



JURNAL ASESMEN DAN INTERVENSI ANAK BERKEBUTUHAN KHUSUS

Jurnal homepage: <https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/jassi/index>



The Role of Shadow Teachers in Providing Self-Limitation Understanding to 6-Year-Old Autistic Children

Dewi Rahmawati*

Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia

Correspondence: dewi.21010@mhs.unesa.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Cases of sexual violence have been rampant, also affecting victims in early childhood. Children with disabilities are also vulnerable to sexual violence. This research specifically discusses children with autistic disabilities, which is important to foster an understanding of self-limitation for children with autistic disabilities, especially in daily life skills. However, the interviewees also revealed that the biggest challenge is the limitation of interaction. Shadow teachers, who are the subject of this study, have a role to play in introducing self-limitation to children with autism. This study aims to analyze the role of shadow teachers in providing an understanding of self-limitation to autistic children aged 6 years. The research method used is qualitative method. The research approach was carried out with a case study approach using a three-stage coding technique, namely open, axial, and selective. The results of the study show that it takes a long time to provide understanding to autistic children about self-limitation. Shadow teachers use flashcards to introduce self-restrictions followed by movement or body language. Learning gradually and consistently to children with autistic disabilities as an effort to provide self-protection of the body. Researchers do not deny that the duration is not instant.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Submitted/Received 17 Nov 2024

First Revised 15 Jan 2025

Accepted 05 Apr 2025

First Available online 01 Dec 2025

Publication Date 01 Dec 2025

Keyword:

Autism,
Education,
Environment,
Self-Limitation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is the main thing to strengthen the foundation of children in their growth and development. Another goal of early childhood education is to prepare children for formal education. The perspective in society is that early childhood education is seen as a form of effort to provide academic maturity to children. Early childhood education is not only limited to academic maturity but the ability to engage in a broader approach that supports child development. Children can grow and develop rapidly due to environmental factors such as family, society, and educational institutions (Wardhana, 2022). This statement is based on the process of maturity in brain development experienced by early childhood.

The early age phase is a sensitive and critical time for children because the quality of interactions and experiences carried out by children will have an impact on children's development at the next age stage (Rosiyannah et al., 2020). This stage will only be experienced once in a human lifetime so that it requires appropriate stimulation for children. The stimulation provided must be adjusted to the age of the child. With stimulation, children's neurons will work more optimally and can develop aspects of development such as physical, cognitive, social, and emotional aspects that occur in children (Azizah et al., 2023). Currently, development in early childhood is more emphasized on the aspects listed in the Standard Levels of Child Development Achievement. Educators in formal schools focus more on the stimulation needed in the six aspects of development. There is sexual development that is no less important than other developments.

In Indonesia, an understanding of sexuality is still something of a minority to be given to early childhood. The absence of understanding about sexuality from an early age can risk increasing cases of sexual abuse. Without knowledge of physical boundaries and signs of inappropriate behavior, children will be more sensitive to exploitation (Dermawan et al., 2023). Research shows that sexuality education to children can be easily accepted, reducing the risk of abuse.

Data from the National Commission on Violence against Women (*Komnas Perempuan*) explained that in 2024 there were 1,451 reports related to sexual violence. This case is the highest reported case of violence compared to physical and psychological violence. Since the beginning of the year until mid-2024, the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) recorded 141 cases of sexual abuse against early childhood in Indonesia with the majority of victims being girls (<https://komnasperempuan.go.id>). Victims of sexual abuse can occur due to several things, one of which is the child's closest environment (Sangalang, 2022). The environment determines children's exposure to sexuality. Thus, it is important to educate children about sexuality education from an early age. In addition, there needs to be a role for the government so that the implementation of children's rights to get protection from sexual abuse can be realized.

Sexuality education in early childhood is an effort to provide insight into personal privacy, physical boundaries, and healthy relationships. Providing sexuality education is done gradually and adjusts to the level of development of the child's age. Sexuality education includes many things, not just about sexuality relationships but also about respecting body parts of oneself and others, understanding physical and emotional development, and how to maintain a healthy body (Wulandari & Lestari, 2023). The existence of sexuality education can provide knowledge, understanding, and skills about self-care, healthy boundaries, and avoiding the risk of sexual violence (Fitriani et al., 2021). Adults around children play an important role in providing appropriate information related to sexuality education according to the child's level of understanding.

In early childhood, knowledge about sexuality education is more emphasized on the introduction of body parts such as body anatomy including gender, introduction to the concept of body privacy, the existence of body parts that may and may not be touched by others without permission, and respect for the privacy of oneself and others (Nursakti & Suherman, 2023). This simple concept is very important to be introduced to children from an early age. The introduction of sexuality to children about body parts such as genitals and basic functions of body organs aims to increase children's understanding of maintaining body privacy and physical boundaries. There is privacy and physical boundaries in children, their rights within their own body boundaries and the importance of respecting the boundaries of others (Hasanah, 2021). This shows that everyone has the right to determine who can touch their body parts, what can be touched, and how the touch is done.

Every human being is born with their own diversity and conditions. There are people who are born with disabilities and non-disabilities. One of them is autistic disability. Autistic disability is a condition of someone who experiences obstacles in the nerves so that they experience difficulties and limitations in social interaction, communication, and behavior (Syaputri & Afriza, 2022). In receiving education, children with autistic disabilities need assistance from a teacher called a shadow teacher. Shadow teachers play a role in helping children with autistic disabilities to adapt and develop and provide support according to the needs of children in an inclusive school environment (Sismawijaya & Astutik, 2024). Children with autistic disabilities will be at greater risk of sexual abuse because they have difficulties in communication and socialization skills (Nirmalasari, 2024). Special attention needs to be given to provide sexuality education to children with autism. Shadow teachers have a role to direct children with autism to understand sexuality education in inclusive schools. Thus, sexuality education is important to be delivered to children with autistic disabilities so that there is a need for the role of shadow teachers to deliver sexuality education to them.

Research on autistic children with disabilities has been conducted by (Nisa et al., 2024) that this research is a qualitative study with a descriptive narrative approach to explore the role of companion teachers in supporting learning assistance for children with special needs. The findings found that the accompanying teacher is a shadow of each child's condition to be able to help and facilitate needs, support learning and improve skill activities in children's self-help, (Ansari et al., 2021) in his research aims to describe the role of special assistance teachers in developing emotional children with autism in Class 1 A SDIT Al-Firdaus Banjarmasin. Based on the results of the study, the role of special assistance teachers in developing the emotions of autistic children in class 1 A SDIT Al-Firdaus Banjarmasin is as a motivator, facilitator, mediator, mentor, and companion. The factors that influence the role of special assistance teachers in developing children's emotional autism in class 1 A SDIT Al-Firdaus Banjarmasin are the role of the Family Environment and the Role of the School Environment.

Another research was by (Tadzkirah et al., 2022) explained that shadow teacher training for children with autism aims to increase the knowledge and abilities of educators, especially kindergarten / Raudhatul Athfal teachers in developing shadow teacher learning tools for children with autism. The initial stage of the training reviewed the importance of accompanying teachers, because it would motivate autistic children to be more directed and programmed in learning activities. The second stage of training is to explain and describe the main tasks and responsibilities of the shadow teacher. The third stage of training is practicing how to shadow teacher therapy for autistic children.

The final stage of training is evaluation, this activity is intended as an indicator of the success of training, (Syafitri et al., 2024) The results showed that learning strategies, communicative support, independence training, and effective emotional control are key in developing self-regulation. Consistent teaching methods, real examples, and a patient and firm approach are very important. Self-regulation in children with moderate levels of autism can be improved through appropriate learning strategies, communicative support, independence training, and effective emotional control, making theoretical and practical contributions in the education of children with autism.

This research presents several fundamental differences compared to previous studies. Firstly, in terms of research background, this study focuses on 6-year-old children who are still in the early childhood stage, whereas earlier studies generally examined children of primary to secondary school age. Additionally, this research specifically targets children with mild autism. Secondly, the focus of this study is on self-limitation, which sets it apart from previous research that tended to concentrate on other aspects. The main objective here is to introduce sexuality education to children from an early age, emphasizing the importance of understanding self-boundaries. In terms of methodology, data were collected using interview techniques with the research subjects, and then analyzed using a coding method for each interview. This coding approach is intended to facilitate a better understanding of the phenomena or events experienced by the research subjects. Based on the identified problems and the background described, the primary aim of this research is to analyze the role of shadow teachers in providing an understanding of self-limitation to 6-year-old children with autism.

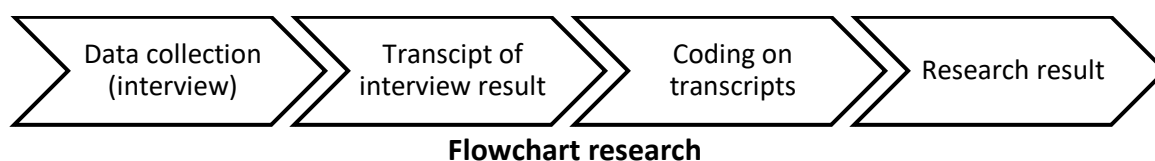
2. METHODS

Qualitative research is used as an exploratory method. This method is given to understand the phenomena that occur in an individual or group. Qualitative research focuses on a deep understanding of a phenomenon that occurs. Research approach with grounded theory. This research is a narrative type by explaining the phenomena that occur in minority groups. Data is collected by conducting interviews with the subject then the interview data is processed by identifying keywords that appear in the management process. Then the data is presented in the form of an in-depth narrative based on the results of the interview. Validating data to the subject by triangulating the research subject.

The process carried out to obtain keywords is, first, by reading the interview transcripts and understanding the data to get keywords or codes from the interview results. The second process categorizes the keywords that have been found in the first process to get the conceptual framework of the research focus. The third process identifies the main categories that become topics in the research to be explained in detail and in depth to obtain research findings. The three processes are continuous to get a code that matches the research topic so that the data produced is empirical data not assumptions.

There are three stages carried out to process qualitative data, namely open code, axial code, and selective code. Open code is the initial stage in research with grounded theory, at the open code stage the data is categorized based on the keywords obtained. Axial code is the stage of connecting between categories that have been obtained at the open code stage, this is done to get a structured concept. Selective code is the final stage to produce conclusions from the relationship between the categories obtained.

After obtaining these codes, the keywords obtained from the coding results will be used as a reference as a description in the discussion section by providing evidence of dialog in the interviews that have been conducted.



3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Characteristics of autistic disabilities in everyday life

Autistic children with disabilities are neurodevelopmental disorders that affect social interaction, communication, and behavior (Amanullah, 2022). Children with autistic disabilities have a variety of characteristics that differ in each child depending on the type of disability and uniqueness. There are several characteristics of children with autistic disabilities, including difficulties in social interaction, communication limitations, repetitive behavior, the need for special support, and emotional responses that are different from children without autistic disabilities (Adijaya & Tamera, 2024). In some conditions in children with autistic disabilities, these characteristics are not all inherent in them.

Autistic children have various categories with mild disabilities, slow learners, and others (Rahma & Salsabila, 2024). Each child with autism has a different IQ level. This inequality between one autistic disability and another makes the shadow teacher provide stimulation and assistance with different methods according to the character of the disabled child he is handling (Sarah & Neviyarni, 2020). The stages of development that occur in children with autism will vary and require a long period of time. The category of children with mild autism still has difficulty in socializing and communicating. The results of the interview show that, to provide one learning material to children takes six to eight months.

“Assalamualaikum well to answer greetings, usually you have to see waalaikum salam, he says waalaikum salam. That's the process, six to eight months for greetings alone ...”

The learning process for children with autistic disabilities will be long because of the time span needed for them to understand in detail the activities they do. Children with autism only have a period of focus for 2 hours and will be easily distracted by things around them (Siti et al., 2020). In addition, when children with autism feel tired, exhausted, and their emotions are unstable they will tantrum.

“Usually when children refuse to tantrum, it's like they are uncomfortable, because they are tired, sad, then they don't want to do what they are doing.” Children will show their attitude if they feel uncomfortable. The existence of social responses in themselves.

3.2. Understanding sexuality to introduce boundaries to children with autism

Sexuality education is the provision of education related to understanding sexuality to children. Sexuality is an important aspect of life because it is related to interpersonal activities (Nugraheni & Tsaniyah, 2020). Children with autism receive sexuality education that includes teaching and understanding sexuality to protect their bodies. Thus, children with autism can understand their bodies, maintain privacy, and protect them.

It is important to provide sexuality education to children with autism to reduce the level of exploitation, and maintain healthy relationships (Ritonga, 2022). Children with autism need to be given the concept of self-limitation about privacy in their bodies.

Sexuality is a sensitive subject to be introduced to children. There are several parts of the child's body that should not be touched by others (Joae et al., 2023). Sensitive body parts to touch are the chest, buttocks, and genitals. This part will be a privacy for the child. It is important for children to know the boundaries of themselves that are safe for children (Wulandari & Lestari, 2023).

Children with autism understand about personal boundaries with the help of media in learning (Palayukan et al., 2023). Based on interviews that have been conducted, children with autism use picture flashcards to show parts that should not be touched by others. Based on the interview with the shadow teacher, children with autism will tend to parrot or imitate the sounds heard by the child. Thus, the shadow teacher always teaches how to speak well.

When children with autism are in an uncomfortable condition, they will use their body as a form of rejection. The body language used to give a sign of rejection to children with hand movements dismisses, refuses, and other body movements (Ni'matuzahroh et al., 2021).

Shadow teachers as accompanying teachers for children with autism will always provide direction to children with autism to introduce areas that can and cannot be touched. Children with autism will respond when there is an uncomfortable touch (Marscha et al., 2023).

3.3. External influences on autistic children's learning experiences on sexuality recognition

Sexuality recognition is important for children with autism because it helps them understand their bodies, their interpersonal relationships and their boundaries. There are factors that influence the effectiveness of children with autism to gain learning experiences about disability recognition, including internal influences and external influences. Internal influences can be in the form of cognitive stages, emotional regulation, and motor skills. While external influences can be in the form of family support, schools, and the surrounding social environment (Resthi et al., 2021).

The environment of children with autistic disabilities has a good and bad impact on their development. A positive environment will support every development and progress experienced by children with disabilities. Meanwhile, a negative environment will provide a labor response to the child's development. Delayed support from parents can hinder the needs of children with autism. There needs to be sincerity in the hearts of parents to accept the condition of the child and the acceptance of teachers to educate children with these conditions. When parents feel worried and are not sincere with their child's condition, it can affect their development. This is in accordance with the results of the interview with the shadow teacher.

“So for the sincerity of parents and families to surrender to the teacher, it will channel the energy. So from there, you will get the difference between socialization that has been accepted and has not been accepted for the development of the child.”

Parents who always support children's development will monitor how the child's process develops. Starting from the smallest things to the biggest things for children. Parental support and education on sexuality will have an impact on how children can survive at a later age.

It takes the role of parents to always provide education related to sexuality to children with autism. This education is a support for children that there is a caring attitude from parents to children with autism (Tenrisau et al., 2024).

The learning experience of children with autism is not only from theory but also practice in everyday life (Nafisah, 2022). In this case, shadow teachers always emphasize children with autism to say sorry when they make a mistake. By teaching the word sorry, children will understand which something is wrong and which is right. This is in accordance with the interview conducted with the shadow teacher. Communication of children with autistic disabilities is also constrained, they have difficulty communicating by speaking. Autistic children with disabilities are only able to speak in one and two words (Sulistiyowati et al., 2022). Continuous stimulation is needed for children with autistic disabilities so that they can absorb and convey the information they have received.

When teaching, shadow teachers not only evaluate the learning they do but also evaluate the entire learning process carried out by themselves and other classes. This evaluation aims to convey important things to be discussed and as a suggestion to share knowledge with fellow teachers, both shadow teachers and non-shadow teachers. Children with mild autistic disabilities will do something by repeating it many times (Primasari & Supena, 2021). With the right support, children will find it easy to adapt. The level of parental support will affect the child's cognitive abilities so that they are easily accepted by the environment around the child (Izzati & Yulsyofriend, 2020).

4. CONCLUSION

The characteristics of children with autistic disabilities are categorized as children with mild autistic disabilities, children with autistic disabilities with slow learn types, and others. The environment in which children with autistic disabilities grow results in support and stimulation for children. However, on the one hand, the learning methods and media used by shadow teachers are conventional and need to be improved. The relationship between parents and children is very closely bonded so there needs to be closeness between the two. As a shadow teacher, there needs to be extra assistance given to children with autistic disabilities so that children's development can occur optimally.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Thank you to the respondents have taken the time, provided experience, and information in this study. Hopefully the results of the study can provide benefits for all groups.

6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

7. REFERENCES

- Adijaya, H., & Tamera, D. M. (2024). Memahami disabilitas dari perspektif teologis. *Alucio Dei*, 8(1).
- Aisyah Durrotun Nafisah, D. (2022). Bunga rampai inklusi dalam PAUD: Teori dan praktik (pertama). *Cipta Media Nusantara*.
- Annisa Aulia Rahma, & Akifah Humaira Salsabila. (2024). Gangguan berbahasa pada anak autis ringan. *Pragmatik : jurnal rumpun ilmu bahasa dan pendidikan*, 2(4), 01–08.
- Ansari, M. I., Barsihanor, B., & Nirmala, N. (2021). Peran guru pendamping khusus dalam mengembangkan emosional anak autisme di kelas 1 A SDIT Al-Firdaus Banjarmasin. *Al-Madrasah: Jurnal Pendidikan Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*, 6(1), 21.
- Azizah, I. N., Rohmatun, S., & Munawaroh, H. (2023). Implementasi neurosains pada anak usia dini. *Реєстрація, Зберігання / Обробка Даних*, 2(3), 59–73.
- Dermawan, V. I., Sukaesih, N. S., & Lindayani, E. (2023). Pengaruh pendidikan seksual dengan media puzzle telur pintar pada anak sekolah dasar. *Jurnal Kesehatan Tambusai*, 4(2), 1086-1092.
- Fitriani, D., Fajriah, H., & Wardani, A. (2021). Mengenalkan pendidikan seks pada anak usia dini melalui buku lift the flap “auratku.” *Gender Equality: International Journal of Child and Gender Studies*, 7(1), 33.
- Hasanah, A. (2021). Introducing sex education to children through pictures and singing. *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Early Childhood Education*, 6(1), 66–77.
- Izzati, L., & Yulsyofriend. (2020). Pengaruh metode bercerita dengan boneka tangan terhadap perkembangan kognitif anak usia dini. *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai*, 4(1), 472–481.
- Joae, P., Nito, B., Ariani, M., & Fetriyah, U. H. (2023). Sex education pada anak usia sekolah: bagian tubuh yang tidak boleh disentuh orang lain sex education in school-age children: parts of the body that others should not touch. *Jurnal Prosiding Seminar Nasional Masyarakat Tangguh*, 2(1), 119–125.
- Marscha, C., Lesmana, F., & Yoanita, D. (2023). Representasi nonverbal autism dalam film pendek animasi loop. *PRecious: Public Relations Journal*, 2(2), 107–128.
- Ni'matuzahroh, Yuliani, S. R., Soen, & Mein-Woei. (2021). Psikologi dan intervensi pendidikan anak berkebutuhan khusus (pertama). *UMM Press*.
- Nirmalasari, D. Y. (2024). Analisis perlindungan hukum anak terhadap kejahatan kekerasan seksual. *KONSENSUS: Jurnal Ilmu Pertahanan, Hukum Dan Ilmu Komunikasi*, 1(4), 356–367.
- Nisa, U., Zain, A., & Rahmah, A. (2024). The role of shadow teachers for supporting learning assistance on children with special needs in inclusive early childhood education. *Journal of Islamic Education Students (JIES)*, 4(1), 32.
- Nugraheni, S., & Tsaniyah, N. (2020). Urgensi pendidikan seks pada remaja autis. *IQRO: Journal of Islamic Education*, 3(1), 85–102.

- Nursakti, N., & Suherman, S. (2023). Rancang bangun game edukasi pengenalan bagian organ tubuh pada anak usia dini. *Jurnal Ilmiah Sistem Informasi Dan Teknik Informatika (JISTI)*, 6(2), 104–111.
- Palayukan, H., Langi, E. L., Triyani, S., Palengka, I., & Panglipur, I. R. (2023). Pendampingan belajar mandiri siswa disabilitas spektrum autisme pada materi aljabar matematika. *Majalah Ilmiah Pelita Ilmu*, 6(2), 139.
- Primasari, I. F. N. D., & Supena, A. (2021). Meningkatkan kemampuan membaca siswa disleksia dengan metode multisensori di sekolah dasar. *Jurnal Basicedu*, 5(4), 1799–1808.
- Resthi, L. L., Rahma, A., & Suprayogi, M. N. (2021). Kajian terapi applied behaviour analysis dalam meningkatkan interaksi sosial pada anak penyandang autisme. *Prosiding Konferensi Nasional I Konsorsium Psikologi (KNIKP) LLDIKTI 3*, April, 284–292.
- Ririn Amaliah Putri Sarah, & Neviyarni S. (2020). Perkembangan siswa berkebutuhan khusus dan siswa yang tidak biasa serta implikasinya dalam proses belajar dan pembelajaran. *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan*, 6(4).
- Ritonga, S. A. (2022). Model komunikasi orang tua dalam mengenalkan seksual kepada anak autisme di “sekolah luar biasa negeri autisme” Provinsi Sumatera Utara. *Komunika*, 18(1), 1–15.
- Rosiyannah, R., Yufiarti, Y., & Meilani, S. M. (2020). Pengembangan media stimulasi sensori anak usia 4-6 tahun berbasis aktivitas bermain tujuh indera. *Jurnal Obsesi : Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 5(1), 941–956.
- Sangalang, R. S. (2022). Perlindungan hukum terhadap korban tindak pidana kekerasan seksual dalam lingkungan pendidikan. *Jurnal Ilmu Hukum Tambun Bungai*, 7(2), 176–192.
- Sismawijaya, A., & Anita Puji Astutik. (2024). Strategi shadow teacher dalam mengatasi kesulitan berkomunikasi anak berkebutuhan khusus (abk) tuna rungu. *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, 09(September), 487–500.
- Siti, A., Marlina, E., & Effendy, D. I. (2020). Pengembangan interaksi sosial anak autisme melalui terapi applied behavior analysis. *Irsyad : Jurnal Bimbingan, Penyuluhan, Konseling, Dan Psikoterapi Islam*, 8(3), 271–288.
- Sulistiyowati, H., Mayasari, D., & Hastining, S. D. (2022). Pemerolehan kosa kata anak autism spectrum disorder (ASD). *Jurnal Obsesi : Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 6(4), 3091–3099.
- Syafitri, M., Rachelia, U., Chi, G., & Dariyo, A. (2024). The role of teachers in forming self-regulation in children with moderate autism spectrum. *Journal of Social Science*, 5(4),
- Syah Roni Amanullah, A. (2022). Mengenal anak berkebutuhan khusus: tuna grahita, down syndrome dan autisme. *Jurnal Almuraja : Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini*, 1(1), 7–12.
- Syaputri, E., & Afriza, R. (2022). Peran orang tua dalam tumbuh kembang anak berkebutuhan khusus (autisme). *Educativo: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 1(2), 559–564.

- Tadzkirah, Ashari, N., Natsir, T. A. L., Nadia, & Syukri, M. K. (2022). Shadow teacher training for autistic children at raudhatul athfal ashabul kahfi, parepare city. *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Bestari*, 1(8), 863–868.
- Tenrisau, Aa. T., Meidina, T., & Hadis, A. (2024). Pengembangan media game edukasi berbasis board game dalam pengenalan pendidikan sex. *Jurnal Metafora Pendidikan (JMP)*, 2(4), 1–12.
- Wardhana, K. E. (2022). Pengaruh kematangan anak usia dini terhadap hasil belajar matematika siswa kelas. *Sultan Idris Journal of Psychology and Education*, 1(2), 56–66.
- Wulandari, H., & Lestari, F. F. (2023). Penerapan materi pendidikan seksual di sekolah paud dalam upaya mencegah kekerasan seksual. *Journal on Education*, 06(01), 5127–5134.