

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE EDUCATION FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract. This article is concerned with child sexual abuse education for primary school students. The aim is to equip students, parents, and associated educational establishments with the knowledge and skills needed for the prevention of child molestation. The authors coordinate the system of the following methods: Document research method; questionnaire investigation method; observation method; in-depth interview method; method of processing data by mathematical statistics. From the analysis of the “red alert” situation, the theoretical and experimental bases surveyed on 60 students of grades 3 and 5 at Pham Tu Primary School, Thanh Tri District, Hanoi. Through means of status quo analysis and assessment of the effectiveness of child sexual abuse education in Vietnam, the article provides educational establishments and educators within this field with suggestions for improvement. Our research group hopes that these recommendations, as well as the conclusions drawn in the article can help to make child sexual abuse less of a threat to students, a challenging topic to teachers, and a prevalent hazard to society.

Keywords: Primary education, sexual abuse, curriculum integration, family involvement.

1. Introduction

Child sexual abuse is now a heatedly debated topic. It continues to traumatize thousands of children each year and provoke anxiety in people whenever it appears in the headlines. On an international scale, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) reported the average age of child sexual abuse victims is 9 years old, 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually assaulted before they turn 18. Looking at the recent statistics, male children are now more at risk of falling victims to molestation. According to the Department of Labors, War Invalids and Social Affairs of Vietnam, the country recorded 5300 cases of child sexual abuse in the span of 5 years, from 2011 to 2015. On average, one Vietnamese child is being molested every 8 hours [3]. However, it is argued that these figures represented only reported cases. An unknown number of unreported cases, where the victims stayed silent, either because of threatening acts from the very perpetrators or for different reasons, are not included in the data.

Regarding the victim-perpetrator relationship, 93% of perpetrators are known to the victims, in which 47% are family members. Therefore, it is important to educate primary school children on child sexual abuse prevention. The children in this age group are the most easily influenced by adults, and they are also the primary targets of predators [8].

There is a great amount of research done on child sexual abuse in Vietnam and all over the world. The “Report of the Consultation on Child Sexual Abuse Prevention” published by WHO in 1999 provided a definition of child sexual abuse which is frequently cited by other articles

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and research papers today [9]. Some other worth-mentioning works including “Child Abuse Influence on Lower Primary School Pupil’s Academic in Aural Setting in Kenya” by Mukami T. Mutua, Ong’ang’a H.M. Ouko (2017), or “Relationship between child abuse and academic performance in five selected Primary School in Sugata Zone of Samburu Country” (2013). These research works had all highlighted the severe trauma child sexual abuse inflicted on the victims on a physical, emotional, and moral level, as well as the obstacles in children’s education that followed this crime [7].

In Vietnam, the social issue that is child sexual abuse garners a lot of public attention. Much effort has been made in researching and dissecting the current prevalence of sexual assaults aimed at children in the country. “Situation Analysis of Children in Ho Chi Minh city Vietnam 2017” is a report conducted by Ho Chi Minh City People’s Committee in cooperation with the UNICEF. The report intended to “provide evidence on the status and trends in the realization of children’s rights, a causality analysis of identified shortfalls and disparities, the roles, responsibilities and capacity gaps of duty-bearers and recommendations and priorities to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and achieve child well-being” [11]. Other works included “Management of cooperation between schools and other educational establishments in prevention of child sexual abuse for primary school students in Nam Dinh” – a Ph.D. thesis written by Truong Quoc Hoi [6], Dang Van Tam, People’s Police Academy, 2005; “Situation and measures to increase effectiveness of prevention of child sexual abuse in Binh Duong province”; “Child sexual abuse in Ho Chi Minh city: situation, cause, and preventive measures” by Phan Viet Thang, Academy of Social Sciences, 2014; etc. [10].

From these works, the prevention of child sexual abuse is a topic which has come to great professional attention in Vietnam and other countries. However, there is a noticeable lack in research on a more age-centered approach, the cooperation between schools, educational establishments, and students’ families in preventing children from being sexually assaulted, and methods to encourage victims’ progress of reintegration into society. Hence, in this article, we have conducted various research on the education of child sexual abuse for primary school children and seek to provide suggestions on preventive measures that we think may benefit each age group. We also hope to help provide necessary knowledge and skills to all involved parties and, as a result, reduce the rate of child sexual offenses.

2. Content

2.1. Methods of research

2.1.1. Theoretical research method

- Research legal documents related to research issues
- Collect scientific information through reading books, newspapers, and documents
- Refer to theses, theses of the same specialization

To establish a theoretical basis for practical research.

2.1.2. Practical research method

To collect practical data as a basis for proposing problem-solving measures. Practical research methods include:

- Written investigation method

Use a survey form with Primary students (age levels), Primary teachers, and parents, and parents.

- Pedagogical observation method

Observe educational activities on sexual abuse for Primary students in the Primary schools to supplement the written method of investigation.

- Interview method.

Directly interviewing some primary school students of different ages, some teachers, and parents about sexual abuse educational activities to supplement information for investigation methods.

- Professional solution

Consult with an expert on education issues for Primary students on sexual abuse, assess the necessity and feasibility of the proposed educational measures.

2.1.3. Methods of processing data by mathematical statistics.

Use mathematical formulas to process collected data, then represent it through the charts and give specific data.

2.2. Research results

2.2.1. In theory

The topic has built a system of basic concepts, in which:

The concept of child sexual abuse is that someone seduces, manipulates, uses force to threaten and force a child to participate in activities related to sex [2].

Educational content:

- Teach students about gender and sensitive areas.
- Teach elementary school students to know how to protect their bodies, distinguish “good touch” and “bad touch”.
- Teach them how to refuse and react if someone deliberately touches their body that makes them uncomfortable.
- Teach elementary students the rules of hand communication (each finger is a rule).
- Teach elementary school students skills to observe and distinguish alarms before the risk of abuse.
- Teach students how to handle specific sexual abuse situations.

Educational procedures:

- Organize the integration through educational activities in schools, classes, in classes: teachers, schools integrate this activity through games and practical activities for students to experience and form skills best self-defense

- Organize the teaching into a separate learning program: the teachers who oversee teaching this section will help the child's education be comprehensive, complete, and more effective, helping children remember longer knowledge, skills, and function on this issue. It can be done in the form of topics about teaching children life skills or integrated in parallel with the classroom curriculum.

- Organizing contests and propaganda through mass media to encourage everyone to work together to prevent sexual abuse for primary school students.

- For parents, not to underestimate the early education for children of this age group on sex and sexual abuse. It is possible to educate through games at home, in talks to understand them better, to equip them with basic knowledge about this issue.

This work will analyze the current situation of education on child sexual abuse for primary school students. It is important that not only students of this age group but also their parents and teachers are taught sex-related knowledge and self-defense measures, because cooperation is key to raising awareness and preventing child sexual abuse [4]. Primary schools' curriculums

must be built to assist children in developing their physical and mental awareness, personal qualities and abilities while concentrating on children's self-perception, family, sense of community, and the formation of good habits in daily life [1].

In addition, sexually assaulted children need special attention and emotionally focused therapy to heal past wounds and reintegrate into society. Schools should offer these child victims a learning environment which is positive, student-friendly, and safe, free of any triggers of their past trauma. This article will identify the main measures of supporting victimized primary school students and analyze their pros and cons, level of necessity, and feasibility before drawing conclusions.

2.2.2. Survey the current situation

We have made an in-depth analysis and assessment of child sexual abuse education for primary school students. Recent years have witnessed a great increase in child molestation rate and the rising concern of schools and families about education of prevention of this crime. Several primary schools located at the center regions of Vietnam have organized talks and training procedures for their teachers and staff to help them deliver sex education to children. In many big cities, childhood education has expanded beyond theoretical knowledge, to social knowledge and skills like self-defense and recognizing sexual abuse when it takes place. However, in other regions, this topic is still considered a taboo due to the belief that children are too young to comprehend such a sensitive subject and they should instead sexually develop naturally. Furthermore, countermeasures to child sexual abuse in the past usually involve the tightening of laws and punishment for perpetrators, which belong to the aftermath of the incident, instead of the prevention and education of child sexual abuse.

In Hanoi, we have researched and evaluated the educational status on prevention of sexual abuse for primary school students as follows:

- * Evaluation of the surveyed area of the topic: Pham Tu Primary School, address: No. 774, Kim Giang, Thanh Liet Commune, Thanh Tri District, Hanoi.

- * Survey period: from December 2019 to January 17, 2020

- * How to conduct the survey:

To conduct a survey on sexual abuse prevention education in Hanoi city, we have used a survey that has been prepared for different subjects and forms such as after:

- + For students: Using multiple choice questionnaires with different levels of survey from recognition, understanding, and application.

- + For teachers: Using essay cards to survey more of the opinions from those who act as a guide for students and the teacher's suggestions for sexual abuse prevention and control education in primary school student.

- + For parents:

- Stage 1: Using essay papers, combining with interviews.

- Stage 2: Using online multiple-choice form.

- * Subjects conducting survey:

- Students: Do the survey on two ages:

- + Grade 3 (9-10 years old): 30 students.

- + Grade 5 (11-12 years old): 30 students.

- Teachers: 5 teachers - are homeroom teachers of 5 blocks 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

- Parents: 25 parents.

Through the survey, we give the following research results:

- **For students:**

Level 1: Evaluating the degree to which children were educated about the issue of preventing sexual abuse.

Table 1. The result of the survey about the frequency of teaching children about the issue of sexual abuse

The frequency of teaching children about the issue of sexual abuse	Third graders		Fifth graders	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Never	5	16.67	1	3.33
Sometimes	16	53.33	8	26.67
Regular	9	30	21	70

It can be concluded that the majority of children are educated from schools and families, through statistics show that grade 5 students are much more educated about sexual abuse prevention and control compared to the 3rd graders. But there are also students who have never been educated on this issue, showing an imbalance between age groups in education, and the concern of families and communities. Association for children is not deep. Because inherently, these knowledge and skills must be educated at a young age [5].

Level 2: Evaluating the understanding of children of two ages about basic knowledge in the issue of the education of the prevention of sexual abuse.

Table 2. The result of the survey about the understanding of children of two ages about the basic knowledge in the issue of the education of the prevention of sexual abuse.

The results	Third graders		Fifth graders	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Right answer	21	70	24	80
Wrong answer	9	30	6	20

Conclusion: In terms of students' knowledge and understanding, most of them have knowledge of sexual abuse prevention and control, but not in depth, and have not spent much time on education.

Level 3: Evaluating how children would put into use the knowledge that they had been taught to handle dangerous situations or situations in which they were likely to be sexually assaulted.

Table 3. The result of the survey about how children would put into use the knowledge that they had been taught to handle dangerous situations or situations in which they were likely to be sexually assaulted.

The results	Third graders		Fifth graders	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Right answer	23	76.67	28	93.33
Wrong answer	7	23.33	2	6.67

Conclusion: In terms of practical skills, applying when solving situations, students know how to act when there are bad risks of attack, but when asked more deeply, this skill is actually quite poor.

- **For teachers:**

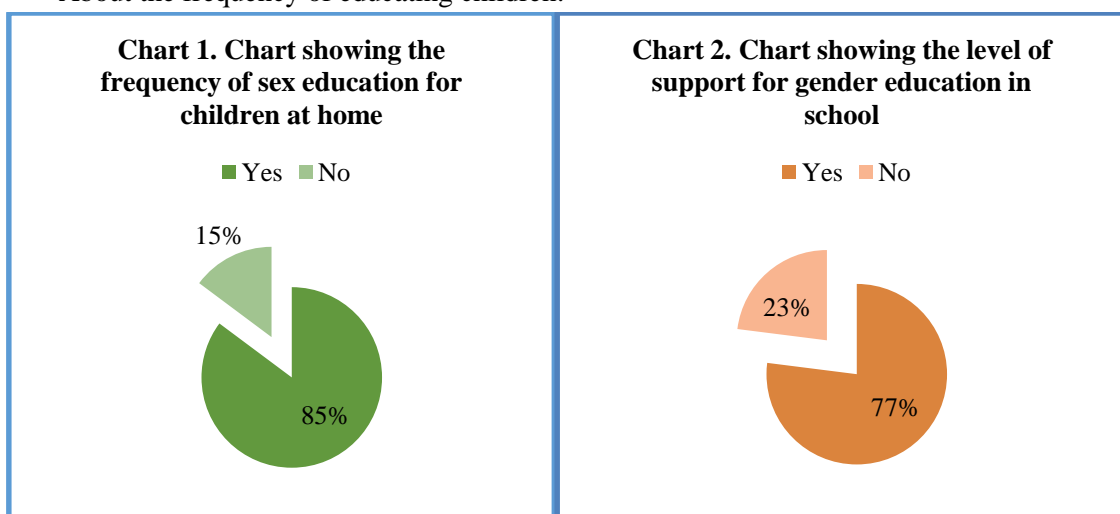
From research and surveys, we realize that when it came to understanding about the issue, 100% of teacher had good understanding about the necessity and importance of educating Primary school students about the prevention of sexual abuse. Moreover, the teacher had mentioned about the issue of educating students through teaching and extracurricular activities, but it was still simple, not in-depth, and regular. This was partly due to a little shyness, limited time spent on class, no special activity and specific subject on this issue. Additionally, there was no proper document that was agreed upon to guide the student. Another point is that concerning the suggestion at which age students need to be educated about the prevention of sexual abuse: most people believed that children needed to be taught since they were in first grade and other people suggested the fourth grade. Finally, to summarize all the suggestions, primary school teachers suggested that strict penalties needed to be given to criminals to deter them, which would then minimize unfortunate incidents. Furthermore, there should be programs to spread awareness to community and training sessions should be held for teachers. The teachers hoped that there would be plans and specific subjects for the school year and a specific amount of time to educate the children more methodically.

- **For parents:**

Most students understood the importance of this issue well but there were still some who considered this unnecessary.

Concerning the suggestions about the age that children needed to begin to be educated about the prevention of sexual abuse, the percentages of parents who believed that children should have been taught sexual education and the prevention of sexual abuse since first grade, second grade and third grade were 5%, 5%, and 15%, respectively. According to parents, 65% of parents believed that children only needed to be educated about this issue since fourth grade.

About the frequency of educating children:



Concerning the frequency of educating children about the issue of sexual abuse at home, 85% of parents believed that they had educated their children about sexual abuse at home, the other 15% had never mentioned about this. About the degree of support for the opening of a class for sexual education and the issues of sexual abuse at school, 77% of parents supported this, 23% of parents participating in the survey believed that it was still unnecessary when there were other subjects in class that needed more attention.

Even though parents could understand this issue, the time they spent for their children was little and they still did not listen to their children enough. The parents mostly expected that “Children are taught more at school about the issue of preventing sexual abuse instead of at home.”

From this, through methods of surveying actual situations, teachers and parents had properly understood about the meanings of educating children about sexual abuse. Moreover, they also learnt about incorporating and being creative during the educational process so that children would understand about this issue. However, educating primary school students about sexual abuse was not done uniformly in different grades and schools. This issue is being paid more attention to and there are noticeable improvements compared to the past. However, a standardized and specific education system needs to be built all throughout Hanoi, both in the urban and the outskirts of the city, from public to private schools, to solve the difficulties and inadequacies during the teaching process from the documents to activities and games that put their education into practical skills so that the children can remember longer. General education programs need to ensure the development of character and abilities of students through educational content along with knowledge, basic skills that are practical and modern, combining character, intelligence, physical skills, and beauty harmoniously, focusing on practical use, employing knowledge, and skills that have been taught to solve issues in school and life; adopting methods and forms of education that have been considered appropriate to achieve the purpose of encouraging activeness and potentials in every student [1].

2.3. Proposed solutions

From the research into theoretical basis and the survey of an actual situation, we propose solutions for the education of primary school students about the prevention of sexual abuse as follows:

Firstly: Arrange sessions to improve the understanding of the education staff about the operation of preventing sexual abuse for students.

How to implement solutions: Develop topics on prevention of sexual abuse for elementary students, equip teachers through writing, training or intensive study, writing harvest articles. In addition to direct communication, instruct teachers to propagate through corners, mass media newsletters, and industry magazines to propagate the results and solutions for primary education development. Study locally.

Condition for solutions: All teachers need to understand the importance of the problem. The resources to organize the training of teachers need to be rich, specialized, and appropriate for each age. Physical conditions include desks and chairs, computers, projectors, and human resources for training activities. Besides, it is necessary to have an appropriate source of funding for this activity. To provide quality training in the resource forces to be able to impart new, basic, and quality knowledge to children, develop topics on prevention of sexual abuse for primary school students, knowledge for teachers through writing, refresher training or intensive study, writing harvest articles.

Secondly: Create a standardized document in education about the prevention of children's sexual abuse for subjects concerned.

Method of implementation: Documents must be built by the consensus of educators with focus in gender education, sexual abuse prevention, and the consent of relevant departments to national scale publication. Materials are included in unified education like compulsory programs for all levels, especially the elementary school program.

Conditions: Governments, national leading forces, and those who are educated and have educated on the issue should be those who recognize the need for education on the issue of aggression sexual harm, thereby following the right solutions and tendencies to implement. It is

necessary to consult experts and educators to consult the experiences of countries doing well in the prevention of sexual abuse. Having an appropriate and guaranteed funding source to publish documents, bring the source materials to mountainous areas and islands.

Thirdly: Cooperate with responsible agencies to organize trainings for primary school students about the methods of preventing sexual abuse.

How to implement the measure: Organize training sessions for relevant ministries and agencies on sexual abuse prevention issues, assign separate tasks to each ministry and set out requirements to be achieved regularly. Check work progress and coordinate with other ministries and branches when necessary. Organize for relevant departments to exchange experiences in the education of primary school students on sexual abuse prevention. At the same time, the departments need to understand clearly the education situation for primary school students on sexual abuse prevention to have timely updates and adjustments.

Conditions for implementing the measure: The division units need to have a clear division of duties, work, and responsibility for the assigned work. Ministries and branches must be equipped with knowledge and skills to propagate while enhancing their enthusiasm and responsibility in the task of implementing their tasks. There should be appropriate equipment and facilities to carry out the work.

Fourthly: Combine families, schools, and society in community about the prevention of sexual abuse.

How to proceed: Arrange propaganda sessions and seminars to share experiences and good teaching methods, communicate with parents and/or guardians of the children to increase parents' awareness and knowledge about gender education for children, as well as how to protect themselves and behave appropriately in each case. Parents also need to be more careful with the surrounding environment, including the people around them that their children interact with. Regularly update the situation and closely contact parents to jointly monitor the children's learning and living environment in case there are negative things affecting them. Create attendance message systems for parents to track the time their children arrive at school and home to respond promptly if they find their children in danger. At the same time, the school needs to keep close contact with parents in the event of emergencies or unusual points compared to every day.

Conditions for implementing the measure: Schools need to organize training sessions on the purpose, meaning, and requirements of education on prevention of sexual abuse of primary school students. School administrators should set aside time and money for proper functioning. In addition, the Parents and Students Association should well implement the guidelines and regulations on sexual abuse prevention education together with propaganda to improve understanding of the meaning of sexual abuse education for students. primary school.

Fifthly: Standardize sexual education program which involves the compulsory educational content about the prevention of sexual abuse for children at the present primary schools.

How to implement the measure: Planning activities, appropriate teaching to bring gender education and sexual abuse prevention into compulsory programs but still ensuring an appropriate amount of time for the subjects other culture. At the same time, make statistics on necessary teaching facilities and equipment to meet the needs of this subject. Schools and educational units mobilize economic capital to organize appropriate teaching activities, which are both theoretical knowledge and have funds to organize extracurricular experiences for students.

The relation of solutions: Conditions for implementing the measure: It is necessary to have the attention of the Ministry of Education to modify the program, include sex education, sexual abuse prevention, and control education into compulsory curriculum at all levels, especially at

the primary level. Adequate funding is required for effective and quality implementation. Schools and students' parents have a close relationship, need awareness and join hands in educational activities for students as well as socializing facilities in education for students.

Every solution differs in purposes, content, methods to carry out and conditions, but all should aim to solve the difficulties in educating primary school students in a most complete, improved, and efficient way.

When how everything connects is considered, the proposed solutions are closely connected to each other. Every solution solves an aspect posed by its problem. Reality shows, on the other hand, that at every given moment, every solution will show relative independence and its own effectiveness. They have an organic relationship supplementing each other to improve and become more unified. During the process of solving the issue, the solutions must not be separated but need to be tightly connected to enhance the effectiveness.

To judge the necessity and the feasibility of the solutions proposed previously, we conducted a test by taking opinion papers from 33 teachers in primary schools. From the survey, the statistics are as follows:

Table 4. The result of the survey about the necessity of the solutions

Order	Solutions	Level of necessity			Level of feasibility		
		<i>Necessary</i>	<i>Not very necessary</i>	<i>Unnecessary</i>	<i>Feasibility</i>	<i>Not very feasibility</i>	<i>Unfeasibility</i>
1	First solution	86.67	13.33	0	84.84	15.16	0
2	Second solution	87.87	12.13	0	75.7	21.3	3
3	Third solution	72.73	24.27	3	78.8	15.2	6
4	Fourth solution	81.8	15.2	3	81.8	15.2	3
5	Fifth solution	90	10	0	87.9	12.1	0
Average		83.8	14.9	1.2	81.8	15.8	2.4

The proposed measures are necessary to educate primary school students on sexual abuse in Hanoi city, shown in the necessary assessment score of 83.8% on average. At the same time, the survey participants assessed that it is very feasible to educate about sexual abuse for primary school students in Hanoi, reflected in the average feasibility score of 81.8%.

3. Conclusions

Based on the results above, we can conclude that necessity and feasibility of the proposed solutions are positively correlated. This means that the proposed solutions to educate primary school students about the issue of sexual abuse in Hanoi are both necessary and highly feasible. The application of all the solutions synchronically should be practical and suitable for circumstances. Targeting quality should make sure to foster the sexual abuse education for primary school students to achieve great results and contribute to improving the quality of the schools' overall education.

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