

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

and Sex Education in Mexico: The Case of Veracruz

An investigation was developed to examine the beliefs of elementary school teachers regarding sex education, to gain a notion of the limits and scope of sex pedagogy in the approach to content, and to provide accurate information for decision-making and public policy.

SEX EDUCATION IN MEXICO

In Mexico, the selection of content on sexuality uses the definitions given by the World Health Organization (WHO) as guidelines. According to the WHO, sex education aims to develop and strengthen children and young people's ability to make conscious, satisfying, healthy, and respectful choices regarding relationships, sexuality, and emotional and physical health. However, the incorporation of sex education in elementary school will not solve the problems since at a structural, cultural, and personal level, multiple factors have influence, including beliefs.

BELIEFS

Ortega y Gasset (2000), says that beliefs shape people's lives because they are put ahead of their perceived reality. There is usually no express awareness of them, but they act latently. It is important to determine the beliefs of primary school teachers regarding sex education, to determine its limits and scope in the approach of the contents, and to gain information that may be useful for decision-making and public policy.

WHY INVESTIGATE BELIEFS?

Sex education is a complex issue around which various beliefs are part of widespread knowledge (Ramírez, 2013). These have such a vital value range that they constitute an ethic that justifies and issues value judgments. Likewise, they play a crucial role in configuring daily practices such as gender relations and violence and inequality (Ramírez et al., 2009). Given Mexico and Veracruz's circumstances, it is this is relevant because it addresses the challenges elementary school teachers have regarding sex education and how pedagogy is permeated by what they believe.

METHOD

A descriptive study was conducted using a qualitative methodology. The data were collected between October and December 2019 in two public elementary schools in the City of Veracruz, State of Veracruz, Mexico. A non-probabilistic sampling method with a maximum variation was used in the study. In total, nine teachers of ages ranging from 22 to 64 years participated.

CONCLUSIONS

The teachers reported that the students must have reached sexual maturity to talk about sexuality. Likewise, a discourse that emphasizes the biological aspects and the belief that abstinence is the best way to prevent unwanted pregnancy predominates. Finally, there were different opinions regarding the need for training teachers to teach sex education.