



Family Communication Management Model for Parents in Building a Child's Sexual Understanding from an Early Age

Dewi K Soedarsono

Universitas Telkom, Fakultas Komunikasi dan Bisnis, Bandung, Indonesia

Email : dsoedarsono@telkomuniversity.ac.id

Lusy Mukhlisiana

Universitas Telkom, Fakultas Komunikasi dan Bisnis, Bandung, Indonesia

Email: lusymj@telkomuniversity.ac.id

Slamet Parsono

Universitas Telkom, Fakultas Komunikasi dan Bisnis, Bandung, Indonesia

Email: slamparsono@gmail.com

Received: December 13, 2022; reviews: 2; accepted: January 21, 2023

Abstract

Understanding of sexuality from an early age needs to be given considering that at this time sexual violence often occurs in minors. The role of the family in this case the parents is very large in providing explanations to children so that it is necessary to form a positive attitude from parents about the importance of sexual education for children so that they can provide explanations about sexuality that are correct according to the stages of child development. But for most families, talking about sexuality to children is taboo. Parents think that sexuality is just sexual relations in adults only. The fact is that the media is very open in presenting information about sexuality, besides that the threat of sexual violence in the environment around children is often ignored. Based on this, this study aims to 1) analyze the use of verbal and nonverbal communication used by parents to children in building sexual understanding. 2) Finding a family communication management model in building children's sexual understanding. This research was studied using a qualitative descriptive analysis method with in-depth interviews with parents who live in Pasir Melati Village, Bandung. In-depth interviews were used to obtain qualitative data. Interviews were conducted with parents selected by purposive sampling. The results of the study show that parents use a variety of verbal communication. Parents' verbal communication avoids the topic of sexuality more, diverts the conversation towards good attitude, discipline and faith. Nonverbal communication is more shown with wide eyes when the topic of sexuality arises,

closes eyes, and chooses to leave the place. The Communication Management Model was found to be an ideal picture of a family building a child's sexual understanding.

Keywords

Communication Management Model, Family Communication, Child Sexual Education

Introduction

In early childhood where children really want to know something, it causes children to start asking questions and being critical. Research has repeatedly shown that early learning has lasting effects on development although they are seldom irreversible (Sylva, 1997). In addition, various open media provide a lot of information of all kinds, so people don't have to bother looking for it. Among various media, television plays the biggest role in presenting inappropriate and premature information to children. Continued media exposure is a risk factor for behavioral problems in children, while reduced early exposure does not pose an additional risk. For social skills, concurrent media exposure is more important than continuous or initial exposure. Considering the timing of media exposure is critical to understanding the consequences of early experiences and informing prevention strategies (Mistry et al., 2007). The results of the study show that television has positive and negative impacts on children. The positive impact is in the form of improving all aspects of early childhood development so that children become more communicative, imaginative and active (Rohani, 2015).

Behind the benefits of television there is a large potential negative influence, especially for children. Children are subjected to murder, violence, kidnapping, hostage-taking, immorality and immorality, moral, cultural and social damage. To reduce the unwanted effects of inappropriate media exposure on children's cognition, parents need to consider delaying their child's introduction to, exposure to appropriate electronic media, and increasing verbal interaction in parental accompaniment during media use with children is very important. (Sudarat et al., 2020). Thus, information disclosure makes children more curious about questions. Children's questions are sometimes answered excessively by parents. Questions that confuse parents that need to be answered are questions about sexuality, for example, where do younger siblings come from, the difference in gender between them and the opposite sex. A study shows that education about sex is rarely done at home. Research found that only 6.8% of children get knowledge about sex from their parents (Bo, 2018).

Most parents in Indonesia still consider talking about sex to be taboo. There are many factors that make people think that discussing matters related to sexuality is taboo, including: (1) cultural factors that prohibit discussion of sexuality in public. This is because sex is considered something that is pornographic and is very personal in nature so that it should not be disclosed to other people. (2) The

definition of sexuality in society is still very narrow, discussions about sexuality seem to only be interpreted in the direction of sexual relations let alone linking it with children (Dwiyani, 2004).

As a result, parents become afraid, confused, embarrassed, thus preventing the parents themselves from providing correct information, even though the fact that there is information about sexuality is already open to children without having to bother looking for it. Information that is easily obtained by children is not necessarily correct according to the stages of their development. Information about sexuality is better taught in the family in a directed and guided manner, this needs to be done to overcome negative information that comes from outside the family environment. But the fact is that when a child asks about his genitals which are different from the genitals of other people who are more mature, the parents don't respond, even though that is an opportunity for the parents to explain sexuality to the child.

The influence of the mass media also makes parents feel worried and afraid of its negative impact on children's development, but parents do not give enough explanation to their children. For example, when there are shows that have a sexual content on television, parents will quickly change television channels without giving an explanation to their children. Parents are also worried if their children hang out with people who are more mature, they are afraid that their children will be taught something negative, for example being invited to watch porn movies. When children play with their peers, parents also supervise closely. Healthy, honest and open sexuality information will foster children's respect and obedience towards their parents. If parents are honest and helpful in explaining sexuality, then children will also be encouraged to trust them in matters other than sex. Sexuality can be taught as early as possible since the child is born (Kriswanto, 2006).

Sexual education is an effort to raise awareness, teach, and provide information related to sex issues. (Ratnasari & Alias, 2016) The purpose of early childhood sex education is to provide understanding to children that from a physiological point of view, every human being is different, both boys and girls. Sexual education does not mean that someone learns how to have sex, but sexual education is teaching whose purpose is to provide an understanding based on facts, to discuss honestly and openly, to place the meaning of sexuality in the right sense, to relate to self-confidence. , also focuses on the ability to act to make decisions (Septiawan et al., 2014). Sexual education in early childhood is also very useful for fostering morals in children so that it can prevent social deviations, especially sexual deviations.(Kurdi & Afif, 2021). Most importantly, children need to be provided with adequate sexual knowledge so that they are able to recognize negative things that might happen in their environment. He must be able to understand efforts that lead to sexual harassment, considering that the level of sexual violence, especially in Indonesia, has been increasing lately, many of which affect young children.(Mukhlisiana et al., 2023).

Literature review

Experts formulate the notion of family as a group of people united by ties of marriage, blood or adoption; consists of one household, interacting and communicating with each other in their social roles as husband and wife, mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters creating a shared culture (Burgess & Locke, 1960). According to Mattessich and Hill, the family is a group related to kinship, residence, or very close emotional relationship that shows four things (namely intimate interdependence, maintaining selected boundaries, being able to adapt to change and maintaining identity over time, and performing tasks -family duties) (Zeitlin, 1995). Law No. 52 of 2009 concerning Population Development and Family Development Article 1 Paragraph (6) states that the family is the smallest unit in society consisting of husband and wife, or husband, wife and children, or father and children, or mother and children.

In the family there is a process in which parents instill values and norms in children or family members who are exemplary or become parents in educating, caring for, and raising their children. Among family members there is communication interaction in which each family member responds to messages and receives messages. This interaction confirms that in the family there is dialogic interpersonal communication (Liliweri, 1997). Feedback activities from communication within the family function as an enriching and strengthening element of communication between family members so that the hopes and wishes of family members can be achieved (Galvin, 2004).

Family communication is a challenging phenomenon to define theoretically because it simultaneously relies on intrapersonal and interpersonal processes. In other words, the variables that explain family communication are within each individual and within the family system. Thus, a full explanation of family communication needs to take into account both intersubjectivity refers to the similarity of meanings that family members attach to their communicative behavior and is best understood in terms of relational cognition. (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006).

Functional structural approach is a sociological theory approach that is applied in family institutions. The family as an institution in society has similar principles in the social life of society. This approach has a clear color, which recognizes the existence of all the diversity in social life. And this diversity is the main source of the structure of society. And finally the diversity in function according to one's position in the structure of a system. For example, in a social organization there must be a segment of members who are able to become leaders, and those who become secretaries or ordinary members. Of course, a person's position in the organizational structure will determine their function, each of which is different. However, this difference in function is not to fulfill the interests of the individual concerned, but to achieve organizational goals as a unit. Of course, this structure and function will never be separated from the influence of culture, norms and values that underlie the social system (Megawangi, 1999).

The application of Structural-Functional theory in the family context can be seen from the structure and rules set. The family is a universal unit that has rules, such as rules for children to learn to be independent. Without the rules or functions carried out by the family unit, the family unit has no meaning that can produce happiness. Even in the absence of regulations, there will grow or form a next generation that does not have better creations and will have emotional problems and live without direction. According to supporters of this theory, harmony in the division and implementation of role functions, allocation, solidarity, commitment to rights, obligations and shared values is the main condition for the functioning of the family. (Megawangi, 1999) On the other hand, families that are not functioning properly, in the absence of these conditions, will be the main producers of problem children (Bell & Vogel, 1960).

The family communication management approach is used to analyze the results of planning and evaluating family communication activities. Communication management can not only be implemented for organizational activities but can also be used to determine individual actions/stages before carrying out communication activities; in this case by applying the POAC model which reveals the stages starting from planning, organizing, actuating and controlling (Soedarsono, 2020). In the end, this research seeks to find an ideal family communication management model in which parents play an active role in building children's understanding of sexual education.

Family communication management is inseparable from interpersonal communication which is the basis for communication between all family members which is carried out in more depth, so that there is mutual understanding between family members, in this case parents, namely fathers and mothers and their children. The interaction network that forms the basis of interpersonal communication allows for the establishment of a relationship of mutual understanding among all family members. Social penetration theory has a major role in the field of psychology and communication. The social penetration theory model provides a comprehensive way to describe the development of interpersonal relationships and to build on individual experience as a process of self-disclosure that drives relationship progress. (Kadarsih, 2009). Therefore it is important in the family to communicate openly and deeply, namely communication that empowers humans and has the goal of building trust and consensus. The intensity of communication carried out must be in line with the direction of communication (Freire, 2005). Pattern family communication contains two dimensions: conversational orientation and conformity orientation (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). This study also uses the theoretical basis of interpersonal communication to examine the forms of verbal and nonverbal communication used by parents in their efforts to provide sexual understanding to their children. During everyday communication, especially face-to-face interactions, vocal and visible behaviors are usually coordinated in a way that provides for their mutual performance. When people speak, they also position their bodies, take various

postures, direct their eyes, perhaps move their hands, all behaving in ways that are interactive events.(Jones & LeBaron, 2002).

Methods

This study uses a qualitative descriptive design with a naturalistic approach (Creswell, 2007). Naturalistic research is research that is used for natural objective conditions where the researcher is a key instrument, data collection techniques are carried out by triangulation, data analysis is inductive, and research results emphasize meaning, not generalization (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982).

To obtain data according to research needs, 10 informants were selected using purposive sampling to take samples in qualitative research. Purposive sampling was carried out to understand essential phenomena, in which the researcher selected individuals deliberately(Creswell, 2007). The number of informants is determined based on the data saturation limit. When the data obtained from several informants showed a fairly high degree of similarity, the researcher decided that the data was saturated and there was no need to increase the number of informants. Research informants were selected based on several criteria, including 1) Are parents of early childhood (0-6 years), 2) One or both parents are workers, 3) Live in the area between the city and the district. Then 10 informants were selected as described in the following table:

Table 1. Research Informants

NO	NAME	AGE	GENDER	WORK
1	RN	31	Male	Factory Labor
2	WJ	24	Male	Security Officer
3	IT	23	Male	Factory Labor
4	BB	28	Male	Driver
5	EN	32	Male	Security Officer
6	CC	25	Female	Factory Labor
7	AI	23	Female	Teacher
8	HD	25	Female	Housewife
9	KM	26	Female	House Assistant
10	TD	22	Female	Housewife

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2023

Data was collected through face-to-face in-depth interviews with all informants. In addition, observations were also made to enrich the data and also as an effort to obtain valid data. Both interviews and in-depth observations were conducted in several meetings over a period of 2 months from January to February 2023. All interview results were recorded and audio recorded. Researchers also make notes and logbooks to record observations which are then compared and compared with the results of interviews to then be analyzed using various approaches so as to produce data that can be accounted for. This was done as a

triangulation method, namely to determine the validity of the data in this study so that the researcher conducted a credibility test, which was defined as collecting data including information sheets, field notes, transcripts, and external evaluations. (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982).

Findings and results

Table 2. Results of research on parental responses to children's questions about gender differences

INFORMAN	VERBAL COMMUNICATION	NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION
1	Yes, you are a woman, he is a man, that's all	Smile while looking embarrassed
2	Yes, I like to be confused, something like that doesn't need to be asked, it's obvious that my child is a boy, why do I ask why I don't know, it's already from there	Laughing and covering face, gesture uneasy and looking uncomfortable
3	Anyway, there are 2 genders, there are men and women, why are there 2, because God created 2, at least I'll explain it	Look calm, facial expression even
4	Just answer as best you can, sometimes it takes too long to get bored asking	No expression, flat and looks uncomfortable
5	It's a pity, no one ever asked that	Laugh, avoiding eye contact
6	There are men, there are women, so if other than that it's a disorder, it's called hahahaha	Laughing, not taking the answer seriously, avoiding eye contact, fidgeting
7	Ah, strange, strange question, that's how it was, that's how it is, that's it	Hands closing eyes, restless, uncomfortable
8	I was once asked by my son, why did my brother have a "bird", why not me? At first I was confused, what kind of "bird" is that? Hahhahaa ... it turns out that "bird". Yes, I'll just answer, the one who owns the bird is a man, if you don't have one because it's a woman, it's "surabi" hahahaha	Face flushed, hands twitching, talking and laughing
9	Men must be strong, women are weak, they like to cry. That's why you have to be strong so you can protect women	Calm gesture, dreamy eyes, avoiding eye contact
10	The woman gives birth, if the man earns a living, it's like the father works, the mother stays at home and takes care of you	Serious facial expression, hands clasped together while occasionally playing with the edge of the veil

Table 3. The results of research regarding parents' responses to children's questions about how the birth process was

INFORMAN	VERBAL COMMUNICATION	NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION
1	Just ask my mom about that	Uncomfortable, parrying hand movements
2	Wow, the questions are difficult, I usually just ask the teacher, I'm afraid it's my fault	Looked reluctant to answer
3	Let me just explain, because God created humans, because of God's power, humans can be born	Calm, expressionless
4	Wow, I've never been to my mother, maybe I'll ask her mother	Uncomfortable, eye twitching, restlessness
5	My child has never asked questions like that, when he was 2 years old, he didn't understand	Looks uncomfortable
6	When I was pregnant with his sister, my sister asked, why was there something in mom's stomach? I said, you soon want to have a sister, this is her sister in mom's stomach. I'm confused, what's the answer? How come it's in the stomach?	Blushing, blushing face, hands moving to cover eyes
7	Have you ever been asked, mamah, where do I come from? Why is there me? Suddenly there? I just replied, you were born from your mother's stomach, uh, he even asked, did it not hurt me in your mother's stomach?	Laughing while occasionally rubbing the stomach
8	Once, even though my child was only 4 years old, I asked questions like that, why did the neng (his little sister) suddenly come out of mom's stomach, ai where did I come out of, I don't know, suddenly weh was in my stomach, I said tea , duh, I'm confused, what should I do to explain it, I want to say that I left "that" hihihii	Laughing, blushing face, twinkling eyes
9	The nature of a woman to give birth, has been arranged by God like that	Calm, expressionless
10	I've never been asked that kind of question, thank God, I don't know how to answer	Relax, a little uncomfortable

Discussion

In line with the topic of Family Communication Management for Parents in Building a Child's Sexual Understanding from an Early Age, according to the results of the study showing the climate of conversation and uniformity in the family will balance the child's independence function, determine the effectiveness of socialization on the development of identity, self-esteem and solving children's problems their children to the difficulties they are experiencing (Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1993. Vandsburger, et al (2008) and complements McCubbin & Petterson's (1982) study which places communication as the main attribute in the adaptation process in the family, as a result of a pile of stress for parents (Bristol, 1987; Stuart & McGrew, 2009).

Based on this explanation, in order to achieve continuity of communication activities between parents and their children in providing an understanding of sex education, the manifestation of research results using verbal and non-verbal communication activities, can be synergized using a family communication management approach, delivered through the following stages:

1. Planning (planning), namely determining the main goals and objectives of the message content to be successful, including: developing a message strategy, how to convey messages both verbally and non-verbally; parents, in this case a mother, to ask questions about sensitive matters, to pack questions/explanations in verbal and non-verbal forms in simple and easy-to-understand language and adapted to the circumstances of the communication.
2. Organizing (organization), aims to determine specifically the activities and needs to achieve the goals and results to be achieved by parents in providing an understanding of sex education to their children. In this case, the people involved, for example the role of the parents, whether the mother or father who interacts with their child or the help of the school teacher
3. Directing (activation), is the process of activities related to the packaging of verbal and non-verbal messages, the contents of the message are carried out according to plan, namely as a process of conveying messages from parents to their children and vice versa.
4. Controlling (supervision), activities carried out by parents whether the contents of the message conveyed are in accordance with the planning objectives, what obstacles or obstacles in understanding the contents of the message, namely after the three stages have been carried out, what has been conveyed by parents and teachers regarding sex education discussed again, to find out to what extent parents experience problems interacting with their children and vice versa what the children do not understand. This is important to do considering the educational aspects of parents and children, the socio-cultural environment influences the understanding of each communicator.

Based on this explanation, according to the research results of Ratna Zakiyah (2016) Parents' knowledge in cases of sexual violence against children (KSA) is still minimal. The main inhibiting factors that hinder parents from providing sexuality education to early childhood are perceived discomfort, unprepared perceptions of children and ignorance of how to convey sexuality education to children. The availability of adequate information about sexuality, good communication and the role of fathers in sexuality education will make it easier for parents to provide sexuality education to early childhood. Another thing is the school environment, social and family factors also contribute to how children understand sex education so that sexual violence in the children's environment can be prevented.

In line with the results of Ridwan Budi Pramono's research, schools are effective places for disseminating information, forming attitudes and developing skills. School is the second place after home where children spend a lot of time interacting and socializing. Teachers play a major role in the school environment. Sex education which is the provision of teachers must be adapted to its designation, so that there is no longer a sense of taboo when hearing the term sex education. Appropriate content and delivery adapted to Indonesian culture will help change people's perceptions of sex education itself, and in the end it is hoped that sex education will become one of the main strongholds for schools in protecting their students from KSA.

Conclusion

Based on the explanation on the results of research and discussion, where the aspects that exist in family communication management activities, namely planning, organizing, implementing and controlling, as well as the role of communication participants, including communicators, messages, communicants and feedback, then to facilitate the process of delivering educational messages sex from parents and/to children, can be simulated in the form of communication management implications as follows:

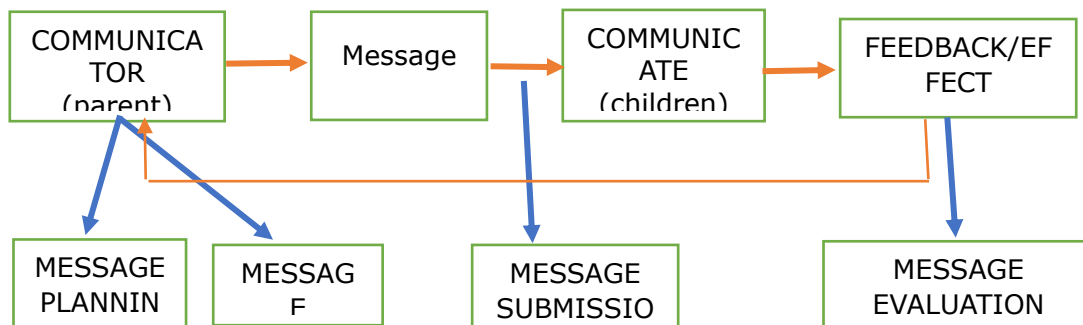


Image explanation

The communicator in this case, before interacting, plans messages, which can be done using the 5 W and 1 H approaches, while organizing messages is a self-evaluation material on whether the mother or father will convey the message

while determining the appropriate method according to the situation when conveying the message. after the message is delivered, an evaluation process is carried out to find out whether the child (communicant) has understood or whether the method of delivering the message Sex education is easy to understand while analyzing any obstacles during communication activities between parents and children.

Furthermore, from this explanation, it can be understood that communication management is generally understood as a process of coordinating interpretations or forms of understanding through interactions between humans. This form is in the form of "ability to communicate" in human interaction and can be understood from the point of view of individual experience (field of experience) and each frame of reference. (Soedarsono, 2020:69).

References

- Bell, N. W., & Vogel, E. F. (1960). A Modern Introduction to the Family. In *Social Forces* (4th ed., p. 691). Glencoe, Ill, Free Press.
- Bo, P. (2018). Association with the opposite sex and sex attitudes of 6th grade elementary students. *The Korean Journal of Health Education*, 4(1), 59–88.
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, K. S. (1982). *Qualitative research for education: introduction to theory and methods*. Allyn & Bacon.
- Burgess, E. W., & Locke, H. J. (1960). *The family: from institution to companionship*. American Book.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*, 2nd ed. (2nd ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Dwiyani, V. (2004). *Ketika buyung bertanya*. Elex Media Komputindo.
- Freire, P. (2005). *Pedagogy of The Opressed*. Continuum.
- Galvin, K. (2004). The Family of the Future: What Do We Face? In *Handbook of Family Communication*.
- Jones, S. E., & LeBaron, C. D. (2002). Research on the Relationship Between Verbal and Nonverbal Communication: Emerging Integrations. *Journal of Communication*, 52(3), 499–521.
- Kadarsih, R. (2009). Teori Penetrasi Sosial dan Hubungan Interpersonal. *Jurnal Media Komunikasi Dan Dakwah*, 10(1), 53–66.
- Koerner, A. F., & Fitzpatrick, M. A. (2006). Family communication patterns theory : a social cognitive approach. In *Engaging Theories in Family Communication : Multiple Perspectives*. SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Kriswanto, C. (2006). *Seks, es krim dan kopi susu*. Jagadnita.
- Kurdi, M. S., & Afif, Y. U. (2021). The enhancement of islamic moral values through sex education for early children in the family environment. *Religio Education*, 1(2), 106–116. <https://doi.org/41346/17490>
- Liliweri, A. (1997). *Komunikasi antar-pribadi*. Citra Aditya Bakti.
- Megawangi, R. (1999). *Membiarkan berbeda : Sudut pandang baru tentang relasi gender*. Pustaka Pelajar.

- Mistry, K. B., Minkovitz, C. S., Strobino, D. M., & Borzekowski, D. L. (2007). Children's Television Exposure and Behavioral and Social Outcomes at 5.5 Years: Does Timing of Exposure Matter? *American Academy of Pediatrics*, 120(4), 762–769. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2006-3573>
- Mukhlisiana, L., Kuswarno, E., Rizal, E., & Maryani, E. (2023). Volunteer communication management in handling children of sexual violence victim in Bandung- Indonesia.
- Pramono, Ridwan Budi, Culture-based sexual education as an effort to prevent sexual violence against children in Indonesia, <https://eprints.umk.ac.id/7302/2/>
- Ratnasari, R. F., & Alias, M. (2016). Pentingnya pendidikan seks untuk anak usia dini. *Jurnal Tarbawi Khatulistiwa*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/2442-756X>
- Rohani, G. A. (2015). Pengaruh televisi (tv) terhadap aspek-aspek perkembangan anak usia 3-4 tahun. *Jurnal Pendidikan Anak*, 4(2). <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.21831/jpa.v4i2.12355>
- Septiawan, M. H., Pitoewas, B., & Hermi, Y. (2014). Pengaruh pendidikan seks dalam keluarga terhadap perkembangan moral anak. *Jurnal Fkip Unila*, 2(8).
- Soedarsono, D. K. (2020). Sistem manajemen komunikasi teori, model dan aplikasinya. *Simbiosis Rekatama Media*.
- Sudarat, S., Trairatvorakul, P., & Chonchaiya, W. (2020). Screen media exposure in the first 2 years of life and preschool cognitive development: a longitudinal study. *Pediatric Research*, 88, 894–902. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41390-020-0831-8>
- Sylva, K. (1997). Critical Periods in Childhood Learning. *British Medical Bulletin*, 53(1), 185–197. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.bmb.a011599>
- Zakiyah, Ratna et al (2016), Taboo, cultural barriers to early sexuality education in children in Kota Dumai, Vol.32 No.9 . <https://jurnal.ugm.ac.id/bkm/article/view/10557>
- Zeitlin, M. F. (1995). Strengthening the Family: Implications for International Development. *Food and Nutrition Bulletin*, 16(1). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/156482659501600122>