



## Sex Education in Islamic Curricula: The Saudi Context

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### ABSTRACT

The current study aims to identify female Islamic studies teachers' attitudes towards including sex education concepts and to ascertain how many such concepts are included in the Islamic studies and Islamic culture textbooks for general education at elementary, intermediate, and higher levels in Saudi Arabia. The study also explores how Islamic studies teachers' perspectives regarding sex education statistically relate to their academic background, years of experience, and level of education. The study uses a descriptive methodology and administers a questionnaire to 450 female Islamic studies instructors and a content analysis card to the texts on Islamic studies and culture. The survey concluded that the applicants favoured the inclusion of sex education as it was taught in Saudi Arabia's general Islamic studies courses. However, the sex education concepts in Islamic studies textbooks are inadequate, and there are very few chapters on the subject. No distinctions were found based on academic standing, but there were differences due to years of experience and educational level.

### KEYWORDS

Islamic studies textbooks, Islamic culture, puberty and intimate body parts, female teachers' attitudes, rights and responsibilities, sexual intercourse

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## 1. Introduction

Islam is meant to meet human needs, whether they are physical or spiritual. By requiring acts of worship, Islam has satiated the spiritual wants. It has also taken care of the physical demands by encouraging control, moderate fulfilment, discipline, purification, and balance (Barsheed, 2014).

Because Allah gave individuals sex as an innate desire and a significant bodily requirement, education must respect it and teach how to discipline passion and not let it dominate human behaviours. The Holy Qur'an contains numerous passages that discuss sexual topics like having intercourse with women, pleasure, and producing sperm without violating social norms. In addition, it discusses sex sensitively, free of excess, vulgarity, and shame. For instance, Surat Al-Baqarah states that marriage's purpose is not sex but rather increasing offspring. When the Prophet appeals to young men, his honourable behaviour is an excellent example. One of his companions has narrated how when they were with the Prophet when they were young and poor, the Prophet of Allah had stated, 'Oh, you youngsters! Those of you who are able to marry need to do so because it will enable you to lower your gaze and protect your modesty' (i.e. keep them from indulging in immoral behaviour, etc.), 'and those of you who are unable to marry ought to fast since doing so will lessen your sexual potency'. Another companion has described how the Prophet addressed the situation of young people who wanted to get married but couldn't because of poverty. The Prophet provided a thoroughly adequate response by advising marrying first. Second, he offered a remedy and a sufficient soother for their passion as well as actual protection, namely, fasting, as fasting limits one's sexual potential. The Prophet suggested chastity as a third alternative, saying, 'Whoever would seek self-sufficiency; Allah will make him self-sufficient; and whosoever would be chaste and modest; Whoever is patient will receive patience from Allah, which is the best and most complete gift one can receive'. Therefore, sex education must focus on every aspect of sexuality, including discipline and gratifying sexual needs reasonably. However, sex education is a sensitive subject that most people avoid because it is shameful, particularly in Arab cultures. Others view it as a gross violation of

morality and honour (Al-Attar, 2019). When one of his wives asked the Prophet what a woman should do in case a woman gets what a man gets in a dream (i.e. experiences orgasm). The Prophet, instead of humiliating her, provided a satisfactory response, 'Yes, they are the counterpart of males', and advised her to take a bath.

Several journalists in their articles have urged pupils to receive sex education and advocated for qualified educational authorities to design the curricula. For instance, the 2017 study 'Sex Education in School Curricula' (Martnez *et al.*, 2012) surveyed experts' views on sex education in school curricula. Previous research has called for the need to include preventive sex education in school curricula to educate children on correct notions of sex and safeguard them from deviant behaviour and sexual harassment. The director of social work at Jeddah Health, Talal Al-Nashiri, stressed the significance of teaching sexual concepts in Islamic-style courses and the need to do so in a genuinely religious and scientific manner. According Layadi 2019, cultural openness calls for extensive supervision and consultation to protect young people adequately. Furthermore, Alia Shuaib, a philosophy professor at Kuwait University, asked for non-detailed courses tailored to this culture while emphasising the importance of adhering to Islamic identity. She stated that it is vitally necessary for a specialised educational curriculum of sexual education to be developed, considering sound traditions and customs, in light of media openness and uncontrolled sexual content on television.

As we enter the third millennium, prior research by Obidat and Tawalbeh (2013) indicated the necessity for incorporating sex education in life and school, compelling individuals to face educational changes and value breakthroughs. According to Tawalba, 'sexual aspects are important throughout the entirety of human life and should be acquired in a comprehensive scientific manner'. As we deal with media flow and pornographic attacks via television and the Internet, Al-Jamal emphasised that sex education should be examined within a sound educational and scientific framework (2018). The informational chaos should be handled with awareness to separate valuable from useless information due to the abundance of reliable and unreliable sources. This can only be done through education that combines the efforts of the family and educational

institutions in terms of sexual orientation and academic guidance. This is difficult to achieve, but it may be done with the help of a curriculum that gives young people the proper knowledge and practical sex education they need. Islamic education is crucial in presenting sexual concepts so that students have the background knowledge to understand the facts, acquire correct sex education, and be able to perceive violations of Islamic philosophy and law. The Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah are referenced explicitly in the Islamic studies programmes. They adhere to traditions and have 'an attractive, polite, and preventive style' when handling sex (Al-Qahtani, 2019).

Sex education should be covered in Islamic studies curricula since they are connected to the Fiqh, which denotes knowledge of practical subsidiary legal rulings derived from detailed evidence. It includes juridical rules for various acts of worship, including purity, prayer, and fasting. In terms of providing children with educational advice and counselling, the family is crucial to sex education. However, to correct and promote the proper concepts of sex among students, the involvement of the school and teachers is essential (Al-Jamal, 2018). The literature on sex education has covered sex education from various angles, such as the significance and necessity of learning in an era of rapid development, technological openness, globalisation of information, and exposure to the unexposed (Layadi, 2019; Najm, 2018). In addition, numerous research papers have revealed favourable perceptions of sex education among school administrators and principals (Abu Farah, 2004; Barsheed, 2014) and teachers (Hussien, 2018; Najm, 2018).

Studies by Abdul Rashid (2008), Obidat and Tawalbeh (2013), Bilinga and Mabula (2014), and Al-Jamal (2018) showed how important it is to give teachers access to training programmes and lesson plans that cover sex education topics.

Numerous studies have called for the inclusion of sex education principles in academic content to increase student knowledge of sexual hazards, illicit relationships, and abnormal behaviour. According to a prior study by Najm (2018), all teachers must participate in sex education.

Earlier works (Qamra, 2011; Alkhaldy, 2011; Azzam *et al.*, 2012; Obidat and Tawalbeh, 2013; Sharaf, 2014; Alghamdy, 2015; Alkhasba, 2021) reported using a method to teach sex education in the pertinent subjects, such as considering sexual education as a legal duty, and the need for integration between curricula in explaining sexual concepts. Sex education is, therefore, an essential component of pedagogy and a vital component of the educational system (Bani Khalaf, 2014).

## 2. Concept of Sex Education

There are many definitions of sex education. According to some researchers, sex education includes all educational measures that prepare young people to confront sex-centred life issues (Keshek, 2012). According to another research, based on their sexual and mental stages of development, sex education provides Muslim youth with information that addresses their concerns regarding sexual ability within Islamic educational controls (Al-Qahtani, 2019). A recent study defined it as a type of education that aims to educate the child about the appropriate behaviours towards sex-related issues (Shaaban, 2017). Researchers have described sex education as the type of education that provides children with scientific information that promotes correct attitudes towards sexual concerns as enabled by their physiological, physical, mental, emotional, and social development. It occurs within the framework of religious teachings, social criteria, and dominant values that are compatible with sexual issues and helps the youth face sexual problems now and in the future (Tahoun *et al.*, 2019).

## 3. Islamic Education and Sexual Concepts

Sexual concepts are not forbidden in Islam. On the contrary, Islam views sexual instinct as an innate tendency endowed by Allah that should be refined and contained in a proper framework. Allah has devoted an entire surah, Al-Nur, in the Qur'an to this issue. This surah consists of social provisions and sacred rites for maintaining familial dignity, honour, and people's rights. It highlights sexual and social traditions that are presented clearly to the believers. Islam adopts a gradual approach to teaching sexual concepts. Paying attention to male circumcision is the first step in the process from birth, and making it a trait of fitra, which is the innate human nature that recognizes the oneness of Allah. Five procedures are defined in fitra: circumcision, pubic hair removal, underarm hair removal, moustache trimming, and nail trimming.

The Prophet started by instructing children between the ages of seven and 10 on rules regarding prayer, ablution, its contradictions, purity requirements, fasting, and the methods of purity. By enforcing fitra and discipline from an early age, the Prophet addressed sex education themes. In one instance, he says, 'And arrange their beds' (so they can sleep separately). The Holy Qur'an also instructs children in the appropriate manner of asking for things. Surah An-Nur states that when the children among you attain puberty, let them always seek permission as those before them have practised. It asks male believers to guard their privates and 'close their eyes' to minimise (some of) their vision. 'For them, that is purer; Allah is aware of what they do, in fact'. To uphold Allah's command, the Prophet urges, 'But let them who find not (the means for) marriage abstain (from sexual relations) until Allah enriches them from His bounty'. He dealt with those between the ages of 10 and 18 more openly, bravely, and diplomatically, advising them not to engage in illicit sexual activity. Surah Al-Isra explicitly forbids adultery, as it is undoubtedly sinful and wrong.

## 4. Importance and Aim of Sex Education in Curricula

Several studies state that sex education mainly aims to build a healthy personality psychologically and socially by providing correct information related to sexual concepts to build awareness of psychological changes and emotional development and encourage an appreciation and respect for all body organs (Abdul Azim, 2008; Al-Attar, 2019; Al-Qadi, 2006; Michielsen and Ivanova, 2022; Obidat and Tawalbeh, 2013; Shulman, 2001). Consequently, a child realises the importance of the functioning of every organ in fostering identity, sexual differentiation, and mutual respect.

Sex education satisfies children's natural curiosity and the desire to explore in a disciplined and ethical way, using reliable sources, thus avoiding the risks associated with consulting unreliable sources and trying to explore the unknown.

Presenting sexual concepts in an educational framework enables learners to confront sexual problems at different stages of development and avoid the resulting behavioural disorders (Azzam *et al.*, 2012).

In summary, sex education helps learners develop the willpower to control their behaviour and reduce harmful gratification. It improves self-care skills and forms healthy, positive concepts. It provides preventive education against abnormal behaviours and disorders and helps learners face pervasive deviations and temptations with sound scientific knowledge (Tahoun *et al.*, 2019). It also raises a generation that can distinguish between right and wrong behaviour and achieve a healthy social structure.

#### 4.1. Sex Concepts in Islamic Studies Books in Saudi Arabia:

Saudi Arabia, represented by the Ministry of Education, has endorsed Islamic studies as a core subject for all educational stages, emphasising the building of a modest Muslim personality, proud of their religion in their speech and action, avoiding deviant ideas and misguided trends, and capable of handling advanced technology consciously (Al-Qahtani, 2019). Courses in Islamic studies that are part of the general education curriculum include specific age-appropriate sex education ideas. For instance, the Fiqh is Islamic jurisprudence, an Islamic legal system based on the Quran and the sunnah. It is the body of Islamic law that governs all aspects of daily life. The course discusses sexual notions through purification laws, acts of worship, laws on women, and restrictions on both sexes' private parts. Fiqh during puberty comprises asking for permission, closing one's eyes, and remaining chaste. The Holy Qur'an's meanings are interpreted in a course called Tafsir, which includes lines like: Had he not been a sperm from semen released? He was a retaining clot at that time, and Allah fashioned his form and proportions. For example, a high school student would say, 'Your wives are a place of sowing of seed for you, so come to your place of cultivation however you wish'. Islamic studies textbooks do contain concepts related to sex education, but they are toned down and are not developmentally appropriate. Some ideas are timidly discussed, while others that are crucial for the age of open information are ignored (Hindi, 2007).

### 5. Statement of the Issue

The study topic is based on pertinent literature regarding the importance of sex education. Since sex is an urgent biological need that necessitates rules for control and direction and is essential for the continuation of life, it is crucial to draw attention to the kinds of cultures and ideas, particularly those related to sex, that may violate social beliefs, customs, and traditions. This is especially urgent, given the spread of abnormal practices and behavioural deviations and the reality of broad intellectual openness where ideas flow freely from other cultures and societies via various information media. Therefore, the younger generation must be educated on proper life principles, particularly those connected to sex, using the modern communication tools that are accessible. So, based on experience with the curricula, the author makes a case for the necessity of including reviewed content on sex education within a Sharia framework in the curriculum of Islamic studies. The author also explores the attitudes of female teachers to teaching the concepts of sex education, as the curricula of Islamic studies do not include sex education aspects.

### 6. Research Questions

What are the attitudes of female Islamic education teachers towards incorporating sex education themes in Islamic studies books of the general education stages in Saudi Arabia? The author broke down this question into the following sub-questions to identify the study problem:

- What are the sex education ideas presented in the Islamic studies textbooks used in Saudi Arabia's general education stages?
- From the perspective of female Islamic studies teachers, how acceptable are the sex education principles found in the Tawheed, Fiqh, Hadith, (What came from the Messenger Muhammad, him, whether a word, an action, a report, a moral or moral quality, or a biography), and Tafsir (A set of statements

that describe a set of facts and explain the reasons, context, and consequences of these facts) textbooks?

- Is the stage of education a significant factor in the availability of sex education concepts in Islamic studies textbooks?
- Is the level of education, academic background, and years of experience of female Islamic studies teachers statistically associated with different views towards teaching sex education concepts?

### 7. Research Objectives

The current study aims to identify:

- Attitudes of female Islamic education teachers towards including sex education concepts in Islamic studies textbooks for general education stages in Saudi Arabia.
- Concepts related to sex education that are incorporated in Saudi Arabia's general education stages' Islamic studies textbooks.
- The principles of sex education incorporated in the texts of Islamic studies (Tawheed, Fiqh, Hadith, and Tafsir) that are sufficiently accessible from the viewpoint of female Islamic studies teachers.
- The effects of academic standing, years of experience, and stage of education on female Islamic studies teachers' views about incorporating sex education topics.

### 8. Significance

The study is relevant because:

- Sex education is an education in human life and is a sensitive subject in a traditional nation like Saudi Arabia.
- The study introduces age-appropriate concepts of sex education to help develop female students' mental, psychological, and social maturity.
- It emphasises the importance of including sex in the Islamic studies curriculum to familiarise female students with the concepts of healthy sex within the confines of Islamic Sharia.
- The study illustrates the comprehensiveness of Islam in all educational aspects and does not ignore its role in refining instinctive behaviour and regulating sexual conduct.
- It provides education officials and decision-makers with a vision to help them develop the curricula of Islamic studies (Fiqh, Hadith, Tafsir, and Islamic Culture) with an inventory of sex concepts to be included in the curricula.

### 9. Methodology

The study chose a descriptive-analytical approach to analyse the content of Islamic studies textbooks for general education stages and identify the incorporated notions of sex education.

#### 9.1. Sampling:

The study sample included:

- The textbooks of Islamic studies (Hadith, Fiqh, Tafsir, and Islamic culture) for general education in Saudi Arabia.
- Four hundred and fifty general education female teachers of Islamic studies in Al-Ahsa Governorate.

## 9.2. Tools:

### 9.2.1. Tool One

Knowledge content analytical card (type of analysis) of the new version (1443–1444 A.H.) of the textbooks of Islamic studies (Tawheed, Hadith, Fiqh, Tafsir, and Islamic culture) for the middle and secondary levels of general education (categories of analysis) to identify the degree of including the concepts of sex education (units of analysis).

- Developing the content card list

After reviewing the content of the sample books, the list of themes for the content analysis card was developed. The themes of sex education in the textbooks of Islamic studies were categorised into five domains: Personal hygiene and purity; puberty and intimate body parts; prevention and instinct control; sexual intercourse and marriage; family, rights, and responsibilities.

- Reliability of the tool

To measure the consistency of the content analysis card, the researcher recruited an expert, a competent colleague, as an external rater. The analysis was conducted individually. The agreement coefficient was calculated using Holsti's method.

The frequencies and agreement coefficient between the 1st and 2nd analyses of the sex education content in the textbooks of Islamic studies related to personal hygiene and purity, puberty, and intimate body parts was 100%; prevention and instinct control was 95.24%; sexual intercourse and marriage was 93.33%; and family, rights, and responsibilities was 96%. Therefore, the consistency coefficient between the analyses was rated at 96.8%, which is statistically accepted, indicating that the analysis card is reliable.

- Validity of the analysis card

The validity of the analysis card was tested by testing its face validity and appropriateness for the study's purposes. The card was presented to specialists in curriculum and instruction and female teachers of Islamic studies to survey their opinions regarding precise phrasing, wording, appropriate and comprehensive content, general layout, and achieving the study objectives. The researcher considered the reviewers' notes.

### 9.2.2. Tool Two

To measure the female teachers' attitudes, the researcher developed a five-point Likert scale after reviewing the literature (Alghamdy, 2015; Alkhalidy, 2011; Alkhasba, 2021; Azzam *et al.*, 2012; Obidat and Tawalbeh, 2013; Sharaf, 2014).

### 9.2.3. Description of the Primary Research Sample

The primary research sample in Saudi Arabia consisted of 450 female Islamic studies instructors. The distribution of the sample in relation to individual parameters was as follows:

- The proportion of bachelor's degree holders was 96.7%, diploma holders constituted 2.2%, and master's and doctorate holders were 1.1%.
- Elementary stage teachers were 32.9%, intermediate stage teachers were 25.6%, and higher stage teachers were 41.6%.
- The proportion of teachers with less than five years experience was 25.1%. Teachers with 5–10 years of experience were 15.6%, those with 11–15 years of experience were 17.3%, and those with 16–20 years of experience were 4.7%. The proportion of teachers with 21–25 years of experience constituted 18.2% of the sample, and teachers with more than 25 years of experience comprised the remaining 19.1%.

## 9.3. Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire:

### 9.3.1. Validity of the Questionnaire

According to a prior study, a tool is deemed valid if it measures only what it is prepared to do (Alassaf, 2016). The validity of the questionnaire was verified as follows:

- **Reviewers' validity:** The preliminary draft of the questionnaire was presented to seven experienced and competent reviewers to explore their views and make suggestions regarding the addition or deletion of items, the clarity of phrasing, scientific accuracy, and relevance of the items.
- **Internal validity:** The questionnaire was administered to a pilot sample of 40 teachers not included in the primary sample. Pearson's coefficient of correlation was used to demonstrate the extent of relevance between each item and the total score of the questionnaire.
- The questionnaire items' correlation coefficients to the total score ranged from 0.430–.771, showing a statistical significance at 0.01 levels and confirming that all questionnaire items had high internal validity.

### 9.3.1. Reliability of the Questionnaire

According to prior research, the tool's reliability means ensuring the exact answer is obtained if applied to the same participants under the same conditions (Alassaf, 2016). The reliability of the questionnaire was verified as follows:

- **Cronbach's alpha:** Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) was utilised to calculate the questionnaire's reliability, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to evaluate the data collected from the pilot sample. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was 0.932, confirming the questionnaire's high reliability.
- **Split-Half Method:** The questionnaire items were split into two halves: odd vs. even. The Pearson coefficient was used to illustrate the correlation between the two halves. In addition, the length was adjusted using the Spearman-Brown and Guttman formulae. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire using Spearman-Brown was 0.926, and Guttman was 0.924, confirming that the questionnaire had high reliability.

## 9.4. The Criterion of Response:

A five-point Likert scale was utilised to determine the response strength: (5) strongly agree, (4) agree, (3) undecided, (2) disagree, and (1) strongly disagree. The following criterion was adopted when interpreting the arithmetic mean values:

- If the mean rate is 1–1.80, it is very low.
- If the mean rate is >1.80–2.60, it is low.
- If the mean rate is >2.60–3.40, it is moderate.
- If the mean rate is >3.40–4.20, it is high.
- If the mean rate is >4.20–5.00, it is very-high.

## 10. Results

### 10.1. Results of Responses to the 1st Question:

- What are the attitudes of female Islamic education teachers towards incorporating sex education themes in Islamic studies books of the general education stages in Saudi Arabia? The researcher analysed the responses descriptively to answer this question, as demonstrated in Table (1).

Table (1): Findings regarding participants' perspectives towards including sex education concepts in the Islamic studies curricula for general education in Saudi Arabia (N= 450)

No.	Item	Frequencies and percentages	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Attitude score
1	I believe that the culture of sex education is a part of Islamic culture.	F %	4.37	0.95	Very High
2	I am fully aware of the concept of sex education.	F %	3.49	1.02	High
3	I think that sex education should start in elementary school.	F %	3.23	1.45	Moderate
4	We should be honest about sexual issues appropriate for every age group.	F %	4.05	1.11	High
5	I think that it is necessary to introduce sexual deviations and disorders, such as masturbation, homosexuality, and their damage.	F %	3.86	1.32	High
6	I think that children should be encouraged to inquire about all vague, incomprehensible issues about sexuality.	F %	3.47	1.33	High
7	Personal hygiene and some forms of purity are part of sex education.	F %	4.44	0.88	Very High
8	I think that Islamic sex education protects children from the dangers of immorality and adultery.	F %	4.53	0.67	Very High
9	The individual's conscience should be fostered regarding any sexual conduct.	F %	4.61	0.57	Very High
10	I think that introducing the concepts of sex education may evoke instincts among learners.	F %	3.75	1.15	High
11	I think that I am not brave enough to teach the concepts of sex education.	F %	3.68	1.25	High
12	I think that including the concepts of sex education in the curricula violates the traditions of Islam and Arab societies.	F %	2.82	1.40	Moderate
13	I believe that it is important to introduce the concepts of sex education in the framework of Islam and the traditions and customs of society.	F %	4.48	0.59	Very High
14	I think that it is important to develop a comprehensive curriculum to teach the concepts of sex education from an Islamic perspective that suits the stages of education.	F %	3.84	1.22	High
15	It is important to deliver training courses for female teachers on educational methods to discuss the concepts of sex education from an Islamic perspective.	F %	4.17	0.97	High
16	I think that there is a shortage in providing sex education, which drives learners to obtain it improperly via the Internet or friends.	F %	4.25	0.99	Very High
17	I think that sex education is limited to marital life.	F %	2.68	1.32	Moderate
18	I think that sex education helps learners acquire proper sexual conduct and prevents deviance.	F %	3.97	0.99	High
19	I think that it is unimportant to include topics on sex education in the elementary stage.	F %	3.07	1.51	Moderate
20	As a teacher, I don't think that I am responsible for sex education.	F %	2.98	1.29	Moderate
21	I think that the proper concepts of sex education should be linked to the Holy Qur'an and Prophetic Hadiths.	F %	4.56	0.66	Very High
22	I am competent in teaching the concepts of sex education.	F %	2.76	1.37	Moderate
23	I think that the concepts of sex education should be introduced in the curricula of the intermediate stage because they are often related to puberty among learners.	F %	3.78	1.16	High
24	I think that promoting differences in gender identity in sex education aims to promote, not prefer, differences.	F %	4.14	0.83	High
25	Only parents are responsible for sex education.	F %	3.43	1.38	High
26	Topics for sex education should suit each educational stage.	F %	4.02	1.14	High
27	I think that extensive knowledge of the topics of sex education should be delivered in the different educational stages.	F %	3.82	1.31	High
28	Sex education should be discussed clearly without embarrassment in the different stages.	F %	3.63	1.13	High
29	The content of sex education in the current Islamic studies curriculum is insufficient and inadequate.	F %	3.52	1.24	High
Overall arithmetic mean			3.77	1.12	High

Table (1) illustrates that the overall arithmetic mean of the questionnaire was 3.77 with a standard deviation of 1.12, demonstrating the positive attitudes of the teachers of Islamic studies towards including the concepts of sex education in the general stages of education in Saudi Arabia.

The arithmetic means of responses ranged from 2.68–4.61, with standard deviations of 0.57–1.51. Item (9), 'the individual's conscience should be fostered regarding any sexual conduct,' was

ranked 1st with an arithmetic mean of 4.61, a standard deviation of 0.57, and very-high on the Likert scale. It was accompanied by Item (21), 'I think that the proper concepts of sex education should be linked to the Holy Qur'an and Prophetic Hadiths', with an arithmetic mean of 4.56, a standard deviation of 0.66, and was categorised very-high on the Likert scale. Item (8), 'I think that Islamic sex education protects children from the dangers of immorality and adultery', was ranked 3rd with an arithmetic mean of 4.53, a standard deviation of 0.67, and a very-high Likert rating. Item (13), 'I believe that it is vital to introduce the concepts of sex education in the framework of Islam and traditions and customs of society', was ranked 4th with an arithmetic mean of 4.48, a standard deviation of 0.59, and very-high Likert rating.

Item (20), 'As a teacher, I don't think that I am responsible for sex education', was ranked 26th with an arithmetic mean of 2.98, a standard deviation of 1.29, and moderate response strength. Item (12), 'I think that including the concepts of sex education in the curricula violates the traditions of Islam and Arab societies', was ranked 27th with an arithmetic mean of 2.82, a standard deviation of 1.40, and a moderate Likert rating. Item (22), 'I am competent in teaching the concepts of sex education', was ranked 28th with an arithmetic mean of 2.76, a standard deviation of 1.37, and moderate response strength. Finally, Item (17), 'I think that sex education is limited to the marital life', came in last with a standard deviation of 1.32, an arithmetic mean of 2.68, and moderate on the Likert scale.

- What are the sex education ideas presented in the Islamic studies textbooks used in Saudi Arabia's general education stages?

The content of Islamic studies was analysed to identify the concepts of sex education included in the examined courses. The themes were distributed into five domains, as follows:

- Personal hygiene and purity include cleansing of impurity (najasah), types of najasah, methods of purity, cleaning oneself after going to the lavatory with water (Istinja) or with stones and other things (Istijmar), ablution (wudu), brushing teeth using pastes and brushes (siwak).
- Puberty and intimate body parts include modesty (Haya) and intimate body parts (awrah).
- Prevention and instinct control include guarding private parts, reducing (some) vision, and homosexuality.
- Sexual intercourse and marriage include marriage, marriage rulings, divorce rulings, and shighar swap marriage which is an exchange marriage in which persons exchange their daughters or sisters without dowry.
- Family rights and responsibilities include suckling, family care, charity for parents, and pregnancy.
- From the perspective of female Islamic studies teachers, how acceptable are the sex education principles found in the Fiqh, Hadith, and Tafsir textbooks?

The percentage of sex education content in the textbooks was calculated. The most included domain in sex education was 'personal hygiene and purity' at 42.4%. The concentration of the concept in the first intermediate grade was 10.6%; in the fourth elementary grade and Hadith1 for the high school, it was 7.6%, followed by the third elementary grade course at 4.5%. The percentage of sex education content for the 'personal hygiene and purity' domain for the second and the fifth elementary grades was 3%, and Tafsir1 and Hadith2 for the high school contained 1.5%. This domain was not included in the courses of the first and sixth elementary grades and Fiqh1 and Fiqh3 for the high school.

The 'family, rights, and responsibilities' domain included 22.8% of sex education concepts. Its concepts in Fiqh1 and Fiqh2 for the high school were 12.1% and 3%, respectively. The proportion of sex-

education-related concepts was 1.5% in Tafsir1 and 1.5% in the second and third intermediate grades courses. In the fourth and sixth elementary grades, it was 1.5%. However, they were not included in the first, second, third, and fifth elementary grades, the first intermediate grade, as well as in Hadith1 and Hadith 2 for high school.

The 'prevention and instinct control' domain contained 16.5% of sex-education-related concepts. They were evident in high school courses and were 4.5% in Fiqh1, Hadith1, and Tafsir1 and 3% in Hadith 2. In contrast, it was absent for the elementary and intermediate grades and Fiqh3 for the high school.

The 'sexual intercourse and marriage' domain was represented by 12.1% of sex-education-related concepts, distributed among Tafsir1 for the high school at 7.6% and the third intermediate grade at 4.5%. It was not represented in the other courses.

The 'puberty and intimate body parts' domain was represented by 6.2% of sex-education-related concepts. It was represented in the second intermediate grade at 3%, Tafsir1 for the high school at 2%, and the third elementary grade (at 2%) It was not represented in the other courses.

- Is the level of education, academic background, and years of experience of female Islamic studies teachers statistically associated with different views towards teaching sex education concepts?

The researcher used the Kruskal–Wallis test and One Way ANOVA to determine the significance of the differences in the attitudes of the teachers according to their academic backgrounds and years of experience, respectively.

## 10.2. Results of Differences According to Educational Qualification:

Table (2): Findings of the Kruskal–Wallis test for the significance of differences in the attitudes of the female teachers of Islamic studies according to academic qualification (N=450)

Academic qualification	Number	Mean of ranks	K.A. Z Value	Degrees of freedom	Significance value	Statistical significance
Bachelor	435	224.86	0.379	2	0.827	Statistically insignificant
Diploma	10	238.15				
Master or Doctorate	5	255.90				

Table (2) illustrates that there were no statistically significant differences between the attitudes of the female teachers of Islamic studies towards including the sex education concepts in the courses of Islamic studies for general education due to academic qualification, suggesting that educational qualification did not affect the participants' perspectives.

## 10.3. Results of Variances According to Years of Experience:

Table (3): Results of the variance analysis test of the differences between the attitudes of the female teachers of Islamic studies according to years of experience (N=450)

SOURCE OF VARIANCE	SUM OF SQUARES	DEGREES OF FREEDOM	MEAN SQUARES	F VALUE	SIGNIFICANCE VALUE	STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE
BETWEEN GROUPS	10755.174	5	2151.035	13.709	0.00	Significant at the level of 0.05
WITHIN GROUPS	69666.826	444	156.907			
TOTAL VARIANCE	80422.000	449				

Table (3) demonstrates statistically significant differences at the level of 0.05 between the female teachers of Islamic studies' attitudes towards including sex education notions in the courses of Islamic studies for general education due to years of experience, suggesting that years of experience affected the participants' perspectives.

Scheffe's post-hoc test was utilised to determine the source of differences between the attitudes of female teachers of Islamic studies due to years of experience, as shown in Table (4).

Table (4): Findings of Scheffe's test for the source of differences between the attitudes of the female teachers of Islamic studies due to years of experience

Years of experience	Arithmetic means		Direction of variance
	Less than five years	106.38	
	5–10 years	107.47	
	11–15 years	119.62 *	
	16–20 years	107.10	
	21–25 years	109.98	
	More than 25 years	105.69	

\*Significant at the level of 0.05

Table (4) illustrates that the differences between the female teacher's attitudes of Islamic studies towards including the sex education's concepts in the courses of Islamic studies for general education due to years of experience were in favor of (11-15 years).

## 10.4. Results of Differences According to Teaching Stage:

Table (5): Results of the variance analysis test of the differences between the female teachers of Islamic investigations' attitudes according to teaching stage (N= 450)

Source of variance	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean squares	F value	Significance value	Statistical significance
Between groups	25100.644	2	12550.322	101.407	0.00	Significant at the level of 0.05
Within groups	55321.356	447	123.761			
Total variance	82422.000	449				

Table (5) indicates statistically significant differences between the female teachers' attitudes towards including sex education concepts in the courses of Islamic studies for general education due to the teaching stage, suggesting the effect of the teaching stage on participants' perspectives.

Scheffe's post hoc test was utilised to determine the source of differences between the female teachers' attitudes due to the teaching stage, as demonstrated in Table (6).

Table (6): Findings of Scheffe's test for the source of differences between the attitudes of the female teachers of Islamic studies due to the teaching stage

Teaching stage	Arithmetic means			Direction of variance
	Elementary	Intermediate	High	
	104.17	122.10 *	105.73	Favouring the intermediate stage

\*Significant at the level of 0.05

Table (6) demonstrates statistically significant differences between the attitudes of the female teachers of Islamic studies towards including sex education concepts in the courses of Islamic studies for general education due to the teaching stage favouring the intermediate stage.

## 11. Discussion

The study sought to understand the female Islamic studies instructors' attitudes towards their inclusion in general education courses of Islamic studies (Tawheed, Fiqh, Hadith, and Tafsir) to determine whether sex education concepts are appropriate for the various educational stages. The participants were highly in favour of including sex education concepts in the curricula of Islamic studies for general education in Saudi Arabia. The author argues that this result suggests that the teachers are aware of the significance of sex education at different stages and the need to educate students in accordance with their age and the teachings of Islam as a form of preventive knowledge. Moreover, the teachers recognise their counselling and guiding roles in the sex education of students, especially with information that has become very accessible through technological advances. Thus, sex education should be included in the courses, along with religious supervision and guidance. This finding agreed with the results of other researchers (Barsheed, 2014; Najm, 2018; Layadi, 2019;). However, the participants were only moderately willing to teach these concepts because of their sensitivity to some concepts. Some believe parents are responsible for teaching their children such concepts, while others consider the topic embarrassing, as reported by prior research (Keshek, 2012; Tahoun

et al., 2019).

Only a few sex education concepts were included in the Islamic studies curricula for general education in Saudi Arabia, suggesting the need to review these books. The age group should be considered when introducing the conceptual framework for sex education in accordance with Islamic instructions and public taste. These results matched the findings of several researchers (Alkhalidy, 2011; Azzam et al., 2012; Sharaf, 2014).

Regarding the effect of preliminary data (academic qualification, years of experience, and teaching stage) among the female teachers of Islamic studies, academic qualification had no effect because all teachers are Muslim teachers of Islamic studies, and sex education is addressed from a religious perspective. This finding was similar to several studies (Barsheed, 2014; Gharib, 2010; Obidat and Tawalbeh, 2013) but differed from Keshek (2012).

Years of experience and educational stage have positively affected female teachers' attitudes and perspectives towards including sex education concepts in the courses of Islamic studies for general education. The researcher argues that acquired knowledge and professional development over the years have helped teachers refine the skills of expressing opinions, constructive criticism, and judging the need for growth. This finding agreed with Abu Farah (2004) that there were differences due to years of experience but differed from Barsheed (2014), Gharib (2010), and Obidat and Tawalbeh (2013). The different findings might be from the differences in the curricula and the educational structure in general.

The intermediate teaching stage was most affected. This is expected because the intermediate stage is the beginning of puberty, with physiological and psychological changes, including concerns about mental stability for both sexes. This stage requires special care and guidance. Inquiries, especially those related to sex education, must be addressed by giving correct and clear justifications.

In addition, this stage in which puberty occurs is a foundation for high school female teachers, as reported by prior studies (Al-Qahtani, 2019).

The study used a questionnaire and content analysis cards on a sample of courses (Tawheed, Fiqh, Hadith, and Tafsir) to determine how female teachers of Islamic studies felt about including concepts from sex education in the courses of Islamic studies for general education (elementary, intermediate, and high). The study concluded that although the teachers' attitudes towards sex education in Islamic studies courses were positive, their level of readiness was moderate. In addition, the Saudi Arabian general education curricula for Islamic studies featured very few notions of sex education, indicating the necessity to study these works. Due to academic background, there were no statistically significant variations in the responses. However, there were discrepancies because of the teaching stage, which favoured the intermediate level, and the most favourable attitudes towards sex education were found in teachers with 11–15 years of teaching experience.

The researcher believes that In the Arab world, there is a strong reservation about sexual culture, and this is evident in the lack of appropriate sex education in Arab countries that complies with modern global understanding. However, they substitute it with teaching about animal reproduction in science classes.

In the Arab world, there is a tendency for teachers to quickly sweep this subject under the rug since they see it as humiliating and embarrassing. In addition, those who are against sex education are convinced that sex education encourages pornography.

Sex education gives youngsters the information and abilities they need for a lifetime of good sexual health. They learn how to have

healthy relationships and arrive at informed conclusions about sex.

Sex education is essential, especially now when everything is available on either the web or social media, and some information might be misleading and inaccurate. For this reason alone, Saudi Arabians must discuss and dive deeper and explore more than just educating young adults and teenagers about how their bodies change and what occurs during puberty and pregnancy. Concepts of sex education should be broadened, and the dangers of modern terminology, such as sexual orientation and liberty of sexual identity, should be examined. Currently, there is a great need for a comprehensive sexual education curriculum. We should come together to end the shame and embarrassment around sex education.

The researcher sees the necessity for preparing training courses for male and female teachers of Islamic studies regarding mechanisms and methods for teaching sexual concepts in accordance with Islamic law without prejudice and to assist them in conveying information adequately and clearly.

## 12. Recommendations

The researcher recommends:

- Promoting ideas of sex education in general education curricula in Saudi Arabia while considering the age group's cumulative knowledge.
- The professional development of Islamic studies teachers through training courses and workshops to teach methods for handling sex concepts.
- Raising awareness of safe sex education among female students in some educational programmes.

## 13. Further Studies

- A study identifying teachers' understanding of the foundations, goals, and teaching methods of sex education.
- A study identifying teacher attitudes towards sex education.
- A study on the mechanisms and means of sex education for general education.

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