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Analysis of Factors Influencing Teachers' Perceptions of Affective-Sex Education

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Abstract

This paper points out the importance of studying the training and attitude of teachers towards affective-sexual education (ASE), its implementation in the classroom being highlighted in the current education law (LOMLOE). The EAS is understood through its direct relationship with the consumption of pornography and subsequent consumption of prostitution, through the dehumanisation and objectification of women and girls. The sample includes 97 teachers of Compulsory-Post-compulsory Secondary Education in Spain. A quantitative methodology with a descriptive approach was used, with a Likert scale questionnaire. The psychometric properties were evaluated using two parametric analyses: T-Student and ANOVA.

Keywords: sex education; training; teachers; attitude; pupil.gender-based violence; sexual violence.

Introduction

In the adolescent stage, people approach and initiate their first affective-sexual relationships; however, it is necessary to know the results of the education that these young people receive in order to know how effective it is (Roldan, 2019). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Women and Unicef, 2018) assures that affective-sexual education (hereinafter ASE) in schools

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generates positive effects among students, helping them to understand and improve their attitudes towards issues such as sexual and reproductive health, contributing to the prevention and reduction of violence and gender discrimination.

In the words of Calvo (2021), the first thing is to know the term 'sexual', because this term does not refer to erotic practices, but encompasses everything that has to do with the development of sexuality: affective, emotional, couple relationships, self-concept... looking at much more than the erotic. The World Health Organisation (2018) states that sexuality is a central aspect of human beings, and is present throughout their lives, specifying that sexuality encompasses different aspects such as sex, identities, gender roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction.

Both pornography and prostitution are patriarchal institutions that subordinate women and girls, granting men the privilege of sexual use over them in an unlimited and unpunished way (Gutiérrez and Cuervo, 2023). When we understand that the sexual imaginary of young people is developing through the viewing of pornography, fostering the desensitisation of situations of violence towards women and the objectification of women, we understand that 54.1% of young people believe that they can find ideas for their sexual relations in porn, and that 54.9% show a desire to practice what they believe is best for them. 9% show the desire to practice what they see in the videos in their own sexual practices, especially boys, highlighting that 36% of young people confuse pornographic fiction with the reality of their sexual relations (Sanjuán, 2020).

Pornography plays the role of prior training in the objectification and sexualisation of women, men will want to move from observation to action, finding in the prostitution system the ideal place to gain access to women, demanding increasingly violent practices (Ballester et al., 2020).

The current legislation regulating the Spanish education system, Organic Law 3/2020, of 29 December, which amends Organic Law 2/2006, of 3 May, on Education (LOMLOE), establishes the obligation to provide education based on effective equality between women and men, the prevention of gender-based violence and training in affective-sexual diversity. It is backed up by various actions, laws and interventions at both state and European level.

In summary, we could conclude that, given that the law requires schools to train students in SEA and violence prevention, teachers must have and/or receive adequate training in this area in order to be able to carry out their role in an optimal way. However, in practice, the implementation of policies on CSE, gender-based violence and sexual violence is limited and varies significantly between the ACs in Spain. In most cases, initiatives tend to be external and brief, based on occasional talks or workshops (Martínez, 2019).

Sanchís (2020) argues that SEA programmes should start from the Early Childhood Education Stage, as sexuality is inherent to human beings and its education at an early age can prevent future problems, guaranteeing healthy

interpersonal relationships. It stresses that this education should be adjusted to the chronological age, level of development, social sensitivity, culture and gender of the pupils.

Some experts in the field underline the importance of schools playing a priority role in the EAS of pupils, in collaboration with families. They also point out that, because SEA is taught in a cross-cutting manner, it does not have its own place within the educational curriculum, so that the teaching materials and resources available are only used by teachers who decide to do so voluntarily (Arconada and Suárez, 2020).

Based on the literature review, it is possible to determine numerous deficiencies in educational bodies, therefore, it is considered necessary to establish the focus of attention in these public entities from a very early age. Therefore, the main objective of this research is to: To make the population aware of the need to have a greater control of affective-sexual education, gender violence and sexual violence in the different educational stages.

The following are the specific objectives:

- To study the internal protocols of educational centres with respect to ASE, gender-based violence and sexual violence.
- To find out about and assess the training and attitudes of teachers in educational centres with regard to SEA, gender-based violence and sexual violence.

Methodology

As developed above, the Law on Education (LOMLOE) underlines the importance of the participation of the educational community in SEA and the prevention of violence from a gender perspective. For this reason, it has been considered relevant to know the knowledge and attitudes of teachers of Compulsory Secondary Education and Post-compulsory Education in these subjects, based on the premise that it is crucial to know their level of training and commitment, as well as the internal protocols of the different educational centres, in the prevention and awareness of gender violence, sexual violence and CSE.

From a methodological point of view, firstly, the research was devoted to an in-depth search through articles, chapters and clarifications highlighting the importance of the subject matter and its relevance, focusing on current education and gender-based violence. Secondly, a quantitative methodology of descriptive approach was employed in which variables were selected and assigned a specific classification. Finally, the objectives were described and analysed using SPSS statistical software. To validate the questionnaire, an exploratory analysis was carried out using factor analysis.

Research Design

The research design was based on a questionnaire administered to teachers of Compulsory and Post-compulsory Secondary Education in various cities and municipalities in Spain. The design developed is a cross-sectional quasi-experimental design, with anonymous response.

Participants and Instrument

The participant sample is made up of 97 people belonging to the educational community, such as teachers of different educational subjects and teachers belonging to the Guidance Department in Spain. Accidental non-probabilistic sampling was used, using snowball sampling.

The questionnaire is made up of two different parts:

- Personal and socio-demographic data of the participants. With socio-demographic variables such as: age, sex, educational speciality, city or municipality where the profession is practised and whether they are a tutor.
- The second part of the questionnaire is made up of three blocks, with a total of 21 items to be answered. For the coding of these items, a Likert-type scale was used, where 1 means ‘Strongly disagree’ and 5 means ‘Strongly agree’.

Quality Parameters of the Information Gathering Instrument

The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was used to evaluate the internal consistency of the instrument, and the internal consistency of the instrument used was considered to be 0.732. Along the same lines, the instrument has been subjected to a content validation process known as expert judgement, carried out by the Department of Research and Diagnostic Methods in Education of the University of Granada, obtaining a concordance index of 90%.

Table 1. Reliability statistics

Alfa de Cronbach	N of elements
.732	21

Source Elaborated by the authors

Finally, in order to assess the suitability and reliability of the instrument, an exploratory factor analysis was carried out, which consisted of verifying the quantities and values obtained through the KMO criterion and Bartlett’s test of sphericity. The value obtained in the KMO criterion is .706, which means that there is a significant relationship between the variables, of a medium nature. With reference to Bartlett’s test of sphericity, the value obtained is .000, therefore, the

null hypothesis is accepted. In other words, it is possible to apply factor analysis to this questionnaire.

The rotated component matrix that establishes the relationship between the variables and a new concept called factors is shown below. The questionnaire items used are grouped into the following three factors.

- Factor 1: Internal protocols of the educational centre in affective-sexual education, gender violence and sexual violence. It is made up of items 6,15,16,17,19,20 and 21.
- Factor 2: Teachers' attitude towards affective-sexual education, gender-based violence and sexual violence in schools. Composed of items 5,8,9,10,11,12,13 and 18.
- Factor 3: Teachers' knowledge of affective-sexual education, gender-based violence and sexual violence. Its items are: 1,2,3,4,7 and 14.

Table 2. Factor 1: Internal protocols of the educational center on affective-sexual education, gender violence and sexual violence

Variables	Factor 1
6. I believe the Ministry of Education offers courses, workshops, and talks to expand teachers knowledge about situations of violence, gender-based violence, sexual violence, and affective-sexual education	.282
15. I have received training on the detection, prevention and awareness of gender-based violence	.693
16. I am a person who has sufficient professional and personal tools to address, with my students, topics such as emotional and sexual relationships	.747
17. I am interested in knowing the state laws against gender violence	.528
19. I have knowledge about topics such as gender-based violence, sexual violence, and the prevention and awareness of human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation	.733
20. I am familiar with concepts such as CSEA.	.849
21. In the event of detecting a situation of CSEA, I know what steps to take	.828

Source: Elaborated by the authors

Table 3. Factor 2: Teachers' attitudes toward affective-sexual education, gender-based violence, and sexual violence in educational settings

Variables	Factor 2
5. I believe that my educational institution should provide more information about the protocols to follow for detecting situations of gender-based violence and/or sexual violence.	.494
8. I believe it is important to conduct workshops in schools on affective-sexual education, adapting the materials to the developmental level of each grade.	.650
9. For students, their main source of information about affective-sexual relationships is the internet	.416
10. The consumption of pornography during adolescence directly affects the affective-sexual relationships of young people	.515
11. I believe it is necessary to allocate resources (material, financial, and human) to students' affective and sexual education	.857
12. 12. I would like to receive more training on how to address topics related to affective-sexual education with my students	.742
13. It is important that schools talk to students about concepts such as pornography, prostitution, and human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation	.626
18. I would like to receive more training to improve my knowledge on how to work with my students on topics such as gender-based violence, sexual violence, and affective-sexual education	.754

Source: Elaborated by the authors

Table 4. Factor 3: Teachers' knowledge in affective-sexual education, gender-based violence, and sexual violence

Variables	Factor 3
1. I believe that my educational institution carries out interventions and actions aimed at preventing gender-based violence with students	.674
2. Within the established protocols at my educational institution, I can find information on how to act in cases of gender-based violence and sexual violence	.832
3. If I were to detect a situation of sexual violence at my educational institution, I would know what to do and how to act	.586
4. I believe that my educational institution has a protocol for prevention and intervention in cases of gender-based violence and/or sexual violence	.787
7. At my educational institution, I have had the opportunity to attend and receive training on topics such as violence, gender-based violence, sexual violence, and affective-sexual education	.483

14. Students are not aware of the risks associated with the improper use of social media	.295
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Source: Elaborated by the authors

A multivariate regression analysis was performed in order to relate different response patterns to latent factors that were not directly observed (SEM) (Rizopoulos, 2006). The SEM model was then re-adjusted to allow for some procedures aimed at validation. With all of this, the questionnaire was refined with the structural model, verified with the fit indices of the initial model, and an item from the third factor was removed, resulting in the model shown below (Figure 1) (González & Backhoff, 2010).

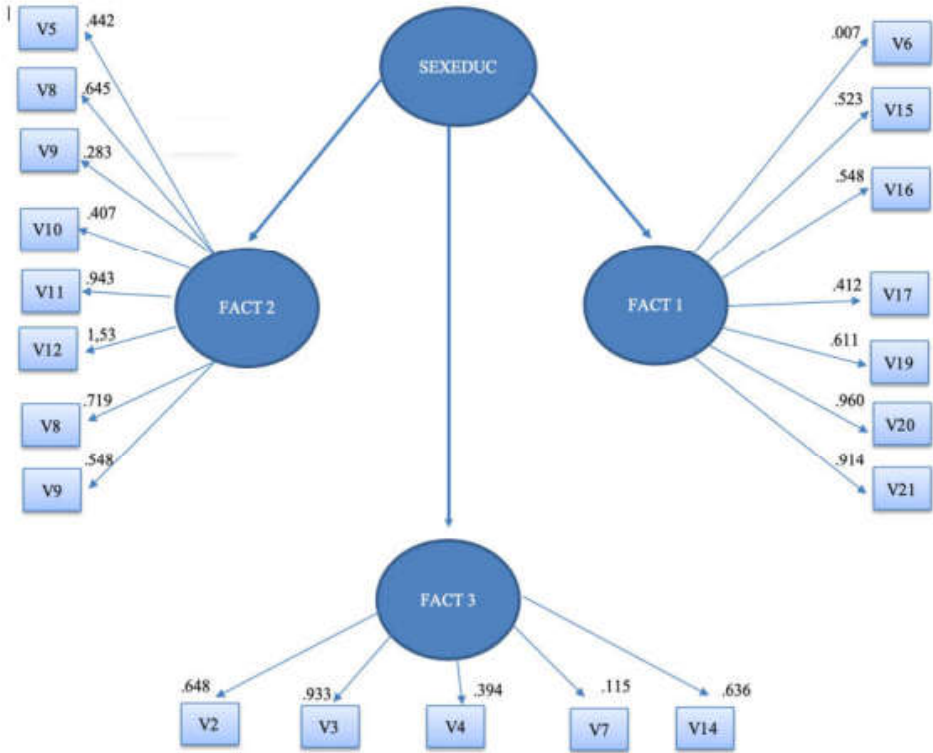


Figure 1. Diagram (path graph) of the Questionnaire on Internal Protocols and Teachers' Attitudes toward Affective-Sexual Education (ASE)

Source: Elaborated by the authors

Results

At the level of descriptive analysis, with reference to the sample, we can conclude that the teaching staff participating in the research obey the following profile:

Mostly, people who define themselves as female (59.8%), as opposed to male (40.2%). The age range is 25-35 years, accounting for 50% of the participating sample. The Autonomous Community with the highest representation in the sample was Andalusia (58.2%) and the teachers with the highest participation belonged to the specialities of English (14.7%), Technology (13.7%) and Guidance (8.4%). Of the total number of participating teachers, 56.3% of the sample performs tutorial action functions.

The Likert scale was used for the responses to the variables that make up the questionnaire, a research method that allows us to measure the opinion of the participants according to the degree of agreement or disagreement with each of the items. This scale uses five degrees of opinion: 1 (strongly disagree); 2 (disagree); 3 (neither agree nor disagree); 4 (agree); 5 (strongly agree).

The results of the questionnaire variables are presented below according to the grouping by factors.

Factor 1. Internal protocols of the educational centre in affective-sexual education, gender violence and sexual violence.

In general terms, the participating teachers do not show a unanimous opinion when it comes to considering that their centre provides effective responses to situations of GBV and SV. 58.8% consider that interventions and actions aimed at prevention are carried out, but, nevertheless, 70.1% consider that they have not had the opportunity to attend or receive training on issues such as GBV, SGBV or SEA. With regard to action measures, 53.6% consider that in the protocols of their school they can find information about how to act in situations of GBV and SGBV, 57.3% of teachers consider that they would know what to do and how to act in a situation of SGBV, but only half 50.6% consider that, in their school, there is a protocol for prevention and intervention in situations of GBV and SGBV.

Factor 2. Teachers' attitudes towards affective-sexual education, gender-based violence and sexual violence in schools

With regard to the attitude of the teachers participating in the research, 89.7% consider that it is necessary to allocate resources for students' ASE, and 91.8% think that it is important for schools to talk to students about concepts such as pornography, prostitution and trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation, as reflected in the fact that 73.3% think that it is important to hold workshops on ASE, adapting the material to the level of maturity. These attitudes are supported by the fact that 82.5% of teachers think that the main source of information on SEA for their students is the Internet, or, in other words, 73.2% think that the consumption of pornography in adolescence affects the affective-

sexual relationships of young people. In this factor, we can see that the participating teachers, in addition to showing awareness of the need to invest in EAS with their pupils, are receptive to receiving more training in order to know how to deal with the issues raised 78.4%, with the intention of being able to work on them with their pupils 74.4%.

Factor 3. Teachers' knowledge on affective-sexual education, gender-based violence and sexual violence

82.5% of the participating teachers consider that they have no knowledge on issues such as GBV, SV and prevention and awareness-raising against trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation. In the same vein, 80.4% recognise that they are not familiar with concepts such as CSAEC and, in line with this, 78.4% recognise that they would not know how to act in the event of detecting a situation of CSAEC. However, the data collected indicate that when teachers are asked about the concept of gender-based violence alone, there is less of a difference between those who consider themselves trained and with the personal skills to deal with it, 44.4%, and those who do not, 54.7%.

Discussion

The Student's t-test is an independent samples test that has been carried out to assess the differences between the measures according to the sex of the participants.

Table 5: Student's t-test for independent variable gender. Group statistics and significance

Items	Gender	Media Square	F	Sig.
I would like to receive more training on how to address topics related to affective-sexual education with my students	Woman	4.47	1.604	.041
	Man	4.03		

Source: Elaborated by the authors

The female participants in the study rated more positively the fact that they would like to have more training on how to approach issues related to the EAS with their students, as the mean obtained was 4.47 compared to the mean of the male participants in the study, which was 4.03.

On the other hand, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was carried out with the aim of comparing the means of the independent variable 'educational speciality', through ANOVA between groups, in those dependent variables that have determined significant differences. Specifically, significant differences have been detected in the dependent variables: V8, V11, V12, V17 and V20, as a function of the independent variable 'educational speciality'.

Table 6: ANOVA Educational Specialty

Items	Educational Specialty	Media Square	F	Sig.
V.8 I believe it is important to conduct workshops in schools on affective-sexual education, adapting the materials to the developmental level of each grade	Physical Education			
	Drawing			
	Philosophy	5.0	2.480	.002
	Socio-educational intervention			
	Islamic Religion			
	FOL			
V. 11 I believe it is necessary to allocate resources (materials, financial, and human) to students' affective and sexual education	French			
	Language and Literature			
	Drawing	5.0	2.342	.004
	Philosophy			
	Socio-educational intervention			
	FOL			
V. 12 I would like to receive more training on how to address topics related to affective-sexual education with my students	French			
	Geography and History			
	Language and Literature	5.0	2.159	.008
	Pedagogy			
	Drawing			
	Philosophy			
	Islamic Religion			
V. 17 I am interested in learning about state laws against gender-based violence	French			
	Philosophy	5.0	2.781	.001
	Islamic Religion			
	FOL			
V. 20 I am familiar with concepts such as CSEA (Child Sexual Exploitation and Adolescence)	Islamic Religion	5.0	1.858	.026

Source: Elaborated by the authors

Those educational specialities have been included which, according to the significance of the dependent variable, have shown a quadratic mean equal to 5.0. As can be seen in table 5, a total of twenty-three educational specialities have been collected.

With regard to item 8, 'I think it is important to hold workshops in secondary schools on affective-sexual education, adapting the material to the maturity level of each year'. Teachers belonging to the subjects of Physical Education, Drawing, Philosophy, Socio-educational Intervention, Islamic Religion and FOL believe that it is important for workshops to be held in schools on ASE, adapting the material to the level of maturity of each year.

Another significant point is obtained in item 11, 'I think it is necessary to allocate resources (material, economic, personal) to affective education and sex education for pupils'. Teachers of French, Language and Literature, Drawing, Philosophy, Socio-educational Intervention and FOL consider that it is necessary to allocate resources (material, economic and personal) to pupils' EAS.

In item 12, 'I would like to have more training on how to address issues related to affective-sexual education with my students'. The results show that the participating teachers of French, Geography and History, Language and Literature, Pedagogy, Drawing, Philosophy and Islamic Religion would like to have more training on how to deal with issues related to PSE with their pupils, compared to teachers of other subjects/subjects.

Another significant point obtained in item 17, 'I am interested in learning about the state laws against gender-based violence', the participating teachers who teach the subjects French, Philosophy, Islamic Religion and FOL, show greater interest in learning about the state laws against GBV, compared to the participating teachers of other subjects/subjects. Finally, in item 20, 'I am familiar with concepts such as CSEA (sexual exploitation of children and adolescents)', the result obtained shows that Islamic Religion teachers are the ones who consider that they have the most knowledge.

Conclusion

As stated in the Organic Law 3/2020, of 29 December, educational centres must include in their Educational Project, the Tutorial Action Plan (where the guidance staff will support its implementation) taking into account that it must include the values and objectives, adapting the curricula of the Educational Administration, approved by the Senate. Promoting learning competences for the education of active citizenship, addressing in a transversal way education in values, sustainable development, gender equality, non-discrimination, prevention of violence, bullying and cyber-bullying, promoting the culture of peace and human rights. This study has shown that teachers of French, Philosophy, Islamic Religion and FOL are

those who are most willing to keep themselves up to date and in touch with new legislation on gender-based violence.

In this regard, a study conducted by Martínez-Álvarez et al. (2012) revealed that 12% of secondary school teachers have university training in Affective-Sexual Education (ASE), compared to 43.2% who have no training in this area. The remaining 44% reported having limited training based on a course, workshop, or seminar. This study is highly relevant as it, along with this research, highlights the need to implement more workshops and resources to improve ASE training. Furthermore, in this same study, teachers pointed out that their main obstacles to delivering ASE training to their students were a lack of time during the school year, the vague and imprecise nature of current legislation (which has been modified with the LOMLOE), and lastly, the lack of training and available resources. These aspects have been considered key in this research, highlighting the significant need to improve all resources related to ASE. Ballarin (2017) emphasizes the importance of teachers, pedagogical staff, counselors, and educators in general being thoroughly trained in issues such as equal opportunities and affective-sexual education to ensure the effectiveness of education based on equality principles.

The results previously outlined regarding teachers' attitudes towards training clearly show that it is necessary to allocate resources for students' Affective-Sexual Education (ASE), highlighting the importance of addressing topics such as pornography, prostitution, and human trafficking for sexual exploitation in schools. A reflection of this is that 73.3% believe it is important to conduct ASE workshops, adapting the materials to the developmental level of each grade. According to the results obtained in this research, it can be determined that many teachers from different specialties agree on the need to hold various workshops in schools adapted to the developmental level of the course. To achieve this, as confirmed, it is necessary to provide various resources - material, financial, and human - that contribute to the development of this type of education. This information aligns with the data provided by Ruiz-Jiménez and Jiménez-Tejada (2019) in their study, which sampled Master's students and current secondary education teachers. In this study, we can see that 73% of the participating sample strongly agreed that ASE training should start at the Primary education stage, with 65% valuing its presence throughout any stage of education. However, the data once again shows a contradiction, as although 86.6% strongly agree or agree that ASE should be a cross-curricular theme adaptable to each subject, 46.6% agree that ASE should be addressed through specific workshops led by experts, meaning external professionals. The data has shown that some teachers, such as those specializing in Islamic religion, are more familiar with these concepts and therefore possess a greater level of knowledge.

In summary, and according to Martínez-Álvarez (2019), the school has the opportunity to intervene in three main functions in Affective-Sexual Education (ASE): first, to make it explicit in the School Project as an essential objective; second, to promote the training of the teaching staff in the institution; and finally,

equally important, to provide resources and teaching materials to work with students on ASE.

To improve the results, as a possible proposal for improvement, it would be of great interest to include families as an evaluation group, allowing for the assessment and comparison of their knowledge, attitudes, and management of affective-sexual education and the quality with which they offer it to their children. On the other hand, an ASE intervention program could be implemented for different age groups, in order to later analyze the improvement of that training, determining which age group evaluates the training best and identifying the optimal stage to address this subject.

Affective and sexual education for students is stated in the LOMLOE as both a principle and goal of education. However, as we have observed in this document, it is still an ongoing task in our educational system. Addressing ASE from a risk prevention perspective does not allow for attention to all its dimensions, placing the intervention in a non-facilitating approach to communication between students and the adults involved in their education (school, teaching staff, families).

It is evident that teachers' opinions regarding the importance of ASE in different educational stages are, in general, very positive. However, for teachers to take on greater responsibility, it is essential that they receive ongoing training, adapted to new realities, and that addresses their concerns. Teachers should feel supported by the school's leadership and work in coordination with the Guidance Department, with the aim of incorporating ASE, gender-based violence, and sexual violence education both cross-curricularly and directly, through the hours allocated to tutoring activities. Due to the various needs, it is crucial to create a methodology that integrates within the school itself, with a School Plan, a Coexistence Plan, and a clear, concise Tutoring Action Plan, that addresses and responds to the realities and needs of students, both educationally and socially.

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