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## Integration of Jambi Malay Wisdom and Islamic Values in Sex Education for Early Childhood: A Qualitative Phenomenological Study of Early Childhood Education Teachers in Indonesia

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### Abstract

Early childhood sex education in Indonesia, particularly in the context of Jambi Malay culture, faces complex challenges stemming from deeply rooted customary norms, Islamic values, and social taboos. This study uses an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach to explore how early childhood education teachers in Jambi interpret and implement Malay local wisdom in sex education practices. Four teachers from the Jambi Ministry of Religious Affairs' Kindergarten and Raudhatul Athfal Dharma Wanita (Women's Kindergarten) were selected through purposive sampling as participants. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, then analyzed through three stages of systematic coding. The findings indicate that teachers' meaning constructions are built on three main foundations: protective, cultural, and religious rationality, implemented through daily practices, local stories, modified traditional games, and culturally based contextual media. The Jambi Malay customary values of shame, trust, and seloko organically blend to form a cohesive normative framework. This research contributes to social constructivism theory by demonstrating that effective sex education in a Malay-Muslim context is not a mechanical adoption of international standards, but rather must be religio-cultural and context-specific. Practical implications include the development of teacher training modules based on local wisdom and an officially institutionalized local content curriculum.

### Keywords

Early Childhood Sex Education; Jambi Local Wisdom; Islamic Values; Teachers.

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### **Introduction**

This context becomes more complex in Indonesia, particularly in Jambi, where Malay culture exerts a strong influence. Existing cultural norms often emphasize taboo and inhibit open discussion of sexual health issues (Novianto et al., 2023; Suryadimulya et al., 2023). Jambi is a setting in which Malay culture is highly dominant, creating serious challenges for exploring and implementing sex education that aligns with local values. Discussing this topic requires a deep understanding of local norms, customs, and beliefs, so that sex education can be formulated in ways that fit Malay values and traditions while still providing information that supports children's development (Novianti et al., 2023; Salleh et al., 2022). Because communities continue to hold strongly to Malay customary norms, similar prohibitions may also become barriers to discussing reproductive and sexual health issues with children (Islam, 2022; Wado et al., 2019).

Global reviews confirm that cultural factors play a crucial role in how sexual information is conveyed (Islam, 2022; Undie & Birungi, 2022). Parental communication, for example, is often constrained by social norms that view this topic as inappropriate to discuss (Undie & Birungi, 2022). By integrating sex education into the curriculum, children are expected to gain not only knowledge but also an appreciation of existing customary values (Astalini et al., 2023; Chua, 2019). Effective sex education in a Malay cultural context is not merely about delivering information, it also involves fostering healthy Penelitian ue between older and younger generations by respecting tradition while improving health and well being (Chia et al., 2022; Gómez et al., 2019). By understanding and adapting educational approaches, more positive outcomes in children's sexual health may be achieved, which in the long term can benefit Jambi society as a whole (Islam, 2022; Yinghui & Yap, 2019). To bridge differing perspectives and to understand teachers' meaning making in depth, this study employs a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology enables researchers to explore subjective experiences and the deeper meanings held by early childhood educators (Ismail et al., 2017; Marsya et al., 2023). This approach is relevant for revealing how Jambi Malay local wisdom rich with values and norms is understood, negotiated, and transmitted through everyday sex education practices in the classroom. By aligning sex education content with local community needs and values, children are expected to grow into individuals who are not only academically educated but also possess strong self awareness regarding their sexual health (Bruno & Sali, 2023; Rahmah et al., 2020).

Early childhood sex education is consistently positioned as both a developmental necessity and a preventive measure to protect children from sexual violence and risky sexual behaviors. A number of studies emphasize that introducing sex education from the preschool years is important because children are in a phase of bodily exploration, begin to develop curiosity about where babies come from, gender differences, and privacy boundaries, therefore, they require age appropriate and child safe information (Nafisah et al., 2023). In the Indonesian

context, early childhood sex education is also emphasized as an effort to prevent sexual violence, children who receive knowledge and self protection skills are reported to have better protective capacities than those who do not receive sex education (Purwasih et al., 2023). and this has become an important concern for schools and parents because cases of sexual violence against children remain a continuing issue (Simorangkir, 2020). impacts of sexual violence in early childhood are also described as strongly affecting children's psychological development, making early education an urgent priority.

An Islamic framework emphasizes that sex education is not understood as vulgar discussion, but rather as introducing halal haram boundaries, proper conduct and strengthening moral character, for example, sex education is viewed as necessary to introduce from an early age so that children understand what is permissible and what is forbidden in Islam, while also guiding them toward moral behavior (Oktarina & Suryadilaga, 2020). Hadith based perspectives likewise stress the need for parents and teachers to provide anticipatory educational steps so that children understand what is allowed and not allowed within the Prophet's teachings that shape Islamic education, therefore, integrating Islamic values is not a cosmetic addition, but a normative framework that directs the aims, content, and modes of delivery of sex education (Kurdi & Afif, 2021).

This study is motivated by the urgent need to develop sex education approaches that are not only informative but also respectful of, and integrated with, local cultural values (Brownlee et al., 2019; Greene et al., 2023). In line with the identified gap, the primary objective of this study is to identify and analyze how Jambi Malay local wisdom is interpreted and applied by early childhood educators in the provision of sex education for young children (Ismail et al., 2017; Marsya et al., 2023).

Kamaludin in his phenomenological study in Malaysia found that Malay mothers face significant challenges in providing sex education to children because Malay cultural norms consider reproductive organs a very taboo topic, so parents tend to use figurative language. (Kamaludin et al., 2022), strengthens this finding by showing the general silence in discussing sexuality publicly, even the 2011 proposal for sex education in Malaysian schools was met with strong resistance from conservative circles. In the context of integrating Islamic values, Gumilar found that kindergarten teachers in Indonesia actively integrate the concept of halal-haram in their learning, navigating cultural and religious factors that influence early childhood education practices (Gumilar et al., 2023). Meanwhile, Julhadi studied the local content curriculum based on Malay culture in Islamic education, finding that the internalization of Malay culture into every subject has a clear basis because Malay culture is an inseparable part of the life of Indonesian society (Julhadi et al., 2023).

Although previous research has examined sex education, Malay culture, and early childhood education separately, substantial gaps remain. Kamaludin focused on Malaysian Malay mothers with children with disabilities, not the formal Indonesian context. Gumilar used phenomenology only for the concept of halal and haram food. Julhadi examined local wisdom for general character education, not sexuality. The existing literature is also dominated by adolescent and urban Javanese contexts. No research has comprehensively examined how early childhood educators in Jambi interpret and apply Malay local wisdom in sex education practices.

The novelty of this research lies in three aspekons. First, this study explores the phenomenological perspectives of early childhood teachers in the Jambi Malay cultural context regarding sex education, positioning teachers as cultural mediators navigating the tension between comprehensive sexuality education standards and local traditions, differing from Kamaludin and Gumilar, who have different focuses. This study develops a three-aspekonal conceptual model that simultaneously integrates local wisdom, Islamic values, and pedagogical practices, transcending fragmented approaches. Phenomenological methodology in the specific context of Jambi Malay produces contextual insights that contribute to non-Javanese communities that have been marginalized in Indonesian academic discourse.

This study addresses a critical gap in early childhood sex education research by examining the phenomenological perspectives of early childhood teachers in the Jambi Malay cultural context. The unique blend of strong Malay cultural norms, Islamic values, and specific taboo structures in Jambi creates a distinctive normative landscape that demands a culturally sensitive pedagogical approach. The study's primary theoretical contribution lies in the development of a three-pronged conceptual model integrating local wisdom, Islamic values, and pedagogical practices that goes beyond the fragmented approaches of previous research. Using a phenomenological methodology, this study generates context-based insights that advance the theoretical understanding and practical implementation of culturally responsive early childhood sexuality education in non-Javanese Indonesian communities.

## Method

This study adopts a qualitative approach using an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis design to understand how early childhood education teachers in Jambi interpret Malay local wisdom and Islamic values in the context of sex education for early childhood. This study will be conducted for six months, from June to December 2025. Participants consist of four teachers, two from TKN Pembina, Jambi City, and two from Raudhatul Athfal Dharma Wanita under the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) of Jambi Province. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on several criteria. First, they must be active teachers. Second, they must have at least three years of teaching experience. Third, they must be willing to participate as informants in this study. The following section presents the profiles of the research informants.

**Table 1 Research Informant Profile**

No	Kode	Age	Education	TMT	Experience Years	Status	Institutional
1	P1	53	S1 PAUD	2005	20	PNS	TKN Pembina 1
2	P2	45	S1 PAUD	2012	13	PNS	TKN Pembina 1
3	P3	25	S1 PIAUD	2022	3	GTY	RA DW Kemenag
4	P4	40	S1 PIAUD	2019	6	GTY	RA DW Kemenag

The research procedure was conducted through several well-integrated main steps. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews designed to explore teachers' perspectives, understandings, and lived experiences. Additionally, classroom observations and documentary evidence, including lesson plans, institutional guidelines, and curriculum documents, were collected to support triangulation. Data analysis followed a systematic

procedure within the IPA framework, encompassing three sequential stages. In the first stage, open coding was applied by reading the interview transcripts line by line and assigning initial descriptive codes to relevant text segments, remaining close to the participants' own language and understanding. In the second stage, axial coding was used to identify relationships between initial codes and group them into broader thematic categories, moving from a descriptive to an interpretive level of analysis. In the third stage, thematic categories were analyzed in more in-depth interpretatively, guided by the theoretical lens of Malay local wisdom and Islamic educational values.

To ensure validity and credibility, this study employed three complementary strategies. First, source and method triangulation was conducted by cross-referencing findings from interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, thereby reducing method-specific bias and enhancing credibility. Second, member checking was conducted by returning the interview transcripts and initial interpretations to each participant for confirmation, with any discrepancies resolved through follow-up Penelitian ue to ensure the findings accurately reflected the participants' lived experiences. Third, peer debriefing was conducted by engaging academic colleagues with expertise in phenomenological methodology and early childhood education in Indonesia to critically review the analytical process and minimize researcher bias.

## Findings

The research findings are presented in the form of graphs, tables, or descriptive narratives. An analysis and interpretation of these findings are required prior to the discussion. Two recommended themes for the findings and discussion are as follows:

### Teachers' Construction of Understanding of Early Childhood Sex Education Grounded in Local Wisdom and Islamic Values

This theme comprises several subthemes that elaborate teachers' understanding of sex education grounded in Jambi local wisdom and Islamic culture, as explained below.

**Table 2. Teachers' Construction of Meaning Regarding Sex Education Based on Jambi Local Wisdom and Islamic Values**

Sub Theme	Informants	Summary of Construction & Key Findings
Urgency of Sex Education	P1 & P2	Protection & Safety: A response to digital era threats and gadgets . It serves as a preventive measure against sexual violence by teaching children to understand bodily boundaries .
	P3 & P4	Religious & Cultural Values: Implementation of Islamic teachings (e.g., separating beds) and the Jambi philosophy of Adat bersendi Syarak as a moral responsibility .
Local Wisdom (Jambi Malay)	P1 & P2	Concept of Malu (Modesty): Not intended to hide information, but to teach self respect, private part boundaries, and proper dress ethics in public .
	P3 & P4	Adat & Syarak: Aligning culture with Islamic law (e.g., rules for mixed gender play) and adapting communication from implicit (metaphors/proverbs) to more explicit forms .
Integration of Islamic Values	P3 & P1	Body as Amanah (Trust): Instilling the realization that the body is a trust from Allah SWT that must be protected in terms of cleanliness and dignity .
	P4 & P2	Adab & Boundaries: Using polite anatomical terms, habituating modest dress, and regulating interaction etiquette (e.g., queuing, toilet entry routines).
Implementation	P1 & P4	Contextual & Cultural: Conflicts between traditional taboo perceptions and

Challenges	the urgent need for children to receive clear information .
P2 & P3	Resistance & Expectations: Parental protests against medical/vulgar terms and high pressure regarding religious education standards in RA institutions .
All	Systemic: Lack of specific training, absence of explicit guidance in the national curriculum, and gaps between central policy and local reality .

Based on the observations, classroom routines such as lining up, queuing, and toilet entry procedures show that teachers deliberately structure children’s interactions to reduce unnecessary physical contact while fostering politeness and self control. This pattern highlights habituation as a dominant strategy in early childhood moral education and as a medium for integrating Islamic values across multiple areas of child development. At the same time, classroom rules regarding private body areas and safe behavior were evident, aligning with Islamic based approaches to sex education that emphasize early protective instruction and the management of children’s exposure to inappropriate content.

School documentation such as classroom and toilet rules, supervision schedules, daily lesson plans (RPPH) under themes like myself, cleanliness, and manners, as well as records of school parent communication further confirms that sex education is positioned as content integrated into routine thematic learning because it does not appear explicitly as a standalone subject. This situation reflects broader challenges in developing local content curricula, which require institutional creativity, effective syllabi, and adequate teacher training.

Overall, triangulation indicates that teachers’ understanding of early childhood sex education is built through: protective rationales, cultural rationales grounded in the internalization of malu and Seloko Adat as tools for politeness and personal boundaries, and religious pedagogical rationales that embed Islamic values within routines, manners, and learning. Implementation tensions mainly arise at the operational curriculum level and in school and parent relationships, reinforcing the need for contextual guidance and teacher capacity building.

### Learning Practices and Instructional Strategies for Sex Education in Early Childhood Education Institutions

This constitutes the second theme of the study. It comprises several subthemes that explain the practices and strategies employed in sex education learning within PAUD institutions, as outlined below.

**Tabel 3 Learning Practices and Instructional Strategies in Early Childhood Sex Education**

Instructional Strategy	Informants	Key Methods and Pedagogical Implementation
Folklore & Storytelling	P1 P4	Cultural & Religious Integration: Utilization of local folklore (Putri Pinang Masak, Si Pahit Lidah) , original tales with Jambi settings (Anak Rimba) , and Islamic prophetic narratives (Prophet Yusuf AS) to teach body protection and dignity .+2
Traditional Games	P1 P4	Learning Through Play: Modification of traditional games (Cak Lempong, Main Jongkok, Engklek, Galah Panjang) to teach physical boundaries, queuing, and naming protected body parts . This reduces the taboo feel of the topic .+1
Habituation & Modeling	P1 P4	Daily Routines: Implementing consent (knocking/asking permission), privacy (closed changing areas), and istinja (purification) during toilet training . Teachers serve as role models through modest dress (hijab/baju koko) and maintain clear physical boundaries .+1

Instructional Content	P1	P4	Gradual Delivery: Introducing anatomy through songs (Dua Mata Saya) and posters , explaining body functions scientifically yet politely , and categorizing good, bad, and confusing touches .+3
Privacy Concepts	P1	P4	Visual Aids: Use of the Underwear Area concept , Body Traffic Light posters , and teaching the Islamic concept of Aurat to establish bodily autonomy .+3
Language & Terminology	P1	P3	Contextual Dialect: Combining Indonesian with Jambi Malay metaphors (amoi, burung) , local proverbs , and Arabic Islamic terms (farji, taharah) to ensure clarity without being vulgar .+2
Contextual Media	P1	P4	Symbolic Tools: Educational dolls in Baju Kurung, puzzles with Batang Hari motifs , Islamic flashcards with calligraphy , and nature based materials (leaves/bamboo) to illustrate privacy concepts .+2
Parental Involvement	P1	P4	Integrated Ecosystem: Use of WhatsApp groups for material sharing , communication notebooks for home school alignment , and specific sessions involving fathers in boys' education .+2

This study concludes that sex education in early childhood education institutions (PAUD) in Jambi constitutes a deliberate synthesis of Islamic theology, Malay cultural wisdom, and child protection imperatives. By transforming taboo into protective habituation, teachers effectively internalize the values of Malu and Amanah through storytelling, modified play, and ritualized routines. This culturally grounded model provides a safe, religiously appropriate, and pedagogically developmentally suitable framework for early childhood.

## Discussion

Based on the findings presented above, this study is based on two interrelated and frequently co occurring needs in this research: first, the need for protection to prevent sexual violence against children, and second, the pedagogical need to package sensitive content in a developmentally appropriate and socially and culturally acceptable manner. These two needs are consistent with studies on the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of early childhood educators, which emphasize that the increase in sexual violence against children reinforces the urgency of early childhood sex education and requires educator preparedness, a further discussion of which will be provided below.

## Teachers' Construction of Meaning Regarding Sex Education Grounded in Local Wisdom and Islam

The findings in this theme demonstrate that early childhood education teachers' understanding of early childhood sex education is built on three main foundations: protective, cultural, and religious rationality. Jambi Malay local wisdom, such as the concepts of shame and Seloko Adat (customary morality), along with Islamic values, serve as the foundation for shaping children's bodily boundaries, manners, and social interactions. Sex education is not taught explicitly but is integrated into daily routines and thematic learning. Key challenges include perceived taboos, parental resistance, and a lack of contextual training and curriculum guidance. Teacher capacity building and the development of a local curriculum that aligns national policies with local cultural realities are needed.

This research finding that Islamic values are the primary foundation in teachers' construction of meaning about sex education aligns significantly with Hasni and Suparno's research conducted in Islamic kindergartens in Indonesia. The study found that sex education was provided through familiarization, demonstrations, and conversations, all guided by Islamic

values. This alignment strengthens the argument that, in the context of Islamic education in Indonesia, sex education is not understood solely as the transmission of biological information, but rather as the formation of moral character grounded in religious teachings (Hasni & Suparno, 2019).

In line with Kurdi and Afif's research, they emphasized that sex education in Islam does not mean explaining sexual relations, but rather helping children understand themselves as creatures of God, both male and female. This directly corresponds with the findings of this study, which found that early childhood education teachers in Jambi integrate the concepts of gender identity and body boundaries within an Islamic theological framework (Kurdi & Afif, 2021).

Local wisdom as the foundation of early childhood character education. The findings of this study on the role of Jambi Malay local wisdom, especially the concept of shame and *Seloko Adat* in shaping children's body boundaries and manners, found strong resonance in Salamuddin's research on the philosophy of *Poda Na Lima* in Batang Baruhar Jae, North Sumatra. The study shows that the local wisdom of the Angkola-Mandailing community based on Islam serves as a guide to life that contributes to increasing children's spirituality and religiosity from an early age (Salamuddin, 2023). Munawwarah and Astuti's research on character education based on Acehnese local wisdom. The research found that Acehnese local wisdom is not only ritualistic but also contains Islamic values that have become part of the culture (Munawwarah & Astuti, 2019). These findings strengthen the argument that in the context of Malay-Islamic communities in the archipelago, including Jambi, local wisdom and Islamic values do not exist dichotomously, but rather reinforce each other in shaping social norms and children's education. The synthesis of these two studies suggests that early childhood education teachers in Jambi do not separate cultural and religious dimensions in developing their understanding of sex education. Instead, the two merge into a single normative whole that shapes teachers' perspectives on children's bodies, manners, and social interactions.

Regarding the perception of taboos and challenges to implementing sex education, this study's findings on the perception of taboos as a major challenge in implementing sex education in early childhood education align with various studies in Indonesia and Asia. Their research in coastal areas found that most parents are unaware of the importance of early sex education, and communities consider children's sexual development a taboo subject. The study also identified that environmental factors, education level, experience, religious beliefs, and social and cultural perspectives influence this phenomenon (Ramadhani & Syamsyudin, 2021).

Similarly, Magta in their research on the role of teachers in sex education in Indonesian playgroups found that the topic of sex is often avoided in conversations in Indonesia, and teachers experience discomfort in discussing sensitive topics. Furthermore, the research revealed that most teachers have a limited understanding of the scope of sexual health education in early childhood, and rarely receive seminars or training on sex education (Magta et al., 2024). This finding directly aligns with the challenges identified in this study, namely the lack of contextualized training and curriculum guidance.

In contrast to other research, this study's findings, which indicate that sex education is not taught explicitly but rather implicitly integrated into daily routines, fundamentally differ from

Gerda's findings, which compared Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) prevention curriculum policies in developing and developed countries. This study found that developed countries were more effective in implementing curriculum policies to prevent early childhood sexual violence than developing countries (Gerda, 2023).

Sex education in a secular and pluralist context. Lehn's research, conducted in Norway, a country with a secular education system, found that children's sexuality remains taboo even in Western societies. However, a fundamental difference with the findings of this study lies in the normative framework used. In the Norwegian context, kindergarten teachers face a dilemma between understanding children's sexuality as natural and biologically normal versus being suspicious of pathological behavior (Lehn et al., 2023). This framework is psychological-clinical, in contrast to the normative framework in this study, which is religio-cultural.

This methodological difference can be explained by the different paradigms underlying the two studies. Lehn's study used focus group interviews with 18 kindergarten teachers from four different kindergartens, focusing on teachers' empirical experiences in dealing with children's age-appropriate sexual development. This study, meanwhile, departs from a social constructivism paradigm, which places cultural and religious values as central variables in the formation of meaning. In terms of the sample, the secular and homogeneous Norwegian context in terms of educational policy yielded fundamentally different findings from the culturally plural but religiously homogeneous Jambi context.

Regarding institutional and socio-educational barriers in the Latin American context, Sánchez and her colleagues, in their study of the *Échale Neurona* program in Mexico, identified at least three types of barriers to comprehensive sex education: institutional, cultural, and socio-educational. While there are similarities in terms of cultural barriers, there are significant differences in the sources of these barriers. In Mexico, cultural barriers stem more from family resistance and school environments that facilitate or hinder sex education programs (Sánchez et al., 2021). Meanwhile, in this study, cultural barriers are more normative-religious in nature, rooted in Islamic values and local Malay wisdom.

This difference can be explained through three analytical dimensions. First, in terms of regional context, Mexico is a country with a strong Catholic influence but within a secular state framework, so the barriers that emerge are more socio-political in nature. Conversely, Jambi exists in a context where local religion and culture actively shape educational policies and practices. Second, in terms of methodology, Sánchez's study used a grounded theory approach with semi-structured interviews with 10 participants, consisting of health promotion experts and program officials, resulting in a more top-down perspective from the perspective of program implementers. This study, in contrast, focuses on the construction of meaning for teachers as educational actors at the micro-level. Third, in terms of sample, Sánchez's study focused on sex education for adolescents in secondary schools, not early childhood, so the dynamics of the barriers faced differ substantially.

Overall, the comparisons and contrasts above reveal several important theoretical implications. First, teachers' construction of meanings about sex education is context-specific and cannot be universally generalized. The findings of this study indicate that in the Jambi Malay context, Islamic values and local wisdom are not merely obstacles but also normative

resources that can be utilized to develop contextual and meaningful sex education for the local community.

Second, the challenges faced by early childhood education teachers in Jambi taboo perceptions, parental resistance, and lack of training are universal, yet manifest differently across contexts. This highlights the need to develop a local curriculum that not only mechanically adopts international standards but also critically and reflectively integrates local values. Third, methodological differences between this study and comparable studies, particularly the qualitative phenomenological approach used in this study versus the comparative literature review, yield different depths of analysis. The approach employed in this study allows for a richer and more contextual exploration of meaning, but limits the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, further research using a mixed methods design is needed to validate these qualitative findings on a broader scale.

### **Practices and Instructional Strategies for Sex Education in Early Childhood Institutions**

This theme yielded findings that sex education in early childhood education institutions in Jambi is a deliberate blend of Islamic theology, Malay cultural wisdom, and child protection. Teachers transform taboo topics into protective habits through local fairy tales, modified traditional games, and structured daily routines. The values of shame and trustworthiness are naturally internalized in learning. Contextual media such as dolls wearing kurung, Islamic flashcards, and visual posters help strengthen children's understanding. Parental involvement through WhatsApp groups and liaison books ensures continuity between school and home, creating a safe, religious, and developmentally appropriate educational ecosystem for early childhood.

Compared with related research, first, this study's findings indicate that the values of shame and trustworthiness are naturally internalized in children's daily routines. This aligns with Muín's research (Muín, 2013) conducted at Mawaddah Kindergarten in Banjarmasin City, which concluded that the internalization of Islamic educational values in students is carried out through a long and continuous process, namely through introduction, habituation, and role modeling. The study explicitly emphasized that good attitudes and behaviors are very important to be internalized through habituation and role modeling, such as the values of honesty, thrift, mutual assistance, respect, and various other noble moral values. This relevance is further strengthened by Rukiyati's research which found that in Islamic-based kindergartens in the Special Region of Yogyakarta and Central Java, the methods used by teachers include role modeling, habituation, storytelling, and dialogue, with moral values developed including religiosity, independence, honesty, and discipline. These two studies confirm that the habituation approach is the dominant strategy in Islamic-based values education in early childhood (Rukiyati et al., 2023).

The use of local fairy tales and contextual media as an instructional strategy, the findings of this study indicate that teachers use local fairy tales as the main media in conveying protective values to children. This is in accordance with Makhmudah's research which found that the storytelling method can use various types of media such as puppets, pictures, or other media to attract children's interest, and that the technique of telling fairy tales is a technique in

storytelling by telling stories of past cultural heritage to pass on to the next generation, because fairy tales in the past have many good values (Makhmudah, 2020). This finding is reinforced by Khotijah's research which specifically examines the implementation of the storytelling method using hand puppets as a medium for early childhood, and concludes that this method is effective in instilling values and morals, forming character, and developing children's affective, cognitive, and social aspects (Khotijah et al., 2020).

Parental involvement as a bridge to educational continuity. One of the key findings of this study is parental involvement through WhatsApp groups and liaison books, which ensure continuity between school and home. This finding aligns with Muín's research, which found that Mawaddah Kindergarten implemented a Parenting Class program to equip parents, particularly mothers of students, with appropriate strategies for internalizing Islamic values through habituation and role modeling within the family. This research confirms that parents in the family and teachers in kindergarten are the closest to children, so all attitudes and behaviors within the family and kindergarten will serve as role models for the children.

In contrast to other research, sex education from a Christian theological perspective fundamentally differs from the findings of this study, which is based on Islamic theology and Malay wisdom. Gaol and Stevanus' research examines sex education for adolescents from a Christian perspective. The study concluded that sex education should be considered as part of the educational process to strengthen personality development and that parents have an important role to overcome deviant sexual behavior by teaching sex education directly and continuously to children as early as possible in the family according to the Bible and local community norms (Lumban Gaol & Stevanus, 2019). The fundamental difference lies in the normative foundation used: this study uses the Quran, the values of shame, and trustworthiness as a moral framework, while Gaol and Stevanus use the Bible and Christian faith as primary references.

Moral Values Education in Islamic-Based Kindergartens Without Integration of Specific Local Wisdom. Rukiyati's research, conducted in Islamic-based kindergartens in Yogyakarta and Central Java, found that early childhood moral education was well developed, but with characteristics different from the findings of this study. The study found that many Islamic-based kindergarten teachers prioritized developing only cognitive and religious aspects in their pedagogical activities, while other aspects were not prioritized (Rukiyati et al., 2023). This contrasts with the findings of this study, which demonstrate a holistic approach that simultaneously integrates aspects of Islamic theology, Malay cultural wisdom, and child protection.

This discussion demonstrates that sex education in early childhood education institutions in Jambi cannot be understood separately from its theological, cultural, and social context. The integration of Islamic values and Malay wisdom into instructional strategies is an adaptive and contextual response to the need for child protection in a Malay-Muslim society. These findings enrich the literature on early childhood education by demonstrating that the most effective approach is one that synergistically integrates theological, cultural, and pedagogical dimensions.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that sex education in early childhood education institutions in Jambi is a deliberative synthesis of Islamic theology, Malay cultural wisdom, and child protection imperatives, where the values of shame, trust, and Seloko Adat organically merge to form a cohesive normative whole. Teachers' construction of meaning is built through three main foundations: protective, cultural, and religious rationality, implemented through daily habits, local stories, modified traditional games, and culturally based contextual media. These findings enrich the theory of social constructivism by demonstrating that effective sex education in the Malay-Muslim context is not a mechanical adoption of secular international standards, but rather must be religio-cultural and context-specific. Practically, it is necessary to develop teacher training modules based on local wisdom, develop an officially institutionalized local content curriculum, and strengthen parenting class programs involving religious and traditional leaders. However, challenges such as perceived taboos, parental resistance, and a lack of contextual training remain systemic barriers that require planned policy interventions, so further research with mixed methods designs and broader scope is needed to validate and expand these findings.

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