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Summary

**Teaching the Subject of Sex Education to Girls in
Arab Society in East Jerusalem**

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Introduction

In the Arab Palestinian community, as other communities, dealing with sex is still a sensitive subject. Talking about sex still encounters shyness and hesitance. These conditions make it hard for the child or the teenager to have knowledge and ways to deal with his sex. The need for the education project lies in the fact that the issue of sexuality and, of course, sexual orientation is tabooed; it is not dealt with, recognized or even discussed openly in the Palestinian society. Even when it is recognized, it is discussed in a derogatory manner and is treated as a shameful deviation emphasized in “closets” and oppression of women's sexuality. (Arab Cultural Awareness, 2006). Arab Palestinian society has been dominated by tradition and religion, which has the Arab husband and his wife learn from an early age that the husband is the head of the family, and this affords him great importance, whereas the wife has to take care of her beauty and deny her mental abilities. Therefore, Sbersky (1993), Saba (1995) and Raday (1995) claim that the cultural and social criteria are the factors that keep the woman subjugated, absorbed and unprotected from sexual violence.

For these reasons, the researcher was interested in studying the subject of teaching sex education for girls in Arab society in East Jerusalem. The goal of this research was to study the effectiveness of a sex education program on the knowledge and the behavioral patterns of Arab girls in East Jerusalem. It also aimed to find ways, and develop programs for the girls, to increase their awareness of their bodies, ways to protect themselves from sexual harassment if it occurred, and to encourage the teachers and the parents to grant importance to the subject of sex education through the research tools including the implementation of the sex education intervention program.

Thus the researcher developed, organized, and then taught a program of sex education for girls in East Jerusalem, expecting the program to realize the following changes:

1. Develop the awareness of students of physical and psychological changes during adolescence.
2. Enhance the confidence of the students themselves.
3. Develop the students' ability to protect themselves from sexual harassment if that occurred.

4. To encourage the teachers and the parents to grant the subject of sex education importance.

Data was gathered from students, teachers and parents using different tools, from a normal girl's school.

1. Questionnaires for sixth grade students (a research group of 38 girls and a control group of 38 girls)
2. A focus group of eight girls from the research class
3. Questionnaires for the teachers and the principle.
4. Interviews with 17 parents.

The above-mentioned program was based on the Aman¹ program and applied to the control group in eleven sessions. Each session lasted 90 minutes and included a lecture, giving information, and discussing it with the girls.

The paper is divided into four chapters. Following the first chapter presenting the theoretical foundations regarding sex education, the second chapter describes the hypothesis and the research methodology, the third chapter presents the research findings, while the fourth and last chapter offers a discussion and the recommendations resulting from this work.

¹ Aweidah, S. and Anbris, K. (2009). *Training manual for girl guides and advisers, and school teachers to develop the life skills of students and to prevent sexual exploitation*. Women's Studies Center, Jerusalem

Summary of the theoretical foundations

Sexuality is one of the most important developmental contexts of individuals. Although sexuality is a lifelong developmental process, more attention is typically given to the physical changes and accompanying cognitive changes of adolescents. Psychosocial developmental issues such as peer pressure for dating and media influence on socialization also contribute to the complex nature of sexuality in adolescence.

The importance of sex education has been emphasized due to the prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among adolescents world-wide. The increasing occurrence of teenage pregnancies, the high number of young adolescents experiencing sexual intercourse, sexual behavior with multiple partners and widespread sexual abuse are also considered important adolescent issues that need to be addressed by sex education programs.

Research from many cultures indicates that parents provide very little or no sexual knowledge to their children and adolescents. In addition, parents discourage children and adolescents from engaging in sex play yet rarely talk about their reasons for this point of view. When young people need information about sex, they acquire it from friends, books, magazines, movies and television. Messages from parents, the media and the broader social environment are contradictory and confusing. On the one hand, adults generally emphasize that sex is bad. On the other hand, many social institutions promote the message that sex is exciting and desirable. Consequently, adolescents remain poorly informed about sex. A heated controversy continues to exist regarding providing adolescents with information about sexuality (Cok. & Gray, 2007).

Sex in the Arab and Muslim world remains a major taboo that has yet to be fully addressed by either our media sources or more importantly, our schools, despite it being a growing problem for our youth (Al-Rafai, 2007).

The sensitivity of the topic in the Arab community and the Arab family as a patriarchal entity promotes maintaining the respect and reputation of its members, especially men. Prejudicing this respect or skepticism of honor may destabilize the ability of male domination within the family. Family honor is associated with the honor of the female within it and her respect and virginity before marriage (Carsel,

1998; Hassan, 1998). Arab education has focused on preferring males to females. It is reflected in the method of raising received by each of them. It has also focused on separating males and females and emphasizing that the sexual identity of girls does not belong to her but to her family and honor. So girls have to maintain their honor and virginity more than anything else (Shalhop-Keporkain, 1998).

Although the Quran has placed so much emphasis on acquiring knowledge, and in the days of Prophet Muhammad Muslim men and women were never too shy to ask him questions including those related to private affairs such as sexual life, for Muslim parents of today, sex is a dirty word. They feel uncomfortable in discussing sex education with their children, but do not mind the same being taught at their children's school by secular or non-Muslim teachers (of even the opposite sex), by their peers of either sex, and by the media and television.

The main reason Muslim parents do not or cannot discuss sex education with their children is because of their cultural upbringing, not their religious training. They are often brought up in a state of ignorance in regard to sex issues. As a result, they may not be comfortable with their own sexuality or its expression (www.zawaj.com).

Social-sexual education in Israel is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports – the consultant psychological service department. The Ministry of Education has procedures and regulations that are made in CEO circulars, procedures that bind all schools and education institutions in Israel.

The Ministry of Education believes that sex education for children and adolescents promotes safer sexual behaviors and does not intensify sexual activity, according to studies. The Ministry of Education has a number of sex education programs for different populations, including for special education and for traditional and religious communities.

Like the Ministry of Education, the public in Israel is divided over this issue, like in other countries. The state – religious education institutions and private religious education institutions almost completely ignore the subject of sex education, except in the field of sexual reproduction in biology lessons. In contrast to boys, women learn matrimonial laws and purity of the family and are examined on this in their matriculation examinations (Pupils' Rights Law, 2000; Arab Cultural Awareness, 2006).

" Every child and adolescent in the State of Israel is entitled to education in accordance with the provisions of any law".

The purpose of this law is to establish principles for the rights of pupils in the spirit of human dignity and the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

According to this law, the students have the right to know and learn about a subject that concerns them and deal with daily in order to have the knowledge that protects them: this is sex education. But before teaching sex education programs each professional has to be informed and aware of the "Duty to Report Law", which imposes punishment of six months of imprisonment on a person in charge if s/he does not report any attack on children to the Department of Social Affairs and to the police.

(<http://cms.education.gov.il/EducationCMS/Units/Zchuyot/ChukimVeamanot/Chukim/PupilsRightsLaw.htm>)

At the end of 1989, a law was enacted obligating everyone doubting any assault on a minor to report to the Ministry of Social Affairs or the police. The informant may be a professional person (doctor, nurse, pedagogue or teacher, social worker, psychologist, etc.), or any other person who questions the occurrence of an assault. Not informing about the assault leads to a prison sentence, ranging from three months to a person other than professional and six months for a professional (Ayalon, 1999).

Oppositionists of sex education in school claim that this kind of education is the parents' job. It must be given by them only because sex education follows a particular field, it is a part of home only. They expect that parents will carry out this task. They consider the parents' failure to do this as a failure in performing the familial jobs. They support their claims by highlighting the importance of parents and children's personality. This importance stems from the ability to raise their children on sex education correctly. Converting the task to school decreases the parents' importance and threatens their position in the family. Also, school can let them acquire sexual values that contrasts with those the family wants their children to acquire.

On the other hand, supporters of sex education at school see it as a part of the social education. It is an integral part of youth education. The education system at school has to help with correct emotional, mental, healthy and sexual development. School has a

key role in talking about the sex education issue because it involves all sectors of society. It should give students a complete and correct idea about the issue by qualified persons. It does not bear full responsibility towards parents because of different cultures among parents and different ways of acquiring it which could be abusive and improper. This can lead to a negative development in the field and sexual awareness of children. There is no objection to participate in work and planning the sex education issue between parents and school because the importance of parents' role in sex education program. (Arhard, 1985, in Daboul, 2002).

The primary goal of any well-rounded sex education program is to equip young people to use their sexuality responsibly, as individuals and as family members, in their present and future lives. Allied to this general goal are such specific aims as reducing venereal disease, illegitimate pregnancies, and broken marriages.

Summary of the hypotheses, objectives and research methodology

Today, sex education is more vital than previously. It is necessary for balancing the negative information available in society. On the Internet or on TV children are exposed to erotic contents that show sexual relations from different angles among different participants, using a diversity of objects.

It is worth telling young people about sexual intercourse out of respect and love, affection and friendship, encouraging them to share emotions and form true, honest friendly relations.

From here our research question is: What are the importance and the benefits of the sex education program, concerning the girls in east Jerusalem?

Our research is guided by a general hypotheses as is mentioned below, which uses a systematical sex education program in the context of female Arab groups in east Jerusalem.

Our research is guided by a general hypothesis as is cited below, which uses a systematical sex education program in the context of an Arab girls group in east Jerusalem.

We expect to develop knowledge, behavior as well as awareness of their bodies and ways of protection from sexual harassment if it occurs, and to encourage the teachers and the parents to grant importance to the subject of sex education through the research tools including the implementation of the sex education intervention program.

Moreover, we tested two groups of hypotheses. The first group of hypotheses concerns the student's knowledge and students' behavior before and after program. The second group of hypotheses concerns the feasibility of using a cross-over design of the student's knowledge and students' behavior after program regarding the personal, demographic, and general profiles. There is also a hypothesis regarding the teachers and the parents (the mothers in this case) regarding the personal, demographic and general profiles.

A group of 153 students, teachers and parents participated in our research. We used comparative research, with the student participants belonging to two groups: A research group of 38 6th grade females, and a control group of 38 6th grade female students from the same school. A focus group of eight girls from the research group held a discussion and dialogue regarding the program.

There are also 60 school teachers and members of the administrative staff, and 17 parents who examined the range of awareness of the school's educational program and the importance of teaching the subject.

Table 1: A comprehensive view of the participants

| Categories | Number | Characteristic |
|--------------------------------|---------------|--|
| 6 th grade students | 76 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research group 38 students Focus group, 8 girls (from the research group). • Control group of 38 students |
| Teachers | 60 | 59 Female 1 Male |
| Parents | 17 | All mothers. No fathers attended |
| Total | 153 | |

To achieve the goal of this paper, which is to study the subject of sex education for Palestinian teenagers, and the effectiveness of sex education programs (in east Jerusalem), the research was implemented in a regular girls school in East Jerusalem to examine the attitude and opinion of the students, teachers, and parents about the sex education program. It was implemented in two 6th grade classes (38 girls in each class), with 12 sessions during the first semester. The suitability of the program for 6th grade pupils, their needs and their origins was taken into consideration.

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research.

Bruner (1985, 1996), in Shakedi (2003), asserts that in a broad perspective, it will be possible to see two basic ways of organizing knowledge through which people organize and shape their worldviews: the positive (or paradigmatic or logical-scientific way) and the narrative way. He asserts that the way in which the world may be known and perceived is the narrative way (which may also be referred to as “constructivist”). The narrative – constructivist way is based on the assumption that the complex, rich phenomena of experience and life are better represented in stories and narratives.

As a result, the methodology in this study will be narrative and diversified. It will be an ethnographic study, because it explores attitudes, opinions, behaviors and the perception of the world of a very specific society in East Jerusalem, which is a member of minorities and examines it from several aspects by the students themselves and their teachers.

Furthermore, the research will be epistemological because it examines the content and studies material requests to offer new content to make a difference in status (Rachel, 1996; Woods, 1996); (see figure 1 for the process and the time table) .

The first step was an initial survey, a first examination of the student's information regarding the sex education program (research group and control group) using a questionnaire. After that the program was taught by the researcher to the research group. At the end a comparison was made for the two groups (control group and research group) to examine the range of importance and benefit of the sex education program through the same questionnaire that was distributed at the start of the research. The range of awareness of the school's educational program and of the

parents of the importance of teaching the subject of sex education was examined through a based questionnaire.

Furthermore, the researcher examined the effectiveness and influence of the sex education program on students through

1. Questionnaires for the students (research group + control group)
2. Focus group from the research class (eight girls from the class)
3. Questionnaires for the teachers and the principle
4. Interview with the parents (17 parents)

Figure 1: The time table and the process

| | | FIRST | MIDDLE | END | NOTES |
|----------------------|-----------------------|--|----------------------------|---|--|
| GIRL STUDENTS | Research Group | Questionnaire Initial survey | Passing the program | Questionnaire The same one that passed in the beginning | first examination of the student's information |
| | Focus Group | Questionnaire Initial survey | Passing the program | Questionnaire The same one that passed in the beginning | Interview with 8 girls from the focus group during passing the program |
| | Control Group | Questionnaire Initial survey | | | After passing the program) a comparison was made for the two groups (control group and research group) |
| TEACHERS | Questionnaire | | | | To examine the attitude and opinion of the teachers and parents about sex education program. |
| PARENTS | Interview | | | | |

It is important to note that research ethics were taken into account at all stages.

Summary of the findings

After the program had been taught, it was evaluated through the students. The results show that the program was successful: 94.4% of the students indicated that it had enriched their knowledge a lot, 5.6% of them indicated that it had enriched their knowledge a little, and none of them indicated that the program had not enriched their knowledge at all.

Support of the program was received from the focus group who expressed their opinions with great confidence.

There is statistically significant development in students' knowledge before and after program about sex: identifying their sexual organs, the female and male anatomy, delivering messages, menstrual period as illness, sexual harassment – who is being sexual harassed, and the expression of sexual harassment.

The results also show that our students are exposed to naked pictures in multiple places, so they must be aware of the danger of such pictures through programs dedicated to sex education.

According to the demographic factors (age, number of family members, fathers' job, the parents' education level), the results show that there is a moderate significant effect of age on students' knowledge. All students with different age groups were significantly more likely to have the same knowledge after the program. There are also moderate differences in students' knowledge in the intervention group regarding the demographic factor (number of family members). Most of the students with employed fathers and educated mothers have more knowledge than those of unemployed fathers and lower educated mothers while student's knowledge not influenced by the fathers' education level.

At the behavioral aspect, there are statistically significant differences in student's behavior before and after the program. While the percentage of female students' awareness of the behavioral aspect was high before the program, it increased more after participating in it. This shows how much our society is connected to traditions and customs and its outlook.

According to the demographic factors, results also show that there is no significant effect of age, number of family members, father's job, education level of mothers and fathers on students' behavior. This indicates that the students' behavior is not influenced by any of these factors: all students were significantly more likely to have the same behavior after the program, which means that the behavior improved for all students after the program regardless of all these factors.

Many of the teachers showed that they face questions about sex education from the students and their inability to answer them in a professional way. This shows that teachers also need training and enrichment on this subject. Moreover, many teachers showed ignorance, and carelessness in discussing such a subject and this is shown in their hesitation in not indicating explicitly their opinions about it.

According to the demographic factors younger teachers had more positive attitudes towards sex education than older teachers while another result shows teachers with more than 30 years of experience had more positive attitudes towards sex education than those who have less experience. Teachers who teach languages and art showed higher positive attitudes than those who teach science and religion.

Teachers who studied in an Israeli university showed highest positive attitudes, followed by the other teachers who study in a Palestinian university, and teachers who hold a Masters degree or above showed highest positive attitudes, followed by those holding a BA degree, then those who hold a diploma.

In summary, the results of this study indicate that teachers have favorable attitudes and perceptions toward towards sex education depending on the age, teaching experience, religion, sex, academic degree, place of study, and educational qualification.

The results show that almost half of the mothers do not talk to their daughters about the subject, forcing the girls to seek information from their friends and other sources. This exposes them to incorrect information and causes ignorance and lack of awareness amongst them, and not knowing how to behave in certain situations.

Mothers who prepare their daughters on the subject have limited information about it and not necessarily with a scientific basis. That is why most of the mothers asked for cooperation between the school and the home on this subject.

There was no significant difference in the number of family members, the mothers' and the fathers' education toward sex education except regarding the issue of "Is it possible for your daughter to go out of the house whenever she wishes?" The results indicate that there is a significant difference in the mothers' responses due to the fathers' educational background. Fathers with secondary educational level or below rejected this statement.

Discussion and Conclusions

This researcher's strong belief in implementing sex education programs, and in their good effects on society, the children, and parents convince her of the changes that will occur due to these programs such as:

- 1 Developing the awareness of students of physical and psychological changes in adolescence.
- 2 Enhancing the confidence of the students themselves.
- 3 Development the students' ability to protect themselves from sexual harassment if that occurs.
4. Increasing the teachers' and parents' awareness of the importance of the subject through the research tools.

The results of implementing this program showed that it has been very successful, This is one of the aims of sex education programs according to Schaalma et al. (2004) - to provide accurate and relevant information about the physical and emotional changes that children and young people will experience throughout their formative years and into adulthood.

There is statistically significant development in students' knowledge before and after program about sex: identifying their sexual organs, the female and male anatomy, delivering messages, menstrual period as illness, sexual harassment – who is being sexual harassed, and the expression of sexual harassment.

According to this result, we can see development in students' knowledge. Mu'adi, (2005) notes that such a program should be continuous to provide accurate information about sex education, following the steps of Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon him) who applied and explained this issue to all Moslems. He listened to and answered questions many of which he considered shameful and that no one should ask. Early Moslems followed this approach to achieve the right and sound sexual knowledge for children, teenagers, youth, male and female in order to achieve awareness of the dimensions of comprehensive sex education and forming a happy Islamic family.

Moreover, we can see from the results that our students are exposed to pictures of naked people in multiple places, so they must be made aware of the danger of such pictures through programs dedicated to sex education. The International Planned Parenthood Foundation (2008) sees that sex education program help to protect youth from abuse, exploitation, unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV and AIDS. It is also argued that providing sex education helps to meet young people's rights to information about matters that affect them, their right to have their needs met and to help them enjoy their sexuality and the relationships that they form.

On the behavioral aspect, there are statistically significant differences in student's behavior before and after the program. But the percentage of female students' awareness of these issues was high before and after the program, but increased their awareness thereafter. This can be explained by Arab Palestinian society in East Jerusalem having been dominated by tradition and religion. Shtandal (1992) claims that some girls are killed by their brothers and fathers because of honor crimes, as the person cannot continue living and he must (and can) return his honor by blood only. Therefore, they raise the girl to behave appropriately to the society, and respect the customs and traditions so as to be accepted by the members of the community. Carsel (1998) and Hassan (1998) explain that the sensitivity of the topic in the Arab community and the Arab family as a patriarchate unity must be handled with sensitivity, promoted by the extent of maintaining the respect and reputation of its members, especially men. Prejudicing this respect or skepticism of honor may destabilize the ability of male domination within the family. Honor of the family is associated with honor of the female within it and their respect and virginity before

marriage. Arabic education has focused on preferring males to females. It is reflected in the method of raising and dealing that are received by each of them. It has also focused on separating males and females and emphasizing that the sexual identity of girls does not belong to her but to her family and its honor. So girls have to maintain their honor and virginity more than anything else. (Shalhop-Keporkain, 1998). For that we saw from the interview with the mothers, that educated fathers allow their daughters to go out of the house whenever they wish, but in this researcher's opinion and in what she saw during the interview, some parents were exaggerating, as, according to Tamish (2003), like other societies, the Palestinian society is still a traditional one.

According to the Social Learning Theory sexual behavior is affected by personal knowledge, skills, attitudes, interpersonal relationships, and environmental influences (Hedgepeth & Helmich, 1996).

Many teachers showed that they face questions about sex education from the students and their incapability to answer them in a professional way. This shows that teachers also need training and enrichment in this subject. Moreover, many teachers showed ignorance, and carelessness in discussing such a subject and this is shown in their hesitation in not stating indicating their opinions explicitly. This point can be explained through the Ministry of Education in Israel, like the public in Israel, being divided over this issue, like in other countries. The state – religious education institutions and private religious education institutions almost completely ignore the subject of sex education, except in the field of sexual reproduction in biology lessons (Arab Cultural Awareness, 2006). The Ministry of Education does not offer training courses in the field of sex education.

However Daboul (2002) sees the importance of the school curriculum. School plays a key role in talking about the sex education issue because it involves all sectors of society. It should give students a complete and correct idea about the issue by qualified persons. She does not support transferring full responsibility to parents because of differing cultures among parents and different ways of acquiring it, which could be abusive and improper. This can lead to a negative development in the field and sexual awareness of children. There is no objection to participating in work and

planning the sex education issue between parents and school because the importance of parents' role in sex education program.

The results also show that almost half of the mothers do not talk to their daughters about the subject, hence the girls seek information from their friends and other sources exposing them to incorrect information, as detailed.

This result is confirmed by Cok and Gray (2007), who mention that research from many cultures indicates that parents provide their children and adolescents with very little or no sexual knowledge. In addition, they discourage children and adolescents from engaging in sex play yet rarely talk about their reasons for this. When young people need information about sex, they acquire it from friends, books, magazines, movies and television. Messages from parents, the media and the broader social environment are contradictory and confusing. On the one hand, adults generally emphasize that sex is bad. On the other hand, many social institutions promote the message that sex is exciting and desirable. Consequently, adolescents remain poorly informed about sex. A heated controversy continues to exist regarding providing adolescents with information about sexuality (Cok & Gray, 2007).

Srougy (1995) sees that sex education relates to the familial personal domain. Talking about it varies from one family to another according to the background of the family, its orientations towards customs and traditions. She agrees with Isbanyouli (1997) in this regard. She sees that parents are basic sexual breeders in the life of their children, especially in the early years even if they do not provide them with direct information.

But Isbanyouli (1997) adds that many parents feel embarrassed if they talk about these issues with their children and they do not talk about all aspects of sex life.

Oppositionists of sex education at schools claim that this kind of education is the parents' job. It must be given by them only because sex education follows a particular route, it is a part of home only. They expect that parents to carry out this task. They consider the parents' failure to do this is a failure in performing the familial jobs. On the other hand, supporters of sex education at school see it as a part of the social education. The education system in school has to help in correct emotional, mental, healthy and sexual development (Arhard, 1985; Daboul, 2002).

Teaching the program at school has great importance. The parents' role in the program also is central to the process, and must not be abdicated. It is key to improving the program and removing negative collision and conflict between parents and school.

It must be emphasized that social support could not be obtained, unless passing an awareness program for parents, children and also for teachers all for sex education in order to be able to offer the needed support, help and assistance. That will enable the community to protect itself and its members from sexual harassment and to create good citizens, enjoying psychological health.

It is important to mention that all the girls were waiting for this researcher when she came for these classes, every girl was sitting in her place. The class was very quiet as they want to take advantage of every minute in the meeting and the discussion, and they told me that they love these meetings, they even sometimes asked me to start the meeting and the exciting thing on which girls focus remains with this researcher throughout the meeting: shy smiles on their faces, one brave girl asking what she wants, other girls preferring to listen.

The focus group was the luckiest for all the girls in the class. They were told, you are lucky. After every meeting of this group with me the girls gathered around them and asked them "What did you say? And about what did you talk?" This yearning by 6th grade girls indicated the extent of the thirst for accurate information and the scientific information that their parents reflected to them as taboo.

Some of the teachers during my pass-through of the program and to school, asked me some questions or told me of an issue which students faced and wanted me to counsel. However the school of Islamic education asked me to give them my help in order to lessen the fear of a girl because of her first monthly period and to explain to her what happened with her, instead of her teacher who did not know how to deal with this issue, and her parents who did not talk with their daughter about it at all. Moreover, some teachers added that what should happen nowadays is that the Ministry of Education should create curricula and prepare teachers for such programs. The teacher who accompanied this researcher said that "the program was taught in a sophisticated way, where appropriate topics were raised in a conservative society, where students asked for scientific information, and that there was no deviation in any direction that was socially unacceptable".

The mothers of the girls attended the interview with this researcher, and after she illustrated the threads of the meetings, and explained to them the goal of the sex education programs and its importance in the life of the individual, they assured that these issues are important and must be discussed at school because the parents do not have the correct and accurate scientific information.

In conclusion, sex education programs and awareness are required socially for their importance, in terms of awareness of the individual of all the physical changes that occur to the body and accept these changes, building a sexual identity correctly without any dilemmas, giving the individual the confidence in herself and love for herself and her body. Individuals should be aware of incorrect and inaccurate information. Every person should try to protect her body and herself from any harassment or assault that might happen. Due to the importance of these subjects, we have to obtain the parents' attention.

A detailed explanation of the results and the hypotheses

The general hypotheses as mentioned below.

We expect to develop knowledge, behavior as well as awareness of their bodies and ways of protection from sexual harassment if they occurred, and to open the eyes of the teachers and the parents to the importance of the subject of sex education through the research tool.

And also we tested two groups of hypotheses. The first group of hypotheses concerns the student's knowledge and students' behavior before and after program. The second group of hypotheses concerns the feasibility of using a cross-over design of the student's knowledge and students' behavior after the program regarding personal, demographic, and general profiles. Another hypothesis pertains to the teachers, the parents, and the mothers in this case, regarding to the personal, demographic and general profiles.

Hypothesis I.a: There are significant differences in students' knowledge before and after the program

Students were asked to respond to 11 statements related to the students' knowledge for both groups. Responses included “true,” “false,” or “I don’t know, as below:

Questions addressed to the students' girls, regarding the knowledge profile of respondents for control and intervention groups

- Did you identify your sexual organs?
- Would you like to know the female and male anatomy?
- Is the menstrual period is an illness that affects females?
- Are hand shaking and kissing strangers acceptable in our society?
- Does privacy mean that our body is ours alone and we must protect it?
- Is it your responsibility to deliver your message to others properly so they understand you properly?
- Is a kiss from the husband to his wife in the street accepted in our society?
- Have you perhaps seen a picture of a naked person?
- If the above answer is yes, where did you see the picture ?
- Sexual harassment is: Touching the sexual organs, someone getting naked, forcing to watch sexual pictures, don't know.
- Sexual harassment affects only females, only males, both females and males, don't know?

The study measured students' knowledge about sex. They were asked whether they identify their sexual organs. At baseline, 52.6% and 57.9% of them in the control and research groups respectively agreed with the statement; this figure increased to 77.8% in the research group after the program (figure 3). For both groups there was a statistically significant increase in the proportion that agreed with the statement after the program (Asymp. Sig. = 0.019, and Asymp. Sig. = 0.038). Both are less than the level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$). In summary, the null hypothesis for this statement is accepted, which indicates that for this hypothesis there are statistically significant differences in the student's knowledge (identifying their sexual organs) before and after program, (although their attitudes towards the different behaviors changed).

Students were also asked if they like to know female and male anatomy. As shown in table 11, 57.9% in the control group and 68.4% in the research group at baseline supported this statement. For both groups there was a statistically significant increase in the proportion (83.3%) that agreed with the statement after participating in the program with Asymp. Sig. = 0.038, and Asymp. Sig. = 0.0058. This indicates that

the null hypothesis for this statement is accepted, which gives statistically significant differences in the students' knowledge (such as knowing the female and male anatomy) before and after program.

Students were presented with the following statement: “The menstrual period is an illness that affects females.” At baseline, about one-fourth of students in the control group (23.7%) and one-third of the intervention group (34.2%) responded affirmatively. These proportions decreased to 16.7% in the research group after participating in the program (Asymp. Sig. = 0.011, and Asymp. Sig. = 0.008). This indicates that the null hypothesis for this statement is accepted, which gives statistically significant differences in student's knowledge before and after program. These changes increase cognitive unconscious of the students' knowledge about the menstrual period.

Students were also asked if "Hand shaking and kissing strangers are acceptable in our society". As shown in table 11, 23.7% in the control group and the research group at baseline supported this statement. For both groups there was a statistically significant decreases in the proportion (5.6%) that agreed with the statement after participating in the program (with Asymp. Sig. = 0.013, and Asymp. Sig. = 0.003). This indicates that the null hypothesis for this statement is accepted, which gives a statistically significant difference in student's knowledge before and after program.

Students were presented with the following statement: “It is your responsibility to deliver your message to others properly so they understand you properly” At baseline 86.8% of the control group and 92.1% of the research group responded affirmatively. These proportions increased to 100% in the research group after participating in the program (Asymp. Sig. = 0.025, and Asymp. Sig. = 0.000). This indicates that the null hypothesis for this statement is accepted, which gives a statistically significant difference in students' knowledge before and after program, and the percentages of these changes increased.

When students were asked if “A kiss from the husband to his wife in the street is accepted in our society” most participants in all groups (94%) did not support this statement before and after the program. These proportions did not change in the research group after participating in the program (Asymp. Sig. = 0.231, and Asymp. Sig. = 0.097) which are greater than the level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$). This indicates

that the null hypothesis for this statement is not accepted, which indicates that there are no statistically significant differences in students' knowledge regarding this statement before and after program.

Percentage of female students' awareness of the points: "It is your responsibility to deliver your message to others properly so they understand you properly", "A kiss from the husband to his wife in the street is accepted in our society", and "Privacy means that our body is our alone", was very high before and after the program. This shows that this society is very conservative and tries to preserve its image abroad. This community is trying to protect its customs and traditions, thus the importance of assuring behavioral norms cannot be stressed too much.

Furthermore, when students were asked if "Have you by chance seen a picture of a naked person", at baseline in the control group (47.4%) and the research group (63.2%) responded affirmatively. These proportions increased to 72.2% in the research group after participating in the program. But this increase does not indicate that there are statistically significant differences in the students' knowledge of this statement before and after program, since their Asymp. Sig. values are greater than 0.05. This means that the null hypothesis for this statement is not accepted.

The same results were obtained when students were asked "Where did you see these naked pictures?" Clearly, according to the results, a high proportion of students were exposed to seeing pictures of a naked person, and in multiple places - before and after the program - so here lies the importance of sex education programs to inform students of the danger of these images. It is also clear from this result that there is no control or awareness by the parents.

Students were also asked about "sexual harassment" is:

- Touching the sexual organs
- Someone getting naked
- Forcing to watch sexual pictures
- Don't know

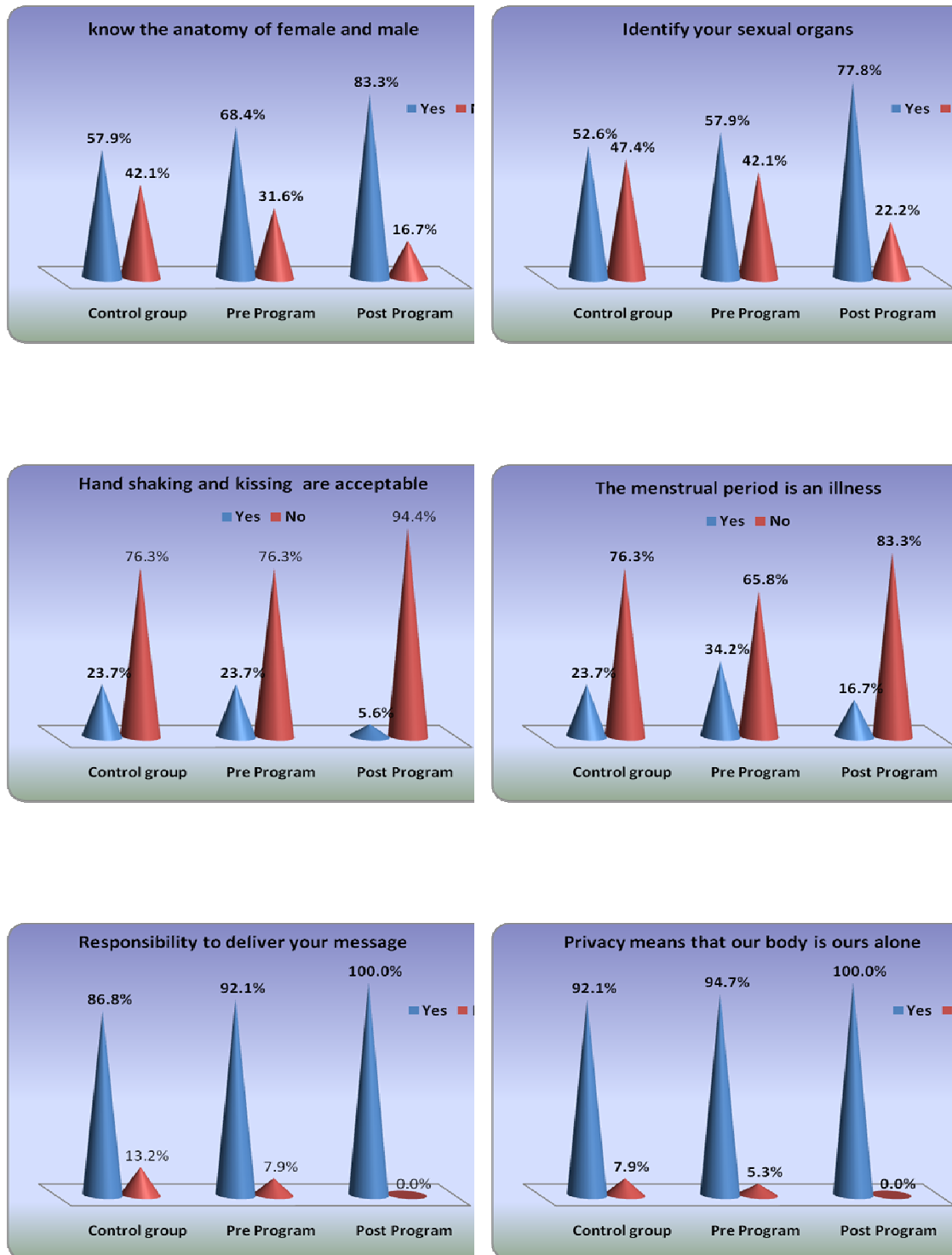
As shown in table 11, 18.4% in the control group and 7.9% in the research group at baseline indicated that sexual harassment is "touching the sexual organs". These percentages increased to 36.1% in the research group after participating in the program, with 2.6% in the control and research groups at baseline indicating that it is

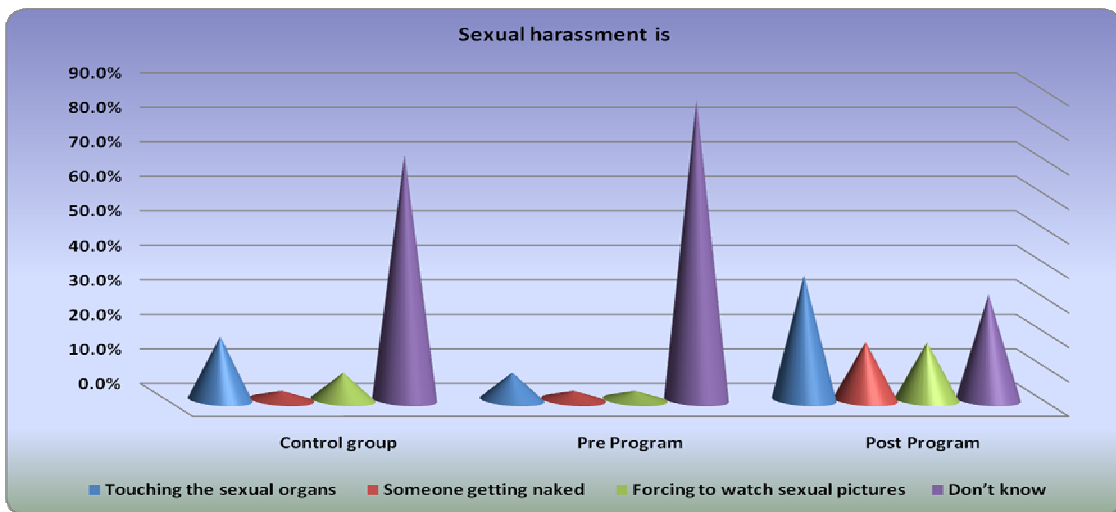
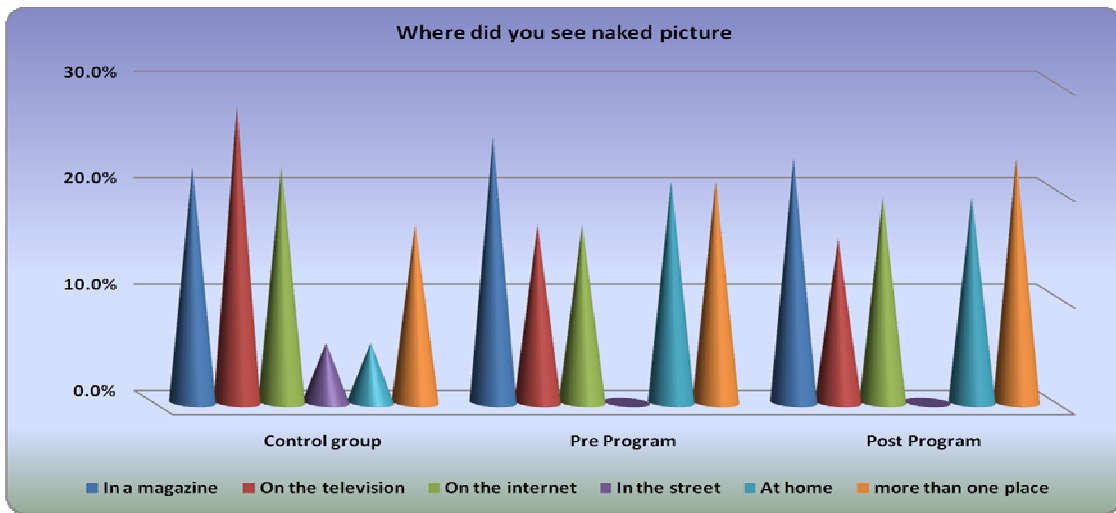
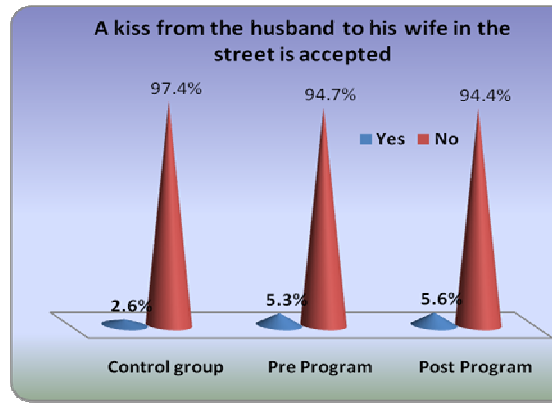
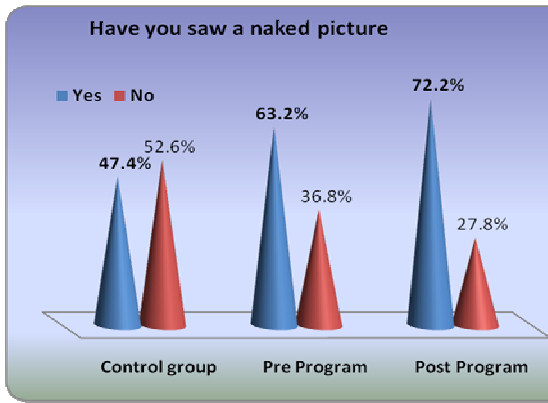
"someone naked". 7.9% in the control group and 2.6% in the research group at baseline indicates that it is "forcing to watch sexual pictures". These percentages increased to 16.7% in the research group after participating in the program. On the other hand, 71.1% in the control and 86.8% in the research group at baseline indicated that they "do not know what it is". These percentages decreased to 30.5% in the research group after participating in the program. The results show that there are statistically significant differences in the students' knowledge (sexual harassment) before and after the program, indicating that the null hypothesis for this statement is accepted.

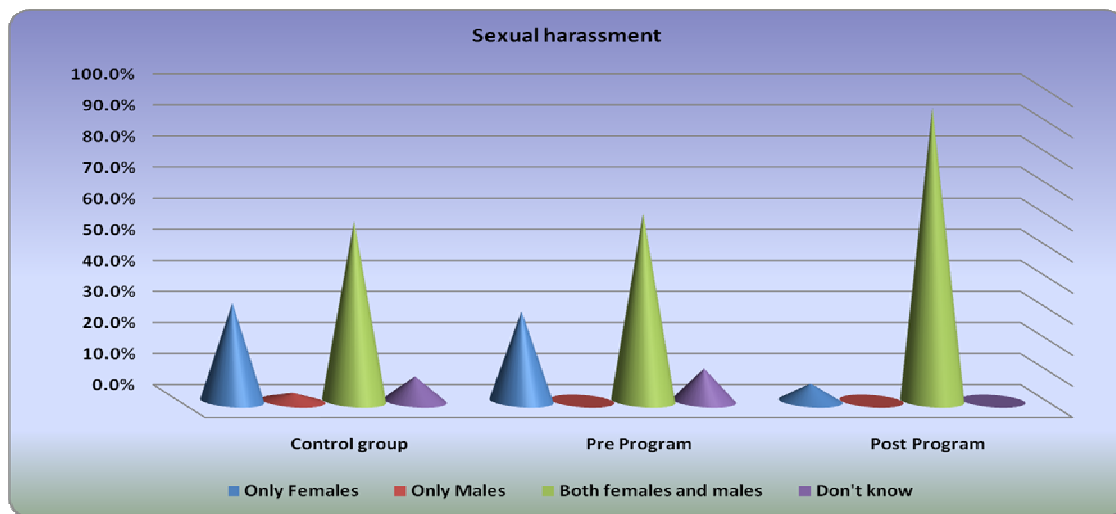
Students were also asked about sexual harassment affects only females, only males, both females and males, don't know? As shown in table 11, 31.6% in the control group and 28.9% in the research group at baseline indicating that "Only females ". These percentages decreased to 5.6% in the research group after participating in the program, and 2.6% in the control group at baseline indicating that "Only males". This percentage decreased to 0.0% in the research group. On the other hand, 57.9% in the control group and 60.5% in the research group at baseline indicates "both females and males". These percentages increased to 94.4% in the research group after participating in the program. The results in table V show that there are statistically significant differences in the students' knowledge (regarding being sexually harassed) before and after the program, indicating that the null hypothesis for this statement is accepted.

It cannot be stressed too often that not only females suffered from sexual harassment; males also suffered from it.

Figure 3: Percentage of students' knowledge profile







Hypothesis I.b: There are significant differences in students' behavior before and after participating in the program.

Students were asked to respond to five statements relating to the behavior of students for both groups. Percentages and Chi-square test for categorical data results are presented in figure 4.

Questions regarding the behavior profile of respondents for control and intervention groups

- A person you don't know said he's a friend of your father or family, and asked you to get in his car to take you home. Do you go with him, argue with the person, refuse to go with him, don't know what to do.
- You go to the store to buy something, and the store owner asks you to come in the store room to help him bring something. Do you hesitate to go in, leave the store, don't know what to do
- A person talking with you in sexual issues and asks you not to tell anyone. Do you listen to him, are disappointed, but agree, refuse to talk, tell an older person, don't know what to do.

- A person you don't know (man or woman) invites you in his/her home either to show, or watch, or play with something you like. Do you hesitate to enter, refuse to enter, don't know what to do.
- If someone bigger than you attacked you and threatened you not to tell anyone about the attack, you would keep silent, inform my family, be afraid and hesitate to inform family, inform trusted person, don't know what to do.

The study measured students' behavior regarding sex. They were asked "what to do if a person you don't know said he's a friend of your father or family, and asked you to get in his car to take you home"; and "A person talks to you about sexual issues and asks you not to tell anyone".

For both groups there was a statistically significant increase and decrease in the proportions in the responses to these statements after program (Asymp. Sig. = 0.002, and Asymp. Sig. = 0.001) and (Asymp. Sig. = 0.032, and Asymp. Sig. = 0.002) respectively. Both are less than the level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$). This shows that there are statistically significant differences in the students' behavior regarding these statements before and after the program. This indicates that the null hypothesis for these statements was accepted.

But we can see significant positive change after participating in the program- based on the graph - regarding the issue "If a person talks to you on sexual issues and asks you not to tell anyone".

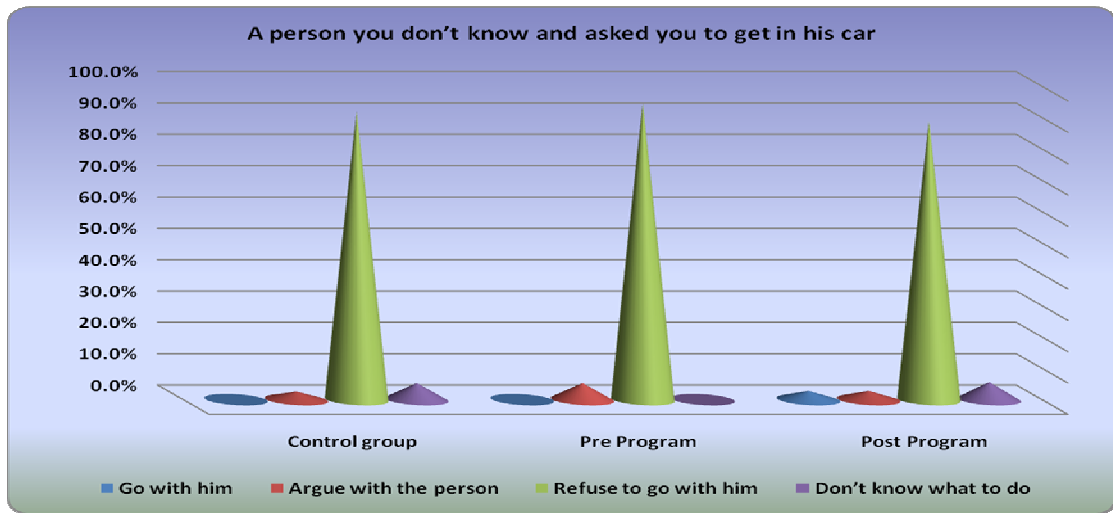
On the other hand, students were also asked, "You go to the store to buy something, and the store owner asks you to come into the store room to help him bring something"; "A person you don't know (man or woman) invites you into his/her home either to show, or watch, or play with something you like"; "If someone bigger than you attacked you and threatened you not to tell anyone about the attack, what will you do?"

Again, the issue is one of sexual harassment – but not only of females as males suffer from the problem as well.

As shown from the results, there were no statistically significant differences in the proportions in the responses to these statements before and after program in all groups. Their Asymp. Sig. are values greater than 0.05, indicating that the null hypothesis for these statements was not accepted.

Female students' awareness of these issues were high before and after participating in the program, but increased thereafter when the correct information had been emphasized.

Figure 4: Percentage of students: Behavioral information profile





N.B. Figure numbers remain as in the doctoral thesis

Analysis of the teachers' information

Many teachers showed that they face questions about sex education from the students and were incapable of answering them in a professional way. This shows that teachers also need training and enrichment on this subject. Moreover, many teachers showed ignorance, and carelessness in discussing such a subject and this is shown in their hesitation in not indicating explicitly their opinions about many items in the questionnaires.

Hypothesis III: There is a statistically significant difference in the teachers' and parents' attitudes towards sex education. .

The results were as follows: (Only significant results are presented)

1. "In my opinion it is not the job of the educator to convey sex education subjects in Arab society "X" age" (where X is the variable).

The results indicate that there are statistically significant difference in attitude: "In my opinion it is not the job of the educator to convey sex education subjects in Arab society". Teachers aged between the ages of 30-35, and 40 years and above, showed that conveying sex education subjects in Arab society is not the job of the educator

with response averages run between 2 and 2.4, whereas, the other age groups did not indicate their opinions about this item explicitly.

2. "I encounter personal difficulties on sex that children face in this field" "X" teaching experience" (where X is the variable).

Results indicate that there are statistically significant differences in attitude. "I encounter personal difficulties in sex that children face in this field" due to teaching experience. Teachers who have more than 30 years of teaching experience strongly agree on this item, where teachers with less than 20 years of teaching experience only agree; while those with 20-30 years of teaching experience did not indicate explicitly their opinions about this item. Overall, there was a general agreement on this question.

"I encounter questions on sex that children face in this field "X" professional field of specialty (where X is the variable).

Results indicate that there are statistically significant differences in attitude on this issue according to the professional field of specialty. Teachers who specialize in languages (Arabic, English, and Hebrew) noted that they encounter questions on sex with response average of 2.13, whereas teachers of other specializations did not indicate explicitly their opinions about this item with averages run between 2.75 and 3.11.

Analysis of the mothers' information

It is important to note a few points prior to the analysis:

- It was significant to mention that only the mothers came to the sessions, while we invited both parents.
- The 17 mothers who came were housewives with a moderate education level.
- Their family sizes varies from four to 11 individuals with the mean family size of seven persons.
- 16 of the 17 mothers wore a head covering.

Of all the participants, 64.7% reported that they had prepared their daughter psychologically for the physical changes that occur in adolescence, whereas, 35.3% of them had not.

52.9% of the mothers told their daughters about this subject, 17.6% of mothers reported that their daughter heard about this subject from friends, the same percentage hearing from mothers and other sources, and 11.8% of mothers reported that no one informed their daughters about this subject.

The results show that almost half of the mothers do not talk to their daughters about the subject, making the girls seek information from their friends and other sources. This exposes the girls to incorrect information, causing ignorance and lack of awareness amongst the girls, and not knowing how they should behave in certain situations.

The mothers who prepare their daughters on the subject have limited information about it, and not necessarily based on scientific facts. For this reason most of the mothers asked for cooperation between the school and the home on this subject.

This researcher felt that most of the mothers tried to give a picture of perfection in their raising of their daughters and children, especially when asked whether it was possible for the daughter to go out of the house whenever she wished. 88.2% disagreed, while 11.8% agreed.

When the mothers were asked whether they let their sons go out of the house whenever they wished, 70.6% said no, while 29.4% said yes.

This writer's own experience and background, however, caused her to feel that this was not an honest answer.

The importance of preserving the traditional culture, and behaving accordingly, however, does not contradict the desire, awareness and need to acquire greater knowledge. Furthermore, the answers received from the study indicate the awareness of the wrongdoing of sexual harassment and need to tell someone about it – as noted in the appendix.

According to the demographic factors, results also show that there is no significant effect of age, number of family members, father's job, education level of mothers and fathers on students' behavior and knowledge, but most of the students with employed fathers and educated mothers have greater knowledge than those of unemployed fathers and lower educated mothers, while student's knowledge was not influenced by the fathers' education level.

While, the results of this study indicate that teachers have favorable attitudes and perceptions toward towards sex education depending on age, teaching experience, religion, gender, academic degree, place of study, and educational qualification.

Also the results show that there was no significant difference in the number of family members, the mothers and fathers education toward sex education except for question five "Is it possible for your daughter to go out of the house whenever she wishes?" The results indicate that there is significant difference in the mothers' responses due to the fathers' educational background; fathers with secondary educational level or below rejected this statement.

Conclusion

After the program had been taught, its evaluation was determined through the students. The results showed that it was successful: 94.4% of the students indicated that the program had enriched their knowledge a lot, 5.6% of them indicated that it had enriched their knowledge a little, and none of them indicated that it had not enriched their knowledge at all. The success of the program is supported by the focus group that expressed their opinions with great confidence.

The results of implementing this program indicated its influence on the research population, which can be shown through the hypotheses and analysis of the results. There is a statistically significant development in students' knowledge before and after the program regarding sex: identifying their sexual organs, the female and male anatomy, delivering messages, menstrual period as illness, sexual harassment (who is being sexually harassed), and the expression of sexual harassment. From the results we can see that the students are exposed to seeing pictures of naked people in

multiple places, so they must be made aware of the danger of such pictures through programs dedicated to sex education.

According to the demographic factors, results also show that there is no significant effect of age, number of family members, father's job, mothers' and fathers' education level on the students' behavior. This indicates that the students' behavior is not influenced by any of these factors: all students were significantly more likely to have the same behavior after the program, which means that the behavior improved for all students after the program regardless of all these factors. Therefore, sex education programs must begin from early childhood and last through the years of their education. Furthermore, the information must be suited to each age period.

Many of the teachers noted that they faced questions about sex education from the students and their inability to answer them in a professional way. This shows that teachers also need training and enrichment on this subject. Moreover, many teachers showed ignorance and carelessness in discussing such a subject and this is shown in their hesitation in not indicating explicitly their opinions about it.

The results show that almost half of the mothers do not talk to their daughters about the subject, forcing the girls to seek information from their friends and other sources. This exposes them to incorrect information and causes ignorance and lack of awareness amongst them, and not knowing how to behave in certain situations.

Mothers who prepare their daughters on the subject have limited information about it and not necessarily with a scientific basis. That is why most of the mothers asked for cooperation between the school and the home on this subject.

All the findings from the teachers and the students, indicate the importance of raising the awareness of the parents in the home, and educating the teachers in schools so that they will be able to pass correct accurate information to the students, and more important the students themselves through implementing sex education programs according to the different ages. All of this in order to develop knowledge for the students, as well as awareness of their bodies and ways of protection from sexual harassments.

Difficulties faced during the research

- While teaching the program there were some girls, who asked questions and discussing issues, and others were listeners who were very shy and did not say a word.
- When we talk about 6th grade, we find that there is a difference between the pupils: some are almost adult, others are still children, some of them have children bodies and they also think as children, others are grown and adult, have also a good level of thinking, and menstruate. These differences must be taken into account, and the program applied according to the level.
- Only the mothers came to the sessions, while we invited both parents.
- The researcher felt that most of the mothers tried to give me a picture of perfection in their raising of their daughters and children.

Research limitations

This research examines the issue of sex education and sex education programs in one school only, and one age group, so results are limited. If we want to generalize the results, we must conduct research on a larger number of schools, as well as on different communities in Palestine.

Another point to bear in mind – the researcher could not start working on her study until she obtained the approval of the Education Department in the Arab Community, of the Psychological Consulting Services in the Ministry of Education, and of the head office of the Ministry of Education in Israel, which took a very long time, but she now sees the positive aspect of this as her research became known to the Ministry.

Recommendations

1. Teachers need special professional training on this subject.
2. The students need such programs to be implemented for their great importance.
3. Parents need training courses or lectures to raise more awareness.
4. These programs should be implemented in all the schools and in a constant rhythm, using a professional curriculum.

5. Sex education should be taken seriously, and taught from kindergarten, gradually.
6. Teaching children sex education should be valid all the time for females and males, not only when certain problems occur.
7. The "Aman" program should be applied in all schools (both private and government) in Jerusalem and the West Bank without exception because it is properly designed for our community, and should be adopted as part of the curriculum.

Applying sex education programs is important, and the community needs them. Students are also ready, because they are exposed to the world of the Internet and Facebook, movies and television stations, and the subject cannot be avoided or ignored.

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