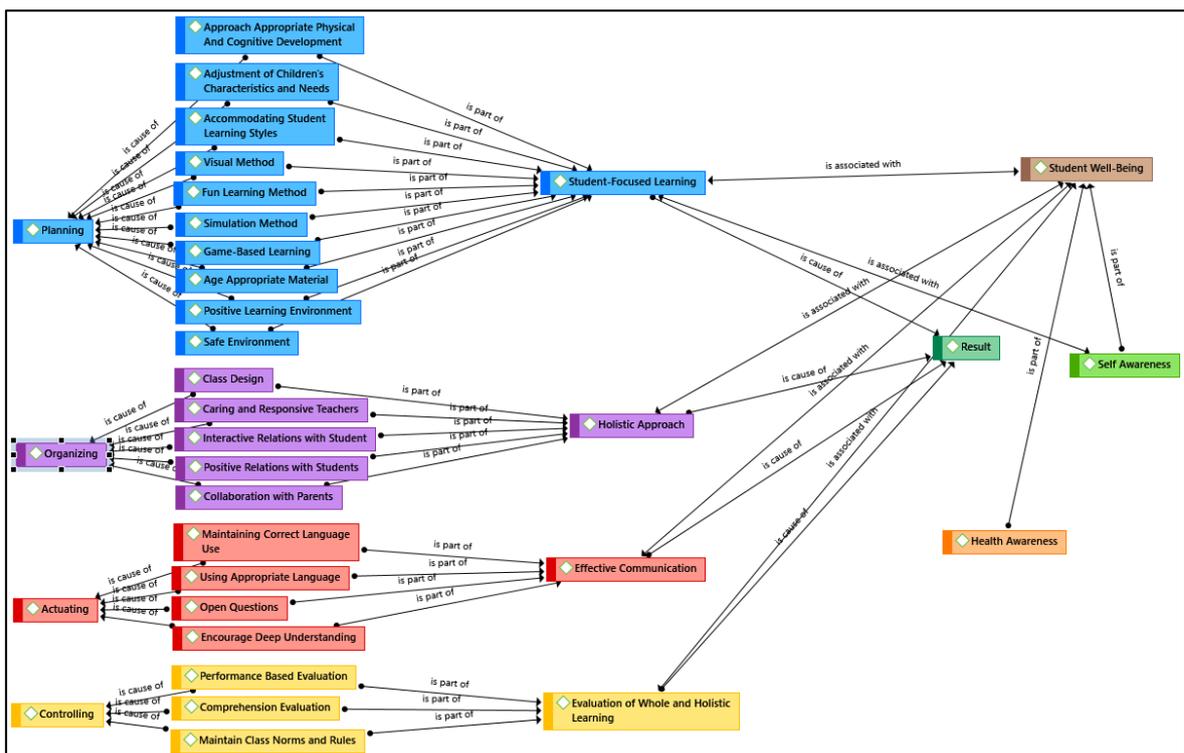


Fig. 2. Management Model for Early Childhood Sexuality Education Classes

Based on Fig. 2. the classroom management model is carried out by the teacher, there are major themes obtained from the results of planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising constructs. All of these aspects contribute to *student wellbeing* (E. Hasanah et al., 2022), by ensuring that education does not only focus on academic aspects, but also on the holistic development of students. *Self-awareness* (self-awareness) and *health awareness*

(health awareness) are becoming an important part of *student well-being* (student well-being), and these approaches help develop understanding and awareness of these issues. In the following, a more detailed explanation of the image.

1) Student Wellbeing

This research shows that a student-centered approach to early childhood sexual education has a positive impact on student well-being. This method allows students to actively engage, choose, and learn at their own pace, thereby creating a positive environment for a healthy understanding of sexuality. This is in line with research (Rahmania, 2022) that the success of classroom management is when a conducive, orderly, disciplined, and passionate learning environment is created, and there is a good relationship between students and teachers and teachers and students interpersonally. According to (Banerjee & Rao, 2022) a student-centered approach in learning early childhood sexuality has a positive impact. By giving control to students, accommodating the characteristics and development of children, creating an environment that supports a healthy understanding of sexuality. Holistic approach, effective communication, and thorough evaluation also influence student well-being. Using the right language, choosing the right words, and open-ended questions in communication learning help students understand sensitive concepts well (Goldfarb & Lieberman, 2021). By considering student privacy and avoiding offensive language, students feel more comfortable and protected, thereby contributing to their well-being. Understanding and performance-based evaluation and constructive feedback from teachers also help students understand and manage concepts well and support their well-being. Through supportive learning methods, positive interactions with teachers, sensitive communication, and in-depth evaluation, students can develop a healthy understanding and feel comfortable learning about this sensitive topic, thereby having a positive impact on students' overall well-being.

2) Self-Awareness

The results of this study reveals *self-awareness* is a key aspect of student *wellbeing* in the context of early childhood sexuality education. Knowing and understanding yourself is the foundation for developing a healthy understanding of sexuality and self-esteem in students. Good self-awareness can motivate individuals to actively participate in learning, take responsibility for their learning, and feel satisfied with their achievements (Fadillah, 2021). Overall, *self-awareness* has an important role in increasing student well-being in early childhood sexuality education. Through deep self-understanding, students can develop self-confidence, positive values, and skills to make good decisions regarding their sexuality. Support from teachers and a supportive learning environment (Oktavian & Hasanah, 2021) are very important in helping students build positive self-awareness.

3) Health Awareness

The results of this study show that health is an aspect that cannot be ignored in efforts to improve student welfare. Awareness about the importance of health, including a healthy diet, exercise, and body care, can have a significant impact on student *wellbeing*. As stated in research (Martínez-Abarca & Martínez-Pérez, 2021), increased health awareness in children is related to increasing their ability to plan, make decisions, and act to maintain their physical and mental well-being. As a teacher, providing children with information about the importance of health is an important step in supporting student wellbeing. Additionally, in the case of unhealthy students, the teacher's role in providing advice and support is key to maintaining well-being and providing a positive learning environment. In line with research (Oktavian & Hasanah, 2021), a conducive environment can influence student motivation and achievement. In research (Sidaruruk, 2023), it is stated that the involvement of teachers who care about student health can have a positive impact on students' physical and emotional well-being. In early childhood sexuality education, the emphasis on health also draws attention to the physical and emotional dimensions of students.

Conclusion

The conclusion drawn from the data and discussion above indicates that effective early sexuality education requires teachers to adopt an approach that centers on children's formative years, considering individual characteristics and needs. Utilizing age-appropriate methods tailored to children's physical and cognitive development, such as visual aids, simulations, game-based learning, and holistic strategies, like creating a comfortable classroom environment, fostering positive relationships with students, involving parents, and facilitating effective communication, is crucial. This approach enables children to comprehend sexuality within a healthy, positive context, fostering self-esteem. Communication should involve age-appropriate language and precise word choices, while open-ended questions should be used to encourage deep understanding and positive dialogue, thereby fostering a supportive learning atmosphere. Student-centered approaches to early childhood sexuality education significantly enhance students' overall well-being, encompassing Student Wellbeing, Self-Awareness, and Health Awareness. In a supportive environment, students gain the confidence to engage in self-exploration, leading to increased self-assurance, positive values, and informed decision-making concerning sexuality. Overall, student-centered learning approaches empower teachers to guide students in developing healthy perspectives on sexuality, enhancing self-awareness, and promoting health awareness, resulting in positive learning experiences that support students' overall well-being.

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