

Knowledge Profiles of Islamic Early Childhood Teachers on Sexuality Education: A Survey of Raudhatul Athfal in Semarang

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ABSTRACT

Early childhood sexuality education is essential for child protection, body awareness, and character development, particularly in Raudhatul Athfal (RA), where learning must align with religious values, social norms, and curriculum guidelines. This study aimed to describe the knowledge profile of RA teachers regarding early childhood sexuality education. This study employed a quantitative descriptive survey design. The participants were 201 RA teachers and principals in Semarang City, selected from RA institutions across subdistricts using random sampling. Data were collected using a four-point Likert-scale questionnaire covering three domains: conceptual knowledge and educational objectives, curriculum or source literacy, and core material knowledge, including privacy, body boundaries, gender understanding, and body awareness. The initial instrument consisted of 31 items, of which 12 were declared valid, with a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.863. Data were analyzed descriptively using mean scores, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages. The findings showed that RA teachers' knowledge of early childhood sexuality education was generally high. The strongest understanding was found in the importance of teaching privacy and bodily boundaries as part of child self-protection and in recognizing the need to understand sexuality education objectives before instruction. However, differences remained in teachers' understanding of the appropriate scope of body awareness, particularly regarding whether instruction should be limited to visible body parts. These findings indicate the need for developmentally appropriate operational guidelines and standardized curriculum references to support consistent, proportional, and culturally sensitive sexuality education in RA settings.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Young children have unique developmental characteristics, including spontaneous self-expression, strong curiosity, high enthusiasm, and a tendency to be exploratory and imaginative (Nurul Zahriani JF et al 2022). These characteristics make children vulnerable to information and experiences that they are

not yet able to fully understand, thus requiring appropriate educational guidance, including in the areas of body awareness, personal boundaries, and personal safety, in accordance with their stage of development.

Sexuality education is an educational activity designed to provide understanding of psychological, biological, and psychosocial changes as part of human growth and development (Fajrin et al., 2020). Sexuality education is also defined as education about the anatomy of the organs involved in sexual reproduction and the consequences of engaging in sexual activity without complying with legal, religious, and cultural norms, as well as an individual's mental and material readiness (Ratnasari & Alias, 2016 in Huriyah et al., 2024). The WHO emphasizes that sexuality education is important to support children's overall development, increase understanding of sexual and reproductive health and rights, develop decision-making and communication skills, reduce risks, and build positive and responsible attitudes towards sexuality and relationships (WHO, 2023).

In the context of Raudhatul Athfal (RA), sexuality education needs to be delivered with consideration for religious values and prevailing social norms. Sexuality education in children is also related to strengthening self-identity (gender), which requires the role of teachers and parents in reinforcing it (Nuramini, 2022). The presence of sexuality education in children's lives is considered beneficial for the future because children will appreciate themselves more and understand the norms or ethics of living life (Rewasan, 2021). According to Islamic law, sexuality education is discussed through the field of fiqh, which emphasizes aspects such as cleanliness, covering the aurat, guarding one's gaze, fasting, and other practices recommended in Islam, which are basically relevant to sexuality education (Faqihudin, 2021).

Although the urgency of sexuality education for young children has been widely highlighted, practices in the field show that the scope of implementation is often still limited. Initial interviews conducted by researchers with several RA teachers revealed that sexuality education is still understood as limited to socialization and, in practice, is more often manifested in toilet training and the application of religious teachings about purity and cleansing from minor impurities (e.g., washing hands and cleaning the body after using the bathroom). These preliminary findings indicate the need for a clearer mapping of RA teachers' level of knowledge about early childhood sexuality education as a basis for strengthening implementation in educational units.

The need to strengthen teachers' knowledge is in line with the demands of professionalism. Regulation of the Directorate General of Teachers and Educational Personnel of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Number 262/B/HK.04.01/2023 emphasizes pedagogical and professional competencies, including broad and in-depth mastery of material to set learning objectives and organize learner-centered learning content (Directorate General of GTK Regulation, 2023). In terms of child protection, every child has the right to live, grow, develop, and receive protection from violence and discrimination (Andayani, 2021). Regulations at the Ministry of Religious Affairs also emphasize the need for prevention and handling of sexual violence in educational units (Kemenag RI, 2022). The RA Curriculum Implementation Guidelines emphasize that the curriculum must consider children's nature, including their sexuality and individuality (Kemenag RI, 2018).

A number of previous studies have shown problems with educator readiness and implementation barriers. Maulia et al. (2021) reported a correlation between increased understanding teacher about Early childhood sexuality education on teachers' attitudes, through training attended by teachers and work experience. Adikusuma and Maharani (2023) found that most teachers believe sexuality education is important and useful for preventing sexual violence, but teachers also feel there are obstacles to its implementation; an important follow-up action is to establish communication between teachers and parents. Nisa (2024) emphasized the urgency of early childhood sexuality education due to children's high curiosity about their bodies, as well as the need for partnerships between parents and teachers in developing basic programs that are in line with religious and moral values. Huriyah et al. (2024) added that many teachers still lack adequate skills in teaching sexuality education due to limited experience and relevant professional training. Davies et al. (2023) show that in Ontario, Canada, the lack of an explicit

curriculum on gender and sexuality in the early years, as well as the discourse of “child innocence,” can limit educators' professional practices. In the context of RA in Indonesia, institutional challenges such as curriculum and teacher qualifications are also still an issue (Mukhsen, 2022).

Based on the above description, this study aims to describe the level of knowledge of Raudhatul Athfal (RA) teachers about early childhood sexuality education. This is important in order to describe the level of knowledge of Raudhatul Athfal teachers about early childhood sexuality education. This description of the level of knowledge is expected to form the basis for planning the socialization, training, and strengthening of sexuality education programs and curricula in RA, so that their implementation does not stop at limited practices, but is more comprehensive, in line with child development, and in accordance with religious values, social norms, and child protection policies.

2. METHODS

This study used a quantitative approach with a descriptive survey design to describe the level of knowledge of Raudhatul Athfal (RA) teachers about early childhood sexuality education. The research location covered 138 RA schools in Semarang City, spread across 15 subdistricts. The research population consisted of 684 RA teachers, with 201 RA teachers selected as respondents using random sampling techniques. Data were collected using a 4-point Likert scale questionnaire with categories (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) agree, and (4) strongly agree. The knowledge level variable was measured using 31 statements covering three domains: conceptual knowledge and educational goals of early childhood sexuality, source/curriculum literacy, and core material knowledge (material structure), including privacy and body boundaries; negative items were given reverse scores. The initial instrument was tested and found to have 12 valid statements out of 31; the reliability test showed a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.863. Data analysis was performed descriptively through frequency, percentage, and average score values to describe the level of RA teachers' knowledge about early childhood sexuality education.

The survey indicators are as follows:

Table 1. Research Survey Indicators

Domain	Item Number	Statement	Score direction
A1.Conceptual knowledge & objectives	1	I have sufficient knowledge about sexuality education for young children.	Positive
	2	I can explain the concept of appropriate sexuality education for young children.	Positive
	5	I do not need to understand the learning objectives of sexuality education because it does not need to be taught yet.	Negative (Reverse)
	6	I understand the stages of sexual development in young children.	Positive
	18	I can answer my child's questions about sexuality well.	Positive
A2.Curriculum literacy (knowledge support)	4	Before teaching sexuality education, I always looked for information sources through the school curriculum.	Positive
A3.Knowledge of core subjects	26	The introduction of body parts must be conveyed in its entirety to children.	Positive
	27	I introduce only the parts of the body that are generally visible.	Negative (Reverse)
	28	In my opinion, a complete understanding of male and female genders should be provided along with the differences in their sexual organs.	Positive

Domain	Item Number	Statement	Score direction
	30	I believe that developing privacy and bodily boundaries is an important part of self-safety that should be taught to young children..	Positive
	31	In my opinion, sexuality education for young children should be limited to teaching them to distinguish between genders.	Negative (Reverse)

Table 2. Value Categorization

Value Mean	Category
1.00 – 1.75	Very Low
1.76 – 2.50	Low
2.51 – 3.25	High
3.26 – 4.00	Very High

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Research Data Distribution

There were 201 respondents from RA throughout Semarang City. The distribution of respondents showed cross-regional representation, with the largest concentration in Gunungpati (18.4%) and Ngaliyan (14.4%), followed by Banyumanik (9.5%), Mijen (9.0%), and Genuk (8.5%). The inped data shows 15 subdistricts; this needs to be noted in the final manuscript because the initial description mentions 16 subdistricts. This discrepancy may have arisen from one subdistrict not being included in the recap or grouping during data entry.

The educational background of respondents was dominated by bachelor's degrees, particularly in Education (30.8%) and Early Childhood Education (28.9%), followed by non-education degrees (16.4%) and high school diplomas (11.9%). This composition is important because the picture of a high level of knowledge can be influenced by the relatively adequate academic background variation in the majority of respondents.

3.2 Results of RA Teachers' Knowledge Level

The analysis results show that Raudhatul Athfal teachers' level of knowledge about early childhood sexuality education is high, as indicated by the average score for each item, which is generally above the midpoint of the scale. The dimensions of conceptual knowledge and early childhood sexuality education objectives (A1) appear to be strong in terms of pedagogical awareness. This can be seen from item 5 (reverse), which obtained a mean of 3.54 with a percentage of agree + strongly agree of 91.5%, indicating that teachers consider it important to understand the learning objectives of sexuality education. These findings reinforce that teachers do not view sexuality education as an issue that can be ignored, but rather one that needs to be supported by clear learning objective planning. The scores on items 1 and 2 (mean 2.90; agree + strongly agree 77.6% and 80.1%) indicate that teachers' confidence in the adequacy of their knowledge and ability to explain the concepts of sexuality education is relatively good, although there is still room for improvement to make conceptual understanding more uniform. Understanding of the stages of sexual development (item 6) and the ability to respond to children's questions (item 18) were at a moderate to high level (mean 2.83 and 2.88), indicating that some teachers still need reinforcement in terms of adjusting materials and safe communication in accordance with the child's developmental stage.

Table 3. Research Survey Results

Domain	Score Direction	Mean	SD	Agree+Strongly agree
A1	1	2.90	0.72	77.6%
A1	2	2.90	0.65	80.1%
A1	5 (<i>reverse</i>)	3.54	0.68	91.5%
A1	6	2.83	0.67	75.1%
A1	18	2.88	0.56	79.6%
A2	4	2.93	0.75	75.6%
A3	26	3.17	0.68	87.1%
A3	27 (<i>reverse</i>)	2.68	0.88	50.2%
A3	28	2.99	0.79	78.1%
A3	30	3.45	0.57	97.0%
A3	31 (<i>reverse</i>)	2.96	0.82	73.6%

Source literacy or curriculum (A2) showed a mean of 2.93 with 75.6% agreeing or strongly agreeing on item 4. This finding indicates that the majority of teachers stated that they referred to the school curriculum before teaching sexuality education, but the practice of formal reference was not yet fully dominant among all respondents. This condition is important to note because the consistency of sexuality education implementation in RA is highly dependent on structured references, especially when the material is sensitive and requires clear boundaries in accordance with institutional values and child development. Strengthening can be directed at the availability of explicit curriculum guidelines, teaching tools, and references agreed upon by the institution so that teachers have a uniform reference.

The core knowledge domain or early childhood sexuality education material structure (A3) shows the strongest tendency in the aspect of self-protection. This can be seen in item 30 with a mean of 3.45 and a percentage of agree + strongly agree of 97.0%, which shows that almost all respondents consider the development of privacy and body boundaries as important aspects of self-safety to be taught to early childhood. The score on item 26 is also relatively high (mean 3.17; agree + strongly agree 87.1%), indicating support for the introduction of the body as a whole. Understanding of the breadth of the material was also reflected in item 31 (*reverse*) with a mean of 2.96 and 73.6% agreeing or strongly agreeing, indicating that most respondents rejected the view that sexuality education should be limited to distinguishing between the sexes. The score on item 28 (mean 2.99; agree+SS 78.1%) shows a tendency for teachers to provide a more complete understanding of gender, although this aspect needs to be directed so that it is age-appropriate, does not cause confusion, and is conveyed in safe language.

The aspect that requires the most attention is seen in item 27 (*reverse*) with a mean of 2.68 and 50.2% agreeing or strongly agreeing. These findings indicate differences in opinion among teachers regarding whether the introduction of body parts should be limited to those that are commonly visible. The low agreement rate on this item suggests that there is no uniform understanding of the minimum and ideal limits of body awareness material for early childhood. This disparity has the potential to cause learning practices to vary greatly between classes and schools. Strengthening knowledge needs to focus on “developmentally appropriate” guidelines that emphasize the goals of self-protection, the use of correct and polite terms, and the establishment of boundaries for touch and bodily privacy without delving into content that is irrelevant to the child's age. This approach can maintain a balance between RA values, social norms, and children's need to have the tools for self-safety.

3.3 Discussion of RA Teachers' Knowledge Level Based on Survey Results

This study is based on the definition of sexuality education knowledge, which is teachers' knowledge about the body, gender differences (male and female), and boundaries of behavior and touch that are oriented towards protecting children. The focus of knowledge is directed at the ability to protect oneself, recognize physical differences (gender), introduce sensitive body parts, and teach ways to care for and protect oneself, with reference to the school curriculum, religious values, and morals. This definition emphasizes that sexuality education does not stop at biological information, but

includes psychological and psychosocial aspects (Fajrin et al., 2020), and needs to consider legal, religious, and cultural norms, as well as individual readiness (Ratnasari & Alias, 2016 in Huriyah et al., 2024). The WHO emphasizes that sexuality education is important for children's overall development, including decision-making skills, communication, risk reduction, and responsible attitudes toward sexuality and relationships (WHO, 2017 in Cacciatore et al., 2020). In the context of RA, the meaning of sexuality education is within the corridor of Islamic teachings, especially related to covering the *aurat*, protecting the body, and distinguishing between mahram and non-mahram, with values based on references from the Qur'an (e.g., QS. Ali 'Imran: 139; QS. An-Nur: 32) and contemporary interpretations (Shihab, 2023). This perspective is in line with Ifadah's (2021) findings that sexuality education is important for early childhood and that educators' understanding is key, because sexuality education is not just about providing information but also developing spiritual, cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral aspects (Ifadah, 2021). Shihab (2023) also emphasizes that the keyword in sexuality education is not only "sexuality" but also "education," which needs to touch the soul and mind in order to lead students to practice values that are in line with religion and culture (Shihab, 2023).

The survey results show that RA teachers' knowledge of early childhood sexuality education tends to be high in core aspects oriented towards self-protection. The highest score was found in the statement that developing privacy and bodily boundaries is an important aspect of self-protection that should be taught (item 30; mean 3.45; agree + strongly agree 97.0%). This finding indicates that the majority of teachers have grasped the main substance of sexuality education in RA as an effort to protect children and shape habits that maintain bodily dignity in accordance with institutional values. Pedagogical awareness of the importance of understanding learning objectives is also very strong, as reflected in item 5 (reverse) with a mean of 3.54 and a percentage of agree + strongly agree of 91.5%. This tendency shows that teachers do not view sexuality education as a topic that can be delivered incidentally, but rather requires the formulation of learning objectives so that education truly guides children towards appropriate behavior and attitudes, as emphasized in the concept of education that touches the mind and soul (Shihab, 2023). Teachers' self-assessment of the adequacy of their knowledge and ability to explain the concept of sexuality education was at a good level (items 1 and 2; mean 2.90; agree + strongly agree 77.6% and 80.1%), which shows that conceptual capital has been formed, although there are still groups of respondents who are not fully convinced, so reinforcement is needed to make it more evenly distributed.

Referring to the school curriculum as a source of information before teaching is also considered good, but it is not yet a dominant habit among all respondents (item 4; mean 2.93; agree + strongly agree 75.6%). This finding is relevant to the character of RA, which requires the delivery of sexuality education in an orderly manner and in line with religious values, social norms, and institutional policies. Using the curriculum as a reference can reduce variations in implementation among teachers and help ensure that material on self-protection, boundaries of touch, and bodily privacy is delivered proportionally according to developmental stages. Teachers' understanding of the stages of early childhood sexual development (item 6; mean 2.83; agree + strongly agree 75.1%) and their ability to answer children's questions about sexuality (item 18; mean 2.88; agree + strongly agree 79.6%) were at a moderate to high level, indicating a degree of readiness, but still requires strengthening communication skills and material adaptation so that teachers' responses are consistent, safe, and do not exceed the developmental needs of children.

The most prominent gap in understanding appeared in item 27 (reverse) regarding the view that it is sufficient to introduce only commonly seen body parts, with a mean of 2.68 and 50.2% agreeing or strongly agreeing. This value indicates a fairly sharp difference in views. Some teachers still choose a very restrictive approach, possibly due to considerations of norms, caution, or concerns about the sensitivity of the topic. Excessive restrictions have the potential to undermine the goal of self-protection, especially when children need an understanding of bodily privacy and boundaries of touch to prevent the risk of abuse. This condition emphasizes the need for operational guidelines that emphasize the principle of "developmental appropriateness" and the use of polite language, while not eliminating the

substance of sexuality education oriented towards self-protection. Psychosexual development theory places children aged 4–6 years in the phallic stage, when children begin to recognize gender differences and develop curiosity about reproductive organs; expressions of curiosity may appear in play, imitation, or verbal expressions, while children's understanding is still simple and influenced by their environment (Freud, 1997; Ilmiah et al., 2025). His explanation reinforces the need for teachers to have adequate knowledge so that their responses to children's curiosity remain educational, unbiased, and developmentally appropriate. The findings of Aini et al. (2025) also confirm that sexuality knowledge includes explanations, teaching, and education tailored to developmental stages (Aini et al., 2025). Thus, the findings of this study can be interpreted as a strong starting point for self-protection orientation and learning objectives, but still require reinforcement in terms of the appropriate scope of body awareness and consistency of curriculum references so that the implementation of sexuality education in RA is more standardized, in line with religious values, and effective in protecting children.

The overview of Raudhatul Athfal teachers' knowledge of early childhood sexuality education shows a high level. Teachers have a strong understanding of the core aspects of sexuality education that are oriented towards self-protection, especially related to privacy and bodily boundaries, and are aware of the importance of understanding learning objectives before teaching the material. Conceptual understanding, curriculum reference literacy, knowledge of developmental stages, and the ability to respond to children's questions are at a good level, although not yet fully uniform across all respondents. The most prominent gap appears in the aspect of body awareness, as there are still differences in views regarding the limitation of material to only visible parts of the body. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the “developmental stage-appropriate” guidelines and standardize curriculum references so that the implementation of sexuality education in RA is more consistent, proportional, and in line with religious values and social norms.

3.4 Gaps in understanding regarding body awareness

The most prominent finding as an area for improvement appeared in item 27 (reverse). The score for this item was the lowest (mean 2.68; agree + strongly agree 50.2%), indicating a difference of opinion among teachers as to whether the introduction of body parts should be limited to those that are commonly seen. This finding can be interpreted as a sign of teachers' caution in the context of social norms and institutional values, but at the same time indicates a lack of uniformity in understanding the minimum material required for self-protection. Overly limited body awareness risks reducing the effectiveness of self-protection messages, especially regarding children's understanding of bodily privacy and boundaries of touch. This gap reinforces the need for guidelines that emphasize the principle of “developmental appropriateness” and how to convey terms correctly and politely within the corridor of RA values.

3.5 Relevance to children's developmental stages

The developmental stage framework helps to place sexuality education material in proportion. Psychosexual development theory states that children aged 4–6 years are in the phallic stage, when children begin to recognize gender differences and develop curiosity about reproductive organs; expressions of curiosity may appear in play, imitation, or verbal expressions, while children's understanding is still simple and influenced by their environment (Freud, 1997; Ilmiah et al., 2025). This explanation reinforces the need for adequate teacher knowledge so that responses to children's curiosity remain educational and developmentally appropriate. The findings of Aini et al. (2025) also state that sexuality knowledge includes explanation (information), teaching (instruction), and sexuality education tailored to the stage of development (Aini et al., 2025). The findings of this study, which show moderate to high scores in understanding developmental stages (item 6) and the ability to answer children's questions (item 18), can be interpreted as a good starting point, but reinforcement is still needed so that teachers have consistent and safe communication strategies when dealing with children's spontaneous questions and sensitive learning situations.

The main implication lies in the need to strengthen teachers' operational knowledge, especially regarding the limits and scope of safe and developmentally appropriate body awareness, as well as strengthening curriculum references so that the implementation of PSAUD is more standardized. A strong focus on self-protection in terms of privacy and bodily boundaries must be maintained, supplemented by guidelines for delivering material that is consistent with religious values and RA norms so that sexuality education does not stop at minimal practices but becomes a comprehensive, proportional, and effective learning process that protects children..

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the level of knowledge of Raudhatul Athfal (RA) teachers about early childhood sexuality education shows that the level of knowledge of RA teachers is generally high, especially in the aspect of child self-protection, such as the importance of privacy and bodily boundaries, as well as the awareness that the objectives of sexuality education need to be understood before being taught. These findings confirm that RA teachers have a sufficient basic understanding to interpret sexuality education as an effort to protect and shape character in line with religious values and institutional norms. However, there are still gaps in the uniformity of understanding regarding the appropriate scope of body awareness and developmental stages, so that teaching practices may vary among teachers. Further research needs to examine the factors that influence variations in knowledge (e.g., qualifications, length of service, and training), develop more factual scenario-based knowledge measurements, and conduct research and development experimental studies to create modules and test the effectiveness of modules or early childhood sexuality education training programs tailored to the context of RA institutions. Such studies can assess the extent to which the designed training is able to improve.

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