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**Finnish pre-service primary teachers' perceptions of  
their preparedness to deliver sexuality education.**

Department of Teacher Education

Master's thesis

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Master's thesis

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Finnish pre-service primary teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to deliver sexuality education.

Prof. Dr. Çiğdem Haser

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This study investigated the perceptions current Finnish primary teacher students had of their preparedness to deliver sexuality education content in their future work as primary teachers. Sexuality education in this study is defined based on the WHO (2010) Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe.

The study was conducted by utilizing the Preparedness for Sexuality Education Survey (PSES) (N = 56) and semi-structured interviews (N = 7) both constructed by the researcher. The PSES asked participants to rate their preparedness to deliver different aspects of sexuality education based on the WHO (2010) guidelines and included two open-ended questions where participants had the opportunity to elaborate their responses. The PSES was analyzed using both quantitative methods and qualitative content analysis. The interview data was analyzed using qualitative content analysis.

The results suggest that while participants were aware of the importance of sexuality education and had ideas about how to implement it in their future classrooms, they were not well prepared to teach specific sexuality education content. Participants primarily found that they had not gained enough information about sexuality education during their primary teacher studies. They were concerned about their ability to deliver sexuality education safely and at a developmentally and age-appropriate level. Many participants found sexuality education important and meaningful despite being nervous and insecure about their abilities.

**Key words:** sexuality education, sexuality, primary teacher education, pre-service teachers

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## List of abbreviations

ABC	Abstain, Be Faithful, Use a Condom
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
HSE	Holistic Sexuality Education
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and others
PSES	Preparedness for Sexuality Education Survey
PST	Pre-service teacher
SD	Standard deviation(s)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WHO	World Health Organization

## List of Tables

- T1**    *Sexuality education in Finnish university curricula for primary teacher education.*
- T2**    *Survey participants' perceptions of preparedness to teach the different aspects of sexuality education in their future work as primary teachers.*
- T3**    *Courses discussing sexuality education mentioned by participants.*

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 The conceptual framework of sexuality education

Ideas and interpretations of sexuality as a part of holistic health have developed rapidly since the sexual liberation in the Western world in the 1970s. Sexuality education as a factor of health education in schools is topical and widely recognized as a component of human development.

Sexuality is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a lifelong part of human development, including physical, psychological and social aspects (WHO, 1999). There are several parallel guidelines for sexuality education, such as the WHO Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe (2010) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (2009; 2018). These most recent UNESCO guidelines discuss Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) which aims to equip children with knowledge, skills and attitudes for empowerment to foster respectful relationships, reflect upon their choices and ensure the protection of their rights (UNESCO, 2018).

An even more recent approach to sexuality education is holistic sexuality education, key characteristics of which include a positive approach to sexuality and life-long guidance (Ketting et al., 2016). Holistic and comprehensive approaches to sexuality education are overlapping and the terms are used interchangeably (Miedema et al., 2020). There is no agreed upon definition for either one, and Ketting et al. (2016) state that this is why the terms are used interchangeably. According to them, holistic sexuality was based on general pedagogical and educational theory, as opposed to an intervention, such as the ABC approach (abstinence, be faithful, use a condom). The ABC approach was a global approach before comprehensive and holistic approaches (Braeken & Cardinal, 2008).

In the current Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (FNAE, 2016) in Finland sexuality education, comprehensive sexuality education, or holistic sexuality education (HSE) are not explicitly mentioned. However, as HSE is a multidisciplinary and continuous approach, different elements of sexuality education are in the subject-specific curricula as well as the general guiding principles of the core curriculum. The most prominent topics of the WHO (2010) Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe found in the current curriculum are relationships and lifestyles, social and cultural determinants of sexuality and emotions. These

topics, among others, are included in the curricula for environmental studies, religion and ethics and health education. Additionally, the human rights approach of HSE can be identified in the core curriculum: the core values include respecting human rights and developing equity and equality throughout society.

While sexuality education in the Finnish school system and National Core Curriculum for Basic Education in Finland is holistic and multidisciplinary in nature and follows the guidelines set by WHO in the Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe (2010), research has indicated that there is still room for improvement. Kontula (2010) studied changes in sex education and students' sexual knowledge in Finland in the 2000s and found that in a sexual health knowledge quiz for students the proportion of correct answers nationally increased from 1996 to 2006. Despite this, girls still exhibited considerably higher knowledge compared to boys. It was revealed that there was no relationship between interest in sexual experiences and sexual knowledge, indicating similarly to Apter (2011) that providing youths with information about sexuality and development did not encourage engagement in sexual activity. The findings thus suggested that the content of sexuality education in Finland should be revised to include more issues relevant to boys such as communication, masculine sexual disorders, and penis size.

Kontula (2010) also found a relationship, albeit simple, between quality of sexuality education and the level of sexual knowledge among the students. There were certain practices associated with higher levels of sexual knowledge among students, including nomination of a teacher responsible for sexuality education in schools, consciously teaching an attitude of tolerance and naturalness, diverse teaching methods and free discussion facilitated by teachers who found teaching sexuality education easy. It was found that male teachers taught more topics and allocated more hours to sexuality education. It seems that there are differences between individual teachers and schools in the quality of sexuality education provided to students.

There are certain aspects of sexuality education which seem more difficult to approach than others. In relation to this, sexuality education is also closely related to culture and values. As norms and values in society have changed, the focal point of sexuality education has changed. Lehtonen (2003) researched discussions around gender and sexuality in Finnish schools from the point of view of non-heterosexual youths. Interviewees described their memories of sexuality education in Finnish comprehensive schools: sexuality education was mostly centred around reproduction and puberty and anatomy with a lack of discussion about pleasure and

alternative contraception to condoms. A lack of discussion about same-sex relationships and sexual interactions was a common theme in the interviewees' narratives. When homosexuality was discussed, homosexual desire was often seen as a passing phenomenon and a marginalized position was highlighted by contrasting differing sexualities with heterosexuality.

Research reflects an outdated education system, and the Finnish society has developed when it comes to recognizing diversity. The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (FNAE, 2014) in Finland also now highlights issues of appreciating diversity and actively promoting and increasing equality. However, in 2021, the Ministry of Justice in Finland published a situational estimate about LGBTIA+ communities within the Finnish society (Finland's Ministry of Justice, 2021). It was highlighted that sexuality education is still based on heteronormative interpretations of sexuality and gender diversity and thus the publication suggested developing sexuality education to include current information about diversity in sexual orientation and gender expression. This suggests that while the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (2014) addresses sexuality education in a multidisciplinary fashion, the quality of sexuality education given in schools does not yet consider certain issues such as diverse orientations of sexuality and gender expression.

Little research within the accessed literature in the context of Finland has been conducted regarding sexuality education content in teacher education and how pre-service teachers are being prepared to deliver sexuality education in working life. The Family Federation of Finland (2024) states that all adults working with children and youths are sexuality educators and they do not get a choice in the matter. As sexuality education in Finland is a multidisciplinary subject, according to its holistic nature, its contents are discussed in the subject-specific curricula of environmental studies, religion, civics and later biology and health education. Thus, one could expect the discussion and teaching regarding sexuality education in Finnish teacher education to take place when learning about the didactics of these subjects.

In the context of the United Kingdom, Cumper, Adams, Onyejekwe and O'Reilly (2024) found that participating teachers had different levels of confidence around teaching sexuality education and found sensitive issues such as sexual abuse and sexual and gender diversity challenging to discuss in an age-appropriate way. The teachers also considered the resisting opinions of challenge difficult to address when it came to sexuality education. A similar finding was addressed by van Leent, Kay, Wighton, Peters and Ryan (2024) regarding pre-service

teachers' learning about sexuality education content during their studies. Pre-service teachers felt prepared to teach sexuality education content but were concerned about a possible resistance from the community and parents especially regarding discussions about gender and sexual diversity.

Similarly in Finland, teachers who found discussing issues regarding sexuality easy and natural and shared personal experiences frankly were positively associated with higher levels of students' sexual knowledge (Kontula, 2010). These findings indicated that to deliver quality sexuality education that increases student knowledge, teachers need to be comfortable in teaching these topics. This poses a need to research how holistic sexuality education contents are communicated to Finnish primary teacher students and how this, in turn, influences their perceptions of preparedness to deliver holistic sexuality education.

Teacher preparedness includes several factors. Ingvarson et al. (2007) found that participants who reported good preparedness for teaching demands in working life had participated in courses with strong focus on content. These courses gave future teachers the opportunity to make connections between content and effective delivery, find connections to students' earlier knowledge and learn specific teaching methods related to the content, for example.

Perceived self-efficacy is a person's belief in their own capabilities to take necessary action to attain certain aims or goals. While self-efficacy and self-esteem are sometimes used interchangeably, self-esteem relates to perceptions of self-worth while self-efficacy is concerned with competence (Bandura, 1997). It is necessary to note that perceived self-efficacy is not necessarily accurate: people can also underestimate or overestimate their abilities.

Pre-service teachers' attitudes and beliefs about sexuality education develop extensively during their years of training (O'Brien et al., 2021). Research indicated that teachers who are comfortable with sexuality education content deliver higher quality sexuality education (Kontula, 2010). WHO (2010) call for adequate preparation and training of teachers to deliver holistic sexuality education. Therefore, teacher education programmes should include both accurate information about sexuality education content and education about delivering sexuality education effectively and with quality to enhance teachers' feelings of preparedness.

## 1.2 Definition of important terms

In this study, Finnish pre-service primary teachers are the students studying at primary teacher education programmes, who are qualified to teach in the first six years of basic education in Finland. Finnish in this instance does not refer to nationality, but to students studying at a university in Finland. Pre-service teachers and student teachers are used interchangeably in this study and refer to students who have not yet graduated from their teacher training programme.

According to the Standards of Sexuality Education in Europe (WHO, 2010), sexuality education refers to learning about all the aspects of human sexuality: social, emotional, cognitive, interactive and physical. The Sexuality Education Matrix (WHO, 2010) includes eight main categories which are all divided into sub-categories based on information, skills and attitudes. The eight main categories are the human body and human development, fertility and reproduction, sexuality, emotions, relationships and lifestyles, sexuality, health and well-being, sexuality and rights and social and cultural determinants of sexuality (values / norms) (WHO, 2010). The instrument used in this study is based on this matrix.

Merriam-Webster (n.d.) defines perception as “a result of perceiving”, “a mental image” and “quick, acute and intuitive cognition”. Listed synonyms include wisdom, comprehension, sense and insight (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Student teacher preparedness is defined in this study in relation to self-efficacy beliefs and readiness-for-the-job. Readiness-for-the-job in the educational context is defined as an indication of teachers' competence to deliver given aspects of the profession (Mohamed et al., 2016). Factors such as confidence in content knowledge and teaching practice and experience of teaching in realistic classroom settings have been found to positively impact feelings of preparedness to teach (see for example Brown et al., 2015; Ingvarson et al., 2007).

Teacher preparedness implies the extent to which student teachers believe that they are capable of influencing student learning within a given topic based on their own abilities. Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk and Hoy (1998) define teacher efficacy as a teachers' belief in their ability to organize and execute their teaching to achieve a teaching task. They highlight that a strong sense of efficacy among teachers has been found to correlate with openness, persistence, and commitment.

In this study, student teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to teach sexuality education content is investigated as an attempt to gain insight on how well or poorly prepared they find themselves based on teacher education so far. Thus, student teacher perceptions refer to the mental images and intuitive insights the participants share regarding the topic, including the self-efficacy and readiness-for-the job.

### **1.3 Research problem**

The aim of the present research is to investigate Finnish pre-service primary teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to deliver sexuality education. As has been established, student teaching is an important part of developing teacher self-efficacy and the sense of preparedness through practical teaching experience in a real-life setting (Brown, Lee & Collins, 2015). Despite being a cross-curricular topic, due to the limited time spent participating in student teaching, it is not likely that all student teachers participate in delivering sexuality education in their practical training. Furthermore, sexuality education is different in each grade-level due to its developmentally- and age-appropriate nature, and it is thus not feasible to expect student teaching alone to be enough to develop a good sense of preparedness.

Research shows that teachers who have good content knowledge and a sense of comfort and confidence in discussing sexuality-related issues with students deliver more high-quality sexuality education (Juuti et al., 2018; Kontula, 2010). This poses the implication that even if teacher training programmes cannot offer extensive opportunities to rehearse delivering sexuality education, they can offer opportunities to expand content knowledge and understanding of the nature of holistic sexuality education.

The review of Finnish universities' teacher training programme curricula presents evidence that sexuality education is rarely mentioned explicitly in course contents. This can, however, be due to the cross-curricular nature of sexuality education and it can thus be expected that sexuality education contents would be taught and discussed within the didactics of subjects such as environmental studies and religion and ethics.

With reference to the WHO Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe (2010) Sexuality Education Matrix, the present study aims to find out how Finnish pre-service class teachers perceive their preparedness to deliver sexuality education based on their studies. The pre-

service teachers' preparedness is evaluated in this research against the WHO (2010) standards because they are referred to by the Family Federation of Finland as a guideline for professionals. Furthermore, the WHO (2010) Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe are referred to alongside sexuality education material by Liinamo, Jokinen and Varstala (2004) by the Ministry of Education in Finland. Despite the fact that the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education in Finland (2014) does not explicitly refer to the WHO (2010) material, it is considered an official guideline by the aforementioned Finnish institutions. A further goal is to investigate which factors influence Finnish pre-service class teachers' preparedness to deliver sexuality education and if these factors are outside factors or related to teacher training programmes in Finland.

There is little research in the Finnish context about how teacher training programmes prepare future teachers for delivering sexuality education. Furthermore, it is necessary to know whether pre-service teachers feel prepared enough to deliver high quality sexuality education based on their university education. It is known that sexuality education is mostly discussed in Finnish basic education in grades 7-9 health education and biology (Kontula, 2010). Holistic sexuality education is, however, a continuum, and should begin in earlier grades in a developmentally- and age-appropriate fashion (WHO, 2010). Because health education in grades 7-9 is taught by a health education subject teacher and grades 1-6 are taught by a primary teacher, this research is narrowed down to the preparedness of primary teachers who are qualified to teach all subjects in grades 1-6. Primary teachers encounter sexuality education content in a multidisciplinary way in the curricula for several subjects including, but not necessarily limited to, environmental studies, religion, ethics and civics as well as the transversal competencies of the curriculum. Accordingly, the research questions at the core of this study are:

- 1) How do Finnish pre-service primary teachers perceive their preparedness to deliver sexuality education in basic education grades 1-6?
- 2) Which factors influence Finnish pre-service primary teachers' preparedness to deliver sexuality education in basic education grades 1-6?

## 2 Background

### 2.1 Teacher preparedness

The concept of teacher preparedness is closely related to self-efficacy, as self-efficacy beliefs determine whether one believes in their capability to complete and succeed in a task (Brown et al., 2015). Student teaching is the primary means for pre-service teachers to gain experience and develop their preparedness. Teacher professional competence develops through practical learning opportunities throughout working life (Kunter et al., 2013). This implies that there are opportunities for in-service teachers to increase confidence and comfort in delivering sexuality education.

To build student teachers' realistic efficacy beliefs, teacher training programmes should provide opportunities for teaching practice in different contexts with gradually increasing complexity to avoid sudden immersion, which can be harmful to the development of a sense of teaching competence (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). Student teaching has a positive impact on pre-service teachers' preparedness and sense of efficacy (Brown et al., 2014). Teacher efficacy has also been found to be positively related to student achievement (see for example Chambers et al., 2013) Juuti, et al. (2018) researched Finnish teacher education and pre-service teachers' self-efficacy. They found that high self-efficacy in pre-service teachers is related to rehearsing teaching in practical, real-world settings with opportunities to connect pedagogical theories and practice. In the context of sexuality education, this implies that in order to grow in comfort in delivering sexuality education, pre-service teachers may benefit from real-life teaching practice in addition to theoretical knowledge.

Student teachers' readiness-for-the-job was researched by Mohamed et al. (2017). They define readiness-for-the-job in the educational context as an indication of teachers' competence to deliver given aspects of the profession (Mohamed et al., 2016). Their research used a framework of eleven international teacher competences (ITCs) as an indicator for student teachers' readiness. The framework includes 17 factors with categories in knowledge and instructional expertise, diversity, partnering of parents and community and attitude towards professional development. For example, student teachers were asked about certain teacher competencies, such as "knowledge of curriculum and subject matter (C1)" and "adapting teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils (C7), and if these were taught

explicitly, in theory and in practice in their teacher education programmes. There are similarities between the ITC framework and the elements of quality sexuality education outlined by WHO (2010), including factors such as cooperating with community and guardians, enhancing equality, recognizing diversity and delivering accurate information. This implies that attaining readiness in delivering quality sexuality education requires similar means as reaching readiness in teaching in general.

Delivering accurate information is a very central component of holistic sexuality education and relates to Housego's (1990) findings about student teachers' feelings of preparedness to teach which revealed that the relevance and applicability of teacher training programme coursework is assessed by students in relation to teaching. Participants in this research placed importance on learning the content to amplify the quality of their teaching. These findings suggest that a teacher's adequate content knowledge of sexuality education would amplify the quality of sexuality education content delivered to learners and in turn enhance preparedness.

Considering these findings, investigating pre-service teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to deliver sexuality education during their studies in Finland can provide insight into how sexuality education is addressed in teacher education programmes in Finnish universities. The findings on student teacher preparedness may provide suggestions for the future curriculum enrichments in teacher education courses as well as for in-service teacher training programmes.

## **2.2 History of sexuality education in Finland**

The rise of sexuality education in Finland followed the trend set by cultural development in Western Europe during the sexual revolution in the 1970s. The sexual revolution was brought along by wider availability of contraception, such as the contraceptive pill, and the legalization of abortion in several countries. The WHO Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe (2010) highlight this societal change as a turning point which called for a new kind of education. Needs for introducing more extensive sexuality education differed among countries and reasons included prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, particularly HIV, unwanted pregnancy prevention and responding to a need for educating younger children after sexual abuse scandals.

In Finland, topics of sexuality education have been discussed publicly as early as in the 1960s in content produced by the Finnish Public Service Media Company YLE. Clips of television

programmes directed at children can be found in the YLE archives discussing romantic relationships, intercourse, and reproduction. Sex and intercourse are discussed and pictured in detail in these videos (YLE, 2019). After the educational reform in Finland in the 1970s, sexuality education has been a part of the curriculum in all comprehensive schools, following the general Western European trend.

The effects of Finland's economic recession in the early 1990s negatively influenced the quality and quantity of sexuality education delivered in Finnish comprehensive schools. Financial cuttings in the mid-1990s made sexuality education an optional subject. This was associated with a nation-wide increase in adolescent abortions and chlamydia infections (Apter, 2011). There was also an increase in girls who started intercourse during grades 8 or 9 (age 14-15), without contraception. After introducing health education as a curriculum subject in 2006, sexuality education content was taught as a part of health education in grades 7 and 8 in most schools in Finland (Kontula & Meriläinen, 2007).

According to the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, to which Finland committed in 1991, children have a right to access information. The Finnish Basic Education Act (1998/628) defines the aim of Finnish basic education as equipping pupils with the necessary skillset to grow and develop into ethically responsible citizens in addition to promoting equality in society. Furthermore, children and youths have the right to receive developmentally- and age-appropriate sexuality education, which holistically addresses physical and health aspects of sexuality but also socio-emotional wellbeing, safety skills and fostering respectful relationships (WHO, 2010). Young children's experiences of closeness and care are a part of psychosexual development and skills learned in early childhood support developing safe meaningful relationships later in life (Cacciatore et al., 2019). This further highlights the need for age and developmentally appropriate sexuality education.

Several studies confirm the need for effective sexuality education and its positive influences historically. The European Expert Group on Sexuality Education (2016) lists some successes of regular sexuality education interventions and programmes throughout the decades: preventing unwanted pregnancies and HIV, increasing awareness of sexual abuse and most recently preventing sexism, homophobia and cyberbullying. They approach the topic of defining and clarifying the concept of sexuality education from a human rights point of view that people have a right to sufficient information. However, informal sources are often

insufficient. Contrary to a popular counterargument, sexuality education does not result in earlier inception of sexual activity among young people (Apter, 2011).

### **2.3 Research for sexuality education in primary teaching**

In the Australian context, Sinkinson (2009) found that pre-service teachers initially thought that sexuality education was not topical when it came to younger students and had lower levels of comfort around teaching about sexuality. Over the three-year training period levels of comfort around sexuality education grew and the pre-service teachers came to recognize positive sexuality as an aspect of holistic health as a content area of high importance, among other things. The participants also found beginning sexuality education at a young age important at the end of the study (Sinkinson, 2009).

Sinkinson's (2009) findings highlight that without the adequate information provided via sexuality education training during their teacher training period, the participants' constructs about holistic sexuality education would not necessarily have ever shifted towards the desired holistic approach. According to both holistic and comprehensive sexuality education, pleasure and sexuality as a positive factor of holistic health are very central, as well as sexual development as a life-long process. It was only after appropriate training that these pre-service teachers came to recognize these very central factors. This strongly implies that concentrating on sexuality education is necessary during teacher training to ensure a quality level of sexuality education delivered to students.

The Family Federation of Finland (2024) highlights everyone's right to receiving high-quality, fact-based sexuality education. They outline that attention should be directed especially to ensuring that different identities, including LGBTQ+ people and disabled people, are considered and that sexuality educators have reflected on their personal assumptions and their impact on the sexuality education they deliver. Additionally, the impact of the material used for sexuality education is discussed. Honkasalo (2018) analysed Finnish health education textbooks from the point of view of culture and sexuality and found that Finland was primarily portrayed as a liberal state accepting of LGBTQ+ identities. In reality, however, sexuality education about diverse gender and sexual identities has found to be lacking and recommendations have been made to pay more attention to educating about and fostering attitudes accepting of diversity within society (Finland's Ministry of Justice, 2021).

It cannot be determined based on Honkasalo's (2018) research how teachers use these textbooks and what kinds of discussions take place around violence towards sexual and gender minorities as the textbook material alone does not acknowledge these aspects and risks. Lehtonen et al. (2024) researched sexuality education of pre-teenage children in Finland and suggested that heteronormativity and norms should be recognized in student-teacher and peer interactions in the context of sexuality education. Both these findings in the Finnish context suggest that there is need for teachers to evaluate the materials and practices used in administering sexuality education. These findings imply that there is room for improvement in the field of sexuality education in Finnish schools.

Comprehensive and holistic approaches have been discovered to have a positive influence especially when it comes to fostering diversity acceptance and increasing equality. Educating youths about diversity appreciation decreases homophobic bullying and perpetration and victimization related to intimate partner violence (Goldfarb & Lieberman, 2020). In China, a CSE intervention among high school students had a positive influence on student knowledge regarding sex and attitudes towards gender and sexuality. After the intervention, young women reported higher sexual self-efficacy, an outcome directly related to goals of reducing inequality by empowering young women (Li et al., 2022).

In their review about research on sexuality education for youths identifying with the LGBTQ+ community, Charley et al. (2023) found that LGBTQ+ youth were often left to search for information in possibly unregulated resources outside of school, such as the internet, because sexuality education in schools did not provide enough relevant information for them. The danger with this is that children are at risk to discover information that is not only not age- and developmentally-appropriate but also possibly scientifically inaccurate and even harmful to the development.

O'Donoghue and Guerin (2016) identified teachers' lack of comfort in discussing issues related to homophobic and transphobic bullying and their lack of training as the main barriers in addressing homophobic bullying. Li et al. (2022) found that the inclusive nature of CSE regarding diversity within gender expression and sexual orientation improved students' attitudes towards homosexual individuals. These findings suggest that enhancing training about sexuality education in teacher education can promote fulfilling the goals in the Finnish National

Core Curriculum for Basic Education, such as promoting equality and respect for human rights (FNAE, 2014).

O'Brien et al. (2021) found that compared to heterosexual youths, non-heterosexual youths considered sexuality education delivered poorly. Ill-preparedness among teachers continues to an extent especially in the countries not within the areas of best practice. Adequate teacher preparation was key to good subject knowledge and high self-efficacy, which in turn increased confidence in teaching sexuality education contents. Their study revealed that the Nordic and Dutch teacher training institutions have been considered as areas of best practice regarding sexuality education (O'Brien et al., 2021). Simultaneously, however, topics of gender and sexual diversity are not addressed enough in sexuality education in Finland (Ministry of Justice in Finland, 2021).

The Finnish National Agency for Education highlights age-appropriate sexuality education as the key measure in preventing sexual abuse and violence (Opetushallitus, 2020). The aspect of strengthening safety skills is also highlighted as a preventive measure related to protecting children from sexual abuse. Almanassori (2023) found that Canadian student teachers expressed disappointment in not receiving training in teaching sexuality education or sexual violence prevention. Participants were keen to gain deeper training on sexuality education but also expressed comfort in teaching about sexuality education thanks to information they had gained during their own time apart from teacher education. This raises the question of whether it is ethical to assume that all student teachers have the interest or resources to seek out knowledge and information about sexuality education outside of teacher education.

In general, sexuality education content overlaps multiple subjects and is holistic in nature in the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (FNAE, 2014). However, research findings regarding the need for more extensive sexuality education around diverse identities raise the question about whether teachers in Finland actually feel adequately prepared to act as sexuality educators. The WHO (2010) Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe is one of the guiding documents for both body-emotion education in Finnish early childhood education and primary education, according to the Family Federation of Finland. This suggests that the guidelines determined by WHO (2010) should be considered in Finnish primary teacher education and in planning sexuality education in Finnish schools.

According to the findings of Kontula (2010), diverse teaching strategies and teachers who felt comfortable discussing issues related to sexuality have led to higher quality student knowledge. Teachers need training to become competent in sexuality education, in addition to believing in the principles set for quality sexuality education (WHO, 2010). When the previously mentioned research findings are considered, it can be deduced that teachers, both pre- and in-service ones, need to be trained in sexuality education topics to be comfortable in teaching them.

### **3 Sexuality education in Finnish teacher training programme curricula**

Primary teacher (or class teacher) education is offered by eight universities in Finland: University of Eastern Finland, University of Helsinki, University of Jyväskylä (also in Kokkola Campus), University of Lapland, University of Oulu, University of Tampere, University of Turku (also in Rauma Campus) and Åbo Akademi. Primary teacher education is composed of a bachelor's degree (120 ECTS) and a master's degree (180 ECTS). While all primary teacher education students participate in Multidisciplinary Studies in the subjects and cross-curricular themes taught in Basic Education (60 ECTS), courses offered may vary among the universities in content and extent.

For the purposes of this research, the curricula for the teacher training programmes in these Finnish universities were reviewed with the intent of researching the extent to which sexuality education is discussed and taught within the course content. The curricula were read, analysed, and coded in January 2024. As holistic sexuality education is cross-curricular in nature, it could be expected that there would not be separate courses discussing only sexuality education. In the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2014, core components of the WHO Sexuality Education Matrix are discussed in the transversal competences and subject-specific curricula for environmental studies, biology, health education, religion and ethics. This suggests that components of sexuality education would likely be discussed in the corresponding curricula for the multidisciplinary studies in subjects and cross-curricular themes taught in Basic Education within primary teacher education programmes.

The framework of analysis created to classify the contents of the university curricula was based on the eight main topic categories of the WHO (2010) Sexuality Education Matrix: the human body and human development; fertility and reproduction; sexuality; emotions; relationships and lifestyles; sexuality, health and wellbeing; sexuality and rights and social and cultural determinants of sexuality (values/norms). Additionally, it was noted whether the course descriptions explicitly mentioned "sexuality education". Table 1 displays the courses mentioned in the curricula for the teacher training programmes. Despite sexuality education in the Finnish basic education system being multidisciplinary and cross-curricular in nature, it is important that primary teachers learn to understand the different elements contributing to it. It

cannot be expected that all primary teacher students with different backgrounds, can identify these different content areas without explicit guidance.

Table 1. Sexuality education in Finnish university curricula for primary teacher education.

	<b>Sexuality education explicitly mentioned</b>	<b>Components of the WHO Sexuality Education Matrix mentioned</b>
<b>University of Eastern Finland</b>		The basics of teaching ethics* Equality and diversity in education*
<b>University of Helsinki</b>	Didactics in health education: multidisciplinary learning module*	Societal, cultural and philosophical fundamentals of education*
<b>University of Jyväskylä</b>		Education, society and change* Pedagogy of religion and worldview studies* Environment and science education*
<b>University of Lapland</b>	Environmental studies: Health education	The society of education* Gendered practices in education*
<b>University of Oulu</b>		Societal and cultural context of education* Diversity in education* Environmental studies I: The living environment*
<b>University of Tampere</b>		Educational communities and equality* Environmental studies* Advanced thematic period in educational studies: Gender-conscious education
<b>University of Turku</b>	Democracy, equality and human rights in school	Biology and health education*
<b>Åbo Akademi</b>		Biology, geography and health education for class teachers*

\* Compulsory courses

The analysis of curricula shows that only three courses in Finnish primary teacher education programmes explicitly mention sexuality education in their course description. Only one of these courses, Didactics in health education: multidisciplinary learning module, in the primary teacher education programme in the University of Helsinki is a compulsory course. The two other courses, Environmental studies: Health education in the University of Lapland and

Democracy, equality and human rights in school in the University of Turku, were elective courses.

Other components of the WHO (2010) Sexuality Education Matrix were, however, discussed in a plethora of other courses, the vast majority of which were a compulsory part of studies. The courses which mentioned core components of the matrix related mostly to environmental studies and biology and religion and worldview studies when it came to subject specific courses. Otherwise, the core components were often mentioned in the curricula related to a societal view of the field of education and promoting good ethical practices and equality in education.

## 4 Methods

### 4.1 Research design

This study adopted a mixed methods design combining surveys and interviews. The advantages of mixed method research include investigating in-depth relationships between variables (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). While the survey provides information about the respondents' perceptions of preparedness on a pre-determined scale of sexuality education content, the interviews provide an understanding of what the participants consider fact and the experiences that have built their self-image as sexuality education administrators.

Survey research is cross-sectional in nature, gathering information at one point in time from a pre-determined population (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012), in the case of the present study the perceptions of preparedness of Finnish primary teacher students regarding delivering sexuality education in their future work. A survey study allows participants to place themselves on a scale of preparedness in addition to providing the chance to express further thoughts through answering open-ended questions.

The survey aimed to find answers to the following research problem: how prepared do Finnish pre-service primary teacher students feel to teach holistic sexuality education content based on their teacher education. The content areas of holistic sexuality education are rooted in the WHO (2010) Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe Sexuality Education Matrix, by which the survey questions were formulated. While the participants were asked to rate their preparedness based on their studies in teacher education, prior research has revealed that teacher students have felt the need to seek information about sexuality education outside their teacher education due to the insufficient effort placed towards sexuality education during their studies (Almanassori, 2023). Therefore, it was important that participants gained a chance to articulate the possible other sources of information and knowledge they have which may influence preparedness outside of or in addition to teacher education. Survey participants were provided the opportunity to indicate sources outside of their primary teacher education programme which have influenced their preparedness in the open-ended questions of the survey.

The web-based survey was distributed to potential volunteering participants in March 2024 and the survey was open until October 2024. The survey was distributed via universities, student

organizations and social media. The survey was open for several months, but there was little increase in responses between May and August 2024 as most students had their summer holiday during this period.

The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach in October 2024. The advantages of structured and semi-structured interviews include somewhat systematic data collection and increased comprehensiveness of data (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). A semi-structured interview does, however, require care from the researcher in wording and sequencing of questions to ensure comparability of answers between participants. According to Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2012), a weakness of a structured approach to interviewing is the possibility of inadvertent omission of interesting viewpoints. In the present study, a semi-structured interview allowed for comparability between the open-ended survey responses and responses of participants in the interview. Additionally, pre-determined questions and structure support an ethical interviewing situation, as there is little need for the researcher to assess whether asking an additional question about an underlying topic is appropriate or not during the interview. This is especially important when discussing possibly sensitive topics such as sexuality, as the views and opinions of participants may relate to personal experiences.

## **4.2 Sample**

The population of the study is current primary teacher students in Finland. The participants were volunteers who chose to take part in the survey. Interview participants were reached via an open invitation distributed on social media and via universities and student organizations. The survey participants include 56 students from the Universities of Eastern Finland, Helsinki, Jyväskylä, Lapland, Tampere and Turku. Interview participants were seven students from the Universities of Turku, Helsinki, Jyväskylä and Eastern Finland.

The interview participants were recruited through invitations distributed via social media and with the help of universities. All seven participants who volunteered for the interview were included. Of the interview participants one was male and six were female and participants were between years 1-6 in their teacher education.

The survey and interview invitations were open to all primary teacher students regardless of the length of their experience in teacher education programmes. Because participants were also asked about factors outside their studies which may have influenced their preparedness to

deliver sexuality education, the experiences of students at early stages of their studies were considered valuable despite little experience of possible university courses which may have influenced their preparedness. One of seven interview participants and three of 56 survey respondents were in their first year of studies. This is a relatively small percentage of all participants, which makes their limited experience of university courses unlikely to influence the results drastically and has been considered in the data analysis.

### **4.3 Data collection tools and process**

The instrument employed in this research was a cross-sectional Preparedness for Sexuality Education (PSES) survey to investigate Finnish pre-service primary teachers' perceptions about their preparedness to deliver sexuality education (Appendix 1). The survey included four alternative response questions, a scale of 25 5-Likert type questions ranging from unprepared (1) to well-prepared (5), and two open-ended questions. For the purposes of this research a new instrument was constructed in the form of a survey, which is largely based on the WHO Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe (2010). The Sexuality Education Matrix of this document is based on holistic sexuality education as a multidisciplinary and cross-curricular approach. The questions in the survey were based on the main content areas outlined in the curriculum for age groups 6-9 and 9-12. These are the age groups taught by primary teachers in Finland. The questionnaire was pre-tested using a small sample of pre-service teachers to determine possible unclarities before distributing to the actual respondents. The highest scores one can get from the scale is 100 and the lowest is 25. The higher scores indicate higher level of perceived preparedness.

Alternative response questions aimed to collect necessary background information about the participants included age, gender (male, female, other), university and the current year of studies. The information about participants' gender is necessary because previous research has shown that there are differences in quality of sexuality education delivered by teachers depending on gender (Kontula, 2010). The information about the stage of the participants' education studies is necessary because university curricula change, and thus different course content may have been included in the same courses depending on the year of studies. The previous curricula were not accessed for the purposes of this study. Due to the comparison between Finnish universities primary teacher programme curricula, this information can be compared to the students' actual experiences of the courses and find out if there is a relationship between these factors.

The scale in the survey asked participants to evaluate how well prepared they feel teaching different content areas of holistic sexuality education. To specify the statements for the participants, the survey includes different examples of the possible contents taught within a given content area (for example “choices about parenthood and pregnancy, infertility and adoption” as a reflection of the content area of the human body and human development). The content areas of holistic sexuality education are defined by the WHO (2010) Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe as the human body and human development, fertility and reproduction, sexuality, emotions, relationships and lifestyles, sexuality, health and well-being and sexuality and rights.

The survey included an open-ended question asking participants to elaborate which courses or contents during their university studies in education have discussed the contents of sexuality education and influenced their preparedness. Additionally, the survey included an open-ended question where participants had the opportunity to elaborate if there are other factors which have influenced their subject knowledge regarding sexuality education, if they feel like these have influenced their preparedness.

#### 4.3.1 Interview protocol

The interview questions (see Appendix 2) included background questions, experience questions and feelings questions. The background information asked of the participants included their age, university and current year of studies. The aim of the background questions is to help evaluate if certain similarities or differences between participant views may relate to common background factors.

The aim of the knowledge questions was to find out how participants first became aware of the concept of sexuality education and what contents they consider included in sexuality education. These knowledge questions aimed to investigate what participants consider fact in relation to the topic at hand, while the following experience questions aim to gain information about the participants’ experiences regarding sexuality education (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). The knowledge questions aimed to find out when participants were first exposed to sexuality education as a concept which may reveal their definition of sexuality education. The survey asked participants to rate their preparedness to teach different areas of sexuality education, which have been defined for them based on the Sexuality Education Matrix (WHO, 2010). In

the interview, however, participants were not told about the topics but instead asked which topics they would consider sexuality education which revealed their pre-existing knowledge about sexuality education and whether it is congruent with the principles of comprehensive sexuality education, as recommended by the Family Federation of Finland (2024).

Experience questions included the experiences participants may have had in delivering sexuality education and the factors that have influenced the participants' preparedness to deliver sexuality education both during their university studies and in possible other areas of life. As real-life teaching experience relates to teachers' perceptions of preparedness (see for example Brown et al., 2014; Juuti et al., 2018), real-life teaching experiences of sexuality education may possibly have influenced the participants' ideas of their preparedness.

In addition to knowledge and experience questions participants were also asked about their feelings about delivering sexuality education and how they believe they will address sexuality education in their future work as teachers, including the factors they believe may influence this in working life. Finally, to allow participants to mention possible other thoughts they have about the topic, the interviewer asked whether there were any questions participants expected but were not asked and if they would be willing to answer them at the end of the interview.

Before the interview, participants were presented with a consent form (Appendix 3), where the opportunity for asking questions before committing to participating in the interview has been presented in advance. The consent form informs the participant of their right to decline answering any questions during the interview or discontinue the interview at any time. Participants were informed that the topic of the interview is sexuality education in advance and offered the opportunity to ask clarifying questions about the aims, content or questions of the interview. None of the participants exercised this right.

## **5 Data analysis**

### **5.1 Quantitative analysis**

The survey in this study provided numerical data which in turn provided statistical insight into the participants' views of their preparedness to teach different aspects of the WHO (2010) Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe Sexuality Education Matrix. Additionally, the participants provided information about their age, gender, current year of studies and university. Descriptive statistics were run to explore the basic characteristics of the sample.

Especially in educational research, practical significance is worth investigating and discussing even if statistical significance is not attained due to small sample size, for example (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). Thus, even though the desired sample size of 100-200 participants is not reached during the data collection period of this study, it was worth investigating the results of the survey based on descriptive statistics as it is likely they reveal insights on how the participants view their preparedness as a group and which aspects of sexuality education are particularly challenging or particularly simple for the participants based on mean scores.

### **5.2 Qualitative content analysis**

The survey included two open ended questions which were answered after the rating of preparedness using a scale. One of the questions (the seventh question) asked the courses that have prepared the preservice teachers regarding delivering sexuality education during their primary teacher education and the other one (the eighth question) asked the other factors that have affected their preparedness regarding delivering sexuality education and how.

These questions provided qualitative data as participants were offered the opportunity to elaborate on their answers and provide more in-detail personal experiences. This data was analysed by implementing the steps of qualitative content analysis, as it is a flexible approach which aims to reduce data (Schreier, 2014). Because the survey did not set any limitations for participants in terms of the length of their replies, there was variation in the length of narratives. Similarities and differences in participant responses were investigated using the practical tool of a coding frame where responses were coded into subcategories and main categories further examined in the following chapter.

The interview recordings were transcribed to create a written script of the participants' responses. After this, qualitative content analysis was performed similarly to the qualitative content analysis performed with the open-ended responses in the survey according to the following steps outlined by Schreier (2014). A coding frame was built based on the written responses and transcribed interviews, and the data was be coded and segmented so that each coding unit is under only one subcategory. For example, the main category for the seventh survey question is university courses, and there are several main categories for the eighth question asking about other factors affecting preparedness to deliver sexuality education, again explained in more details in the findings.

The data was coded twice. There were very few differences between the two rounds of coding. During the second round of coding, however, certain statements were no longer identified as they were too vague and relied too heavily on the researcher's interpretation. An advantage of qualitative content analysis is that it recognizes the researcher's position as an influencing factor guiding how they approach the analysis. The highly systematic approach emphasizing coding data at two separate points in time as well as reflecting on choices made in terms of data coding throughout the research process are tools in recognizing choices made based on researcher position (Sarajarvi & Tuomi, 2017).

### **5.3 Internal validity**

Standardization is a common assumption in survey research and checking for these assumptions requires checking for cultural specificity, assuming participants are comfortable answering all questions and whether the questions have the same meaning when translated (Chelleadurai, 2020). The questions in the survey in Finnish are based on the WHO (2010) Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe which has been fully and officially translated into Finnish by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare. This confirms that the terminology used in the Sexuality Education Matrix is current, scientific and in accordance with the original test in English.

The comfort and true volunteering of participants must be approached seriously and carefully as the research handles sexuality, a topic which can be considered private and a topic even health and education professionals often do not know enough about (Balter, van Rhijn & Davies, 2016). Admitting their possible lack of knowledge can cause participants discomfort, as well as discussing personal experiences of sexuality education. For these reasons the PSES

is anonymous, and participants are informed of the contents of the survey, the document they are based on and their option to interrupt answering the survey before beginning. Interview participants are guaranteed anonymity.

Respondent burden is related to the possible discomfort described earlier and additionally encompasses sacrifice of personal time to answering a survey or participating in an interview (Sharp & Frankel, 1983). Considering the participants are university students studying education, they are likely often offered the opportunity to volunteer as a participant in a survey study or interview and they may well grow tired of it. The issue with a high level of subject loss due to incomplete surveys is that it is impossible for the researcher to know what the lost participants would have answered and how this would ultimately influence the result. Additionally, in survey research it is impossible to determine whether there were similar characteristics to the lost subjects and if these similarities in turn related to the research topic. It is possible that those who feel more comfortable and confident in participating in a study about sexuality education (even though it was anonymous) may have answered the survey, revealing participant bias (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). These threats to internal validity can be compensated for, to an extent, by supplementing the research data with interviews. The participants are different, but the interview allows for more in-depth narratives to be conveyed by the participants and provides the opportunity to ask follow-up questions, which is not possible in the survey. The survey link was kept open for several months to access more student teachers in multiple outlets, aiming to reach potential participants with different views.

Another threat to internal validity in the present research is history. Due to the research design, participants complete the survey on their own time and the researcher has little information about the previous events in the participants' lives which may influence their replies and views apart from what the participants choose to disclose. Certain participants may have recent pre-service teaching experiences due to which they have recently gained a lot of information on the topic and have reflected on it more than other participants. The participants' personal beliefs, views and histories may also influence their perceptions on sexuality education (see for example Goldman & Coleman, 2013; de Haas & Hutter, 2022). The instrument provides participants the opportunity to disclose these factors in the open-ended questions to provide the researcher with more information about where their preparedness or unpreparedness stems from and in-turn make more accurate connections when analyzing data.

A limitation regarding qualitative content analysis is establishing validity, as the research is so heavily guided by the researcher's position and possibly subjective interpretations (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). Therefore, it is necessary to approach the qualitative data obtained as reflections of individuals instead of data providing causational insights. This possible limitation is also considered by double-coding the data at different points in time to ensure that the process is as systematic as possible.

To ensure a higher level of internal validity, the PSES, interview questions and data collection plan were read and reviewed by several peers during the writing process, as suggested by Crewswell and Poth (2018). Before distributing the PSES and beginning the interviews, all questions were approved by the supervisor of this research.

#### **5.4 Limitations and Assumptions**

A limitation regarding the quantitative data is the question of the statistical significance and generalizability of the data which depends on the number of responses gathered by the end of the data collection period. It is necessary to note that the findings of this research are limited to the responses of 56 survey participants and the responses of 7 interview participants.

A limitation regarding anonymous survey-research is that it is impossible to further clarify the replies of participants and thus interpretations is solely done by the researcher, and it is impossible to fully determine that the reply has been interpreted according to the respondents' original intentions. This limitation is addressed to an extent in the interviews as there is an opportunity for the interviewee to ask for clarification about the questions and for the interviewer to ask for the consent of the participant to ask a follow-up question.

In this research it is assumed that because the survey is anonymous and is unlikely to provide participants with any benefits or problems during their studies, participants are reflecting on their preparedness and sharing their experiences honestly. Another assumption is that participants have little knowledge about their actual preparedness as they are student teachers who most likely do not have sufficient experience teaching sexuality education content in real-life classroom settings independently. The participants understanding and interpretation of the questions in the PSES the way the researcher intended was ensured by running a small pilot study beforehand.

## 6 Findings

### 6.1 Preparedness to teach about different content areas of sexuality education

Most participants who responded to the survey were from the universities of Helsinki, Jyväskylä and Turku (48 in total). From the universities of Eastern Finland, Lapland, Oulu and Tampere there were only eight participants combined. Comparing the difference in participants' feelings of perception between different universities would not provide valid and useful information due to the variance of the number of participants between different universities. It is noteworthy to point that 48 participants were currently in at least their third year of studies, making it likely that they have participated in the Multidisciplinary Studies in the Subjects and cross-curricular Themes taught in Basic Education (60 ECTS), where courses of the didactics of different subjects take place, and thus have likely been exposed to the possible teaching about sexuality education during their studies.

All 56 participants answered 25 items about preparedness to teach different topics of sexuality education. The interview participants will be referred to as PST1-7 from this point onwards. The participants did not seem to be prepared to teach these aspects ( $M = 72.11$ ,  $SD = 23.37$ ). Table 2. illustrates the participants' ratings of how prepared they perceived themselves to deliver the different content areas of sexuality education based on their primary teacher studies. Participants were asked to rate their preparedness on a scale (1 = Unprepared, 5 = Very well prepared).

Table 2. Survey participants' perceptions of preparedness to teach the different aspects of sexuality education in their future work as primary teachers.

	Mean	SD
Body changes, menstruation, ejaculation, individual variation in development	2.63	1.10
Early changes in puberty (mental, physical, social and emotional changes)	2.84	1.06
Choices about parenthood and pregnancy, different methods of conception.	2.61	1.17
Different types of contraception and their use; myths about contraception.	2.71	1.32
Symptoms of pregnancy and risks and consequences of unsafe sex.	2.95	1.30
Sex in the media (including the internet).	2.91	1.07
First sexual experience.	2.34	1.08
Gender identity.	2.91	1.21
Sexual behaviour of young people (variability of sexual behaviour).	2.34	1.05
The difference between friendship, love and lust.	2.93	1.13
Different emotions.	3.73	.75
Differences in individual needs for intimacy and privacy.	2.73	1.14
Different families.	3.52	1.03
Differences between friendship, companionship, and relationships, and the different ways of dating.	2.91	1.18
Different kinds of pleasant and unpleasant relationships (influence of (gender) inequality on relationships).	2.55	1.14
The positive influence of sexuality on health and well-being.	2.61	1.07
Diseases related to sexuality.	2.55	1.22
Sexual aggression and violence.	2.45	1.08
Symptoms, risks and consequences of unsafe, unpleasant or unwanted sexual experiences.	2.43	1.08
The prevalence of different types of sexual abuse, how to avoid it and where to get support.	2.40	1.00
The right of self-expression.	3.32	1.05
Sexual rights of children (information, sexuality education, bodily integrity).	2.98	1.14
Sexual rights.	2.57	1.08
Gender roles.	2.96	1.17
The influence of peer pressure, media, pornography, culture, religion, gender, laws and socioeconomic status on sexual decisions, partnership and behaviour.	2.38	1.15

For most content areas, participants rated their preparedness between 2 (somewhat unprepared) and 3 (somewhat prepared). There were certain content areas which the participants felt more prepared to teach. These included different emotions ( $M = 3.73$ ), different families ( $M = 3.51$ ) and the right of self-expression ( $M = 3.32$ ). Participants felt particularly unprepared to deliver sexuality education about the topics of the prevalence of different types of sexual abuse, how

to avoid it and where to get support ( $M = 2.39$ ) and the influence of peer pressure, media, pornography, culture, religion, gender, laws and socioeconomic status on sexual decisions, partnership and behaviour ( $M = 2.37$ ). Especially the latter contains a significant number of different factors, which in practice are not all addressed together all the time in sexuality education, but can be difficult to rate preparedness on especially, if participants feel better prepared to discuss the influence of some of the listed factors compared to others.

The content areas of first sexual experience and sexual behaviour of young people (variability of sexual behaviour) have low means (both 2.34). This indicates that these topics are not discussed much in teacher education programmes which may relate to sexual experiences not being very common and thus not being topical for children in grades 1-6. In written responses, several participants clarified that they responded to this question based on how prepared they are in relation to the education they have received through their primary teacher studies, and that they would rate their preparedness higher in at least some content areas due to seeking out information on their own time or personal experiences, for example. The results here can, therefore, be considered indicative of which content areas have been discussed during primary teacher education more than others.

### 6.1.1 Emotions around sexuality education

Interview participants were asked about how they felt about delivering sexuality education. Most participants expressed both positive and negative emotions around sexuality education. All interview participants except for one expressed feeling nervous about delivering sexuality education. Participants were nervous about their ability to deliver sexuality education safely and age-appropriately, pupils' reactions, their lack of knowledge about the topic and parent reactions.

“[Sexuality education feels] mostly nerve-racking. The situation itself is not nerve-racking to me especially with young children, because it is easy to execute and somehow, I know I can do it, but I am nervous about the parents and their reactions because the general sentiment with young children is that sexuality should not be discussed, and it is for adults or teenagers.” (PST5)

“At first [teaching sexuality education topics] was nerve-racking, but only because I knew that at the beginning the pupils' reaction would be amusement. [...] I am tired of laughing about the topic.” (PST3)

Three interview participants felt natural and comfortable about teaching sexuality education content. They expressed that their comfort in teaching had increased after seeking out information on their own time. Most participants expressed that they considered teaching sexuality education important or meaningful, even if they had mixed feelings about their abilities to deliver it.

“Personally, I find [teaching sexuality education content] natural but I have sought out information about it myself, but it is challenging to be able to execute all points of view in a way that is safe and comfortable.” (PST4)

Overall, participants approached teaching sexuality education with openness and considered it meaningful but found their lack of skills an inhibiting factor which in turn evoked feelings of nervousness and discomfort.

## **6.2 Factors influencing primary teacher students' preparedness to deliver sexuality education**

### **6.2.1 Courses discussing sexuality education in primary teacher education programmes across Finnish universities**

Both survey participants and interview participants were asked about the courses they have taken during their primary teacher studies which have prepared them to deliver sexuality education. A total of 52 participants responded to this question in the survey, out of whom 15 stated that no courses during their primary teacher education had prepared them to deliver sexuality education. Table 3 lists all the courses which were mentioned in more than one participant response in both the interviews and the survey. Of the interview participants, three gave examples of courses preparing them to deliver sexuality education and four stated that no courses had prepared them.

Some courses, such as Didactics of Physical Education and Didactics of Health Education, have been grouped together. This is because they are taught within the same course in certain universities and as two separate courses in others. Therefore, certain participants mentioned discussing sexuality education in a course titled “Didactics of physical education and health education” while others mentioned discussing the topic in the courses “Didactics of physical education” in addition to the separate course of “Didactics in health education”. Similarly, Didactics of biology and environmental studies are combined because some universities teach the subjects combined in environmental studies, such as biology and geography, as separate

courses, while others have a combined module of environmental studies. Some of the courses mentioned once included studies in pedagogy of special education, pre-primary and early primary education, multidisciplinary learning modules, critical thinking, interaction skills, basics in media education and didactics of history and religion.

Table 3. Courses discussing sexuality education mentioned by participants.

Course	Times mentioned in participant responses
Didactics of physical education, didactics of health education	28
Didactics of biology, didactics of environmental studies	11
Teaching practice periods	4
Basic and subject studies of health education	3
No courses	15

Many participants stated that sexuality education was discussed briefly in the courses they mentioned and hoped that it would have been discussed more. An interview participant described for example, that sexuality education was referred to in the health education course, but it was not the main topic of a lecture or a workshop.

Some of the survey participants recognized courses which discussed certain aspects of sexuality education as courses increasing their preparedness to deliver sexuality education. The aspects mentioned included socioemotional skills, diverse families and online safety, which are all considered sexuality education content by WHO (2010). This may indicate that the participants recognized the contents of sexuality education differently or that they interpreted the question to only include courses with explicit mentions of sexuality education as a concept.

The participant responses depend on their interpretation of the concept of sexuality education, their memories of courses that have possibly happened some time ago in their studies, changes in curriculum and who the courses were taught by. This data does not give a generalizable answer to which courses in primary teacher education contain sexuality education in every university, but it does provide a helpful understanding of the subjects which are primarily considered the arenas for sexuality education in primary education. These subjects are physical education, health education and environmental studies.

### 6.2.2 Personal interests and informal education

Most of the survey participants (35 of 50 who submitted a written response to the question) stated that personal interest towards the topic and time spent researching the topic have influenced their preparedness to deliver sexuality education. Many participants mentioned that they found the topic compelling and meaningful. Many also mentioned that they have been motivated to find out more about sexuality education on their own time because of how insufficiently they found the topic to have been discussed during their university studies.

Additionally, some participants recounted the sources where they have found information about sexuality education outside of formal education. This included literature, courses arranged by organizations and social media. Courses mentioned included training by Tasaseks, which is an organization with undertakings funded by the Finnish Ministry of Education (Tasaseks, 2024), and courses arranged by Seta RY (LGBTIQ Rights in Finland).

### 6.2.3 Experiences of working with children and social interactions

A factor mentioned by several participants as a positive factor enhancing their preparedness to deliver sexuality education was experiences of interacting with children and working with children. Participants mentioned that interacting with their own children and the children of loved ones had provided them with valuable experiences of discussing different topics with children at a developmentally appropriate level.

Additionally, many participants outlined their experiences in working with children in the fields of education, social services and health care. A considerable amount of their experience also related to their primary teacher studies, as many included experiences of pre-service teaching practices and substituting alongside studies.

“[Working as a substitute] is useful in learning how to interact with pupils in surprising situations or situations requiring a sensitive approach.” (Survey participant)

“[...] the children of siblings have provided opportunities to practice handling many topics with children.” (Survey participant)

Certain participants also raised their social circle, family, friends and other professionals, as a resource which has increased their preparedness to deliver sexuality education. Several interview participants had other teachers in their immediate family and described having

discussed administering sexuality education and utilizing different teaching methods with them. One interview participant was close with a sex educator who had become an important resource in gaining information and discussing thoughts and ideas.

#### 6.2.4 Identity and past experiences

Seventeen of 50 survey respondents and 5 of 7 interview participants described experiences in their personal past and factors related to their identity as factors influencing their preparedness to deliver sexuality education. Especially past experiences of received sexuality education, sexual orientation, gender identity and the (lack of) sexuality education received from the childhood family were mentioned by many participants.

Participants outlined their experiences of not being acknowledged in sexuality education in school due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

“[...] my status as a member of a minority and experience of not being seen in sexuality education when in school have increased interest towards sexuality education.” (Survey participant)

“[...] because I am a member of the “rainbow folk” [LGBT+ community], I have the desire to deliver sexuality education better for future children compared to how it was delivered to me.” (Survey participant)

There were several mentions of how sexuality education received as a child and teenager at school and/or at home have influenced the interest in delivering sexuality education as a professional. Many participants considered the sexuality education they had received insufficient. However, there were also participants who described how an open atmosphere and natural attitude towards sexuality education at home had greatly benefited them.

“I have become aware of how badly my age group has been taught about the topic in school.” (Survey participant)

“[After the 5th grade sexuality education lesson] I have asked my mother why the topic had been discussed and then my parents also had the conversation with me.” (PST2)

“I could have used a lot of sexuality education; I had a relationship as a teenager where education about consent and boundaries would have been good.” (PST4)

Some participants elaborated on why the sexuality education they had received in school had been so poor in their opinion. Some reasons included lack of discussion about diversity in sexual orientation and gender identities and safe sex for non-heterosexual people, only concentrating on sexually transmitted infections and lack of education about boundaries and consent. Some participants also raised concerns about how the sexuality education they had received in school had been executed separately for girls and boys, which they found problematic because it denied the other group of important information.

### **6.3 Delivering sexuality education in the future**

#### **6.3.1 Factors anticipated to influence delivering sexuality education in the future**

The interview participants were asked about how they believe they will approach delivering sexuality education in their future work as primary teachers and which factors they believe are likely to influence it. All participants discussed resources, either time, available material, or both. PST7, for example, described that they found it challenging to get started with teaching sexuality education content, because they had not accessed material which would clearly guide the educator how to start discussing the topics with pupils.

“[...] there aren't really instructions in teaching material in terms of how to start discussing [sexuality education topics].” (PST7)

Four participants expressed that their professional views, attitude, prioritizing, motivation and possible further future training would be a key factor influencing the sexuality education they would come to deliver. Many participants described their high motivation for teaching sexuality education and expressed that they wanted to put effort into organizing sexuality education and finding more information about the topic.

One participant described that they were not familiar with how sexuality education is outlined in the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (2014) and was under the impression that in addition to teaching the topics which are outlined in the environmental studies curriculum, for example human anatomy and puberty, the curriculum does not bind teachers to administering sexuality education. This highlights how each individual teacher's understanding of the different content areas of sexuality education influences their interpretation of the curriculum.

“As I don’t know if sexuality education is stated anywhere in the curriculum using this exact term, it doesn’t oblige teachers to [teach it].” (PST7)

Most interview participants addressed the influence of the age and former knowledge of pupils as well as the geographical location of the school they will work in as factors to be considered when planning sexuality education. PST3 and PST7 described the differences between teaching in a city school in the capital city Helsinki and teaching in a small village school outside of urban areas and how the location influences the developmental level and interests of children. They found that children in bigger cities are exposed more to diversity of people and different expression of gender and sexuality, for example.

“Of course, at first I was nervous because I knew that it was a village school of 100 pupils, and I knew most of them had a stigma towards different sexualities, so it was difficult to start teaching the topic to them.” (PST3)

### 6.3.2 Teaching arrangements

All but one participant described how they would ideally organize and arrange sexuality education as a primary teacher. The experience of girls and boys receiving sexuality education separately was mentioned by many participants in both survey and interview responses and PST1 addressed they especially wanted to avoid this in the future and found that everyone needs to have access to all the same sexuality education information regardless of gender.

“I would like to [teach sexuality education content] so that it would be together for girls and boys, everyone, so they would not be separated because in many schools there would be a separate lesson for girls and boys.” (PST1)

Several participants outlined considering the previous knowledge, age and development level of pupils when planning sexuality education. PST4, for example, described that their approach would be quite different depending on whether they were teaching in early primary education or grades 5-6. Participants also expressed the importance of considering the general nature of the group of children. They stated that some groups can be very talkative and open to discussion, while others might be more reserved and quieter, which needs to be accounted for when planning the ways of working.

“Some [pupils] are a lot more talkative and interested and want to ask questions and for some the topic can be awkward or uncomfortable so. As a teacher I don’t want to make anyone feel even more uncomfortable or make it into something embarrassing or a joke. The safety aspect is the most important to me, so I am the safe adult [...].” (PST2)

PST6 noted that sexuality education could be executed in co-operation with other professionals, such as the school nurse, reasoning that some pupils may find it uncomfortable to ask questions from their own teacher who they are very familiar with. This was also a notion on accounting for the general nature and different personalities in the group of pupils.

All the participants raised the importance of a safe learning environment during the interviews. They considered sexuality education a sensitive topic which requires good knowledge of pupils to consider their individual differences and make the discussions and teaching comfortable and safe for everyone. Several participants also considered it important that they are safe adults to the pupils and teach in an age- and developmentally appropriate way. Many found it challenging to find the appropriate way of teaching about many sexuality education topics and had concerns about making sure all pupils feel safe during this learning.

PST1 and PST3 found that teacher-oriented execution of sexuality education lessons would be helpful in minimizing the restlessness of pupils. They raised concerns about how sexuality education evokes reactions of laughter from pupils and found that giggles and laughter should be kept to a minimum. Their reasoning was that sexuality education should not be made a laughing matter but instead should be approached seriously.

“I think I would approach it in a very teacher-led way, and I would like to make the environment safe so, that it is okay if there is some laughter and giggles but so that it would not be too much of a laughing matter, but things would be discussed with accurate terms and how they are.” (PST1)

PST3, PST4, PST5, PST6 and PST7 emphasized that they wanted to integrate sexuality education into all subjects and day-to-day situations. They highlighted that sexuality education should not only be tied to specific environmental studies but is rather something that can be addressed in many situations. Many participants gave the example of respecting the personal space and boundaries of others and speaking kindly and respectfully as examples of sexuality education in everyday situations.

“[Sexuality education] can be integrated into anything at least a little bit. For example, in P.E.: remember that you may not touch someone if they don't wish to be touched. Socio-emotional education can be integrated with any topic. With older grades it would be good to have the safe environment so these issues could be discussed also outside of lesson time and teaching.” (PST4)

## 7 Discussion

Overall, the interview findings of this study suggest that current primary teacher students in Finland find sexuality education important. Despite differences in their current stage of studies, all participants raised that sexuality education is significant for all ages. This finding differs from certain international research such as Sinkinson (2009), where it was found that Australian teacher students did not find sexuality education relevant for young children, but this idea changed and shifted over the course of participating in sexuality education courses during their teacher training. Despite not having many experiences of sexuality education being discussed during their studies, the participants of this study all recognized the importance of age- and developmentally appropriate sexuality education.

Many participants expressed their ideas about delivering sexuality education by integrating it into different subjects. This is in line with the WHO (2010) and FNAE (2014) recommendations where holistic sexuality education is a multidisciplinary, continuous and cross-curricular approach. Participants had an awareness of the continuity of sexuality education and ideas about how they would ideally organize it in their teaching. A safe learning environment, multidisciplinary approaches and co-operation between professionals were considered important.

While participants had an awareness of the importance of sexuality education and how they would arrange it as future teachers, they seemed to have little information on specific topics of sexuality education. Especially the prevalence and prevention of sexual abuse was a topic survey participants considered themselves unprepared to teach. This is in line with the findings of Almanassori (2023) and Cumper et al. (2024) who found that teacher students considered themselves ill-prepared to teach about sexual violence as the topic was not discussed in their teacher education programmes. Sexuality education is one of the key measures in terms of preventing sexual harassment (Opetushallitus, 2020). The findings of this study suggest that attention should be paid to educating future teachers in addressing serious and sensitive topics such as sexual violence in a safe and fact-based manner.

Sexuality education of non-heterosexual and non-cisgender youths has been researched in the recent years and findings have confirmed that there is not enough sexuality education geared at LGBTQ+ youth (see for example O'Brien et al., 2021; Charley et al., 2023; O'Donoghue &

Guerin, 2016; Lehtonen, 2003). The Ministry of Justice in Finland also calls for more extensive and inclusive sexuality education for all, considering that not all children and youth are heterosexual or cisgender (Oikeusministeriö, 2021). Both survey and interview participants brought up the theme of inclusive sexuality education and found that different sexualities and expressions of gender are a part of sexuality education and human diversity is and should be discussed with children in day-to-day situations. Different families, self-expression and gender roles were all themes in which the mean rating survey participants gave for their preparedness to discuss in teaching based on their teacher education programme was highest. This suggests that the need for addressing diversity and highlighting the uniqueness of different people has been considered in teacher education in Finland. The uniqueness of each pupil, equality and (cultural) diversity are considered the underlying values of basic education (FNAE, 2014) which may explain why these themes are discussed more in teacher education in Finland.

In late 2024, discussion rose in Finnish media about a sexuality education handbook previously distributed to lower and upper secondary schools in Finland in 2019. The handbook, *Respektiä – Seksikirja pojille* (transl. *Respect – A Sex Book for Boys*) (Chavez Perez, 2019), is described as an honest and modern guide about consent, flirting, sexuality, bodies and becoming a man for young men. The current Ombudsman for Children Elina Pekkarinen raised that she found some of the quotes which had recently been discussed on social media inappropriate, despite not having read the book herself (Kiviranta, 2024). In the news article by Kiviranta (27.11.2024) on the website of the Finnish Public Service Media Company (YLE), upper secondary schoolers were interviewed about their views on the handbook. The interviewees found that the handbook used language young people use amongst themselves and considered these types of guides helpful and useful. Some interviewees pondered, that lower secondary school pupils can be at very different stages in their development and that for some the topics raised in the handbook are timely, while for others they may not yet be current.

The question of timing was thought-provoking for many of the participants in this study. The current primary teacher students involved in this research primarily placed high value on providing accurate, adequate and safe sexuality education for pupils in their future work as class teachers. This includes finding a balance in what information is appropriate to deliver to pupils to relay all the necessary information and facts but to avoid inducing anxiety or discomfort in pupils. As sexuality education is to be age- and developmentally appropriate, a teacher is under great responsibility to determine the developmental average of the group to ensure children are

not exposed to overly advanced concepts but equally to guarantee that pupils gain the adequate information.

In terms of teacher education, several participants expressed they had grown in confidence and managed to grow more comfortable in teaching sexuality education content through experiences of substituting and teaching practices. Real-life situations and discussions with children had helped them grow their skillsets. This is in line with previous research findings about teacher preparedness which have revealed that experiences in real-life professional settings have increased the feeling of competence in student and novice teachers (see for example Housego, 1990; Kunter et al., 2013). In the Finnish context it has been found that there is a slight relationship between high quality sexuality education and student knowledge (Kontula, 2010). Perhaps teacher education should include modules where student teachers can learn to identify and teach themes of sexuality education in terms of multidisciplinary teaching.

## 8 Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that the current primary teacher students in Finland primarily approach sexuality education with a positive mindset and find the topic meaningful. They consider it important to be able to teach this content well, safely and accurately. While primary teacher education in Finnish universities may not have time or other resources to prepare student teachers to deliver sexuality education in depth, students who find the topic meaningful are willing and eager to educate themselves. Yet, they do not perceive their preparedness high. Therefore, there is a need for a more structured training for sexuality education in teacher education with necessary resources in order to prepare student teachers by utilizing their somewhat high motivation to teach it. This can also be extended to the in-service training to provide future student teachers with mentor teachers at schools who can guide and provide them with experiences. One important aspect of guiding pre-service and in-service teachers, schools, and teacher education programs seems to be indicating the sexuality education more explicitly in the curriculum with its connections to different content areas. Curriculum designers and textbook writers in relevant content areas should consider providing more developmentally- and age-appropriate guidelines to both teachers and students.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1 Preparedness for Sexuality Education Survey

Mandatory questions \*.

Hello! My name is Karla Vuorenoja and I am a student at the Department of Teacher Education in the University of Turku. The purpose of this master's thesis study is to investigate Finnish primary teacher students' perceptions of their preparedness to deliver sexuality education in grades 1-6. In this study sexuality education is approached from the definition of Holistic Sexuality Education (HSE). The questions to rate preparedness are based on the World Health Organization (WHO) Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe Sexuality Education Matrix main topics for age groups 6-9 and 9-12. You can access the document here: [https://www.bzga-whocc.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/BZgA\\_Standards\\_English.pdf](https://www.bzga-whocc.de/fileadmin/user_upload/BZgA_Standards_English.pdf)

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will complete an anonymous online survey. The survey includes questions about your feelings of preparedness to teach sexuality education content in your future work. Answering the survey will take approximately 10 minutes. You are free to stop answering the survey until submission. After submitting you cannot revoke your participation, as I do not know which answer is yours. By submitting your answers, you consent to the data to be used as a part of this research. The survey is unlikely to provide participants with any benefits or cause any problems during their studies.

The survey is anonymous but requests information about your age, gender and university to gain more information about the topic. The survey includes questions about possibly sensitive topics related to teaching about sexuality and sex. Please do not include your name or further identifying factors in your answers. Your answer cannot be traced back to you using any electronic identifiers.

If you have any questions about this study, do not hesitate to contact me at the following address: [kaadav@utu.fi](mailto:kaadav@utu.fi). You may also contact me anonymously. This study is supervised by Prof. Dr. Çigdem Haser at the University of Turku. In case of any questions or concerns, feel free to contact her at [cigdem.haser@utu.fi](mailto:cigdem.haser@utu.fi).

Thank you.

1. I have read the form above. I am aware that I can stop answering at any point before submitting the survey. \*

I agree to participate.

I do not agree to participate.

2. Age: \*

3. Current year of studies: \*

1

2

3

4

5

6 or more

4. University: \*

University of Eastern Finland

University of Helsinki

University of Jyväskylä

University of Lapland

University of Oulu

University of Tampere

University of Turku

Åbo Akademi

5. Gender: \*

Female

Male

Other

I prefer not to say

6. Based on your studies in primary teacher education until this point, please rate on a scale (1 = Unprepared, 2 = Slightly prepared, 3 = Somewhat prepared, 4 = Prepared, 5 = Well prepared) how prepared you feel to teach the following aspects of sexuality education in your future work as a primary teacher: \*

1. Body changes, menstruation, ejaculation, individual variation in development over time.
  2. Early changes in puberty (mental, physical, social and emotional changes and the possible variety in these).
  3. Choices about parenthood and pregnancy, different methods of conception.
  4. Different types of contraception and their use; myths about contraception.
  5. Symptoms of pregnancy and risks and consequences of unsafe sex.
  6. Sex in the media (including the internet).
  7. First sexual experience.
  8. Gender identity.
  9. Sexual behaviour of young people (variability of sexual behaviour).
  10. The difference between friendship, love and lust.
  11. Different emotions.
  12. Differences in individual needs for intimacy and privacy.
  13. Different families.
  14. Differences between friendship, companionship and relationships, and the different ways of dating.
  15. Different kinds of pleasant and unpleasant relationships (influences of (gender) inequality on relationships).
  16. The positive influence of sexuality on health and well-being.
  17. Diseases related to sexuality.
  18. Sexual violence and aggression.
  19. Symptoms, risks and consequences of unsafe, unpleasant or unwanted sexual experiences.
  20. The prevalence of different types of sexual abuse, how to avoid it and where to get support.
  21. The right of self-expression.
  22. Sexual rights of children (information, sexuality education, bodily integrity).
  23. Sexual rights.
  24. Gender roles.
  25. The influence of peer pressure, media, pornography, culture, religion, gender, laws and socioeconomic status on sexual decisions, partnership and behaviour.
- 
7. Which courses during your primary teacher education studies have prepared you regarding delivering sexuality education?
  
  8. What other factors have affected your preparedness regarding delivering sexuality education? How?

## Appendix 2 Interview questions

1. How old are you?
2. What year level are you studying at right now?
3. Which university are you attending for teacher education?
4. How did you first become aware of sexuality education?
5. Which topics are included in sexuality education?
6. Can you tell me about any experiences you have had in delivering sexuality education, if any?
7. How do you feel about delivering sexuality education?
  - a. Do you feel you have sufficient knowledge of the content of sexuality education?
  - b. What kind of resources do you know or can you use for delivering sexuality education?
8. Can you describe how your primary teacher studies have prepared you to deliver sexuality education?
9. Can you describe other factors that have influenced your thoughts about delivering sexuality education?
  - a. Were there any specific courses or lectures dedicated to this, as far as you can remember?
  - b. Do you remember any discussion or assignment that focused on sexuality education?
10. Are there any other factors that have influenced your thoughts about delivering sexuality education? Can you please elaborate on those?
11. How do you think you will address sexuality education when you become a teacher?
12. What kind of factors will affect your teaching of sexuality education in the future?
13. Are there any questions you expected me to ask in this interview, but I did not ask? Would you answer if I ask it now?

### Appendix 3 Interview consent form

Hello! I am Karla Vuorenoja, a student at the Department of Teacher Education in the University of Turku. I am conducting a study for my master's thesis investigating the Finnish pre-service primary teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to deliver sexuality education. As a part of the study, I want to conduct interviews to learn about participants' experiences and thoughts. Your participation should be voluntary.

The interview will be in a one-to-one setting of your preference. Participating in the interview has no risks or benefits, apart from being involved in educational research. The raw data you provide will not be provided to anyone other than the researchers. I will ask to audio-records the interview, which you may decline. You may refuse to answer certain questions, stop the interview at any moment and decline the use of the data you have provided.

If you volunteer to participate in the interview, your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent possible. I am the only researcher with access to the data provided by you. The findings presented in the study will not include any identifying factors about you. The data will be used only for research purposes and may be presented in scientific meetings or reported in scientific publications. In any case, your name and any information that may reveal your identity will not be stated at all. All data collected from the participants will be archived in a secure cloud service of the University of Turku until 1.12.2027, when it will be destroyed. This consent form is prepared as two copies, one for your records and one for the researcher.

You are free to ask questions before deciding to volunteer and during the interview. You may discontinue the interview at any time or decline answering questions if they make you feel uncomfortable. If you have any questions after the interview or about the future of the study, you may contact me (anonymously, if you prefer): [kaadav@utu.fi](mailto:kaadav@utu.fi) or 044 515 3115. This study is supervised by Prof Dr. Cigdem Haser at the University of Turku. If you have any concerns or questions, do not hesitate to contact her: [cigdem.haser@utu.fi](mailto:cigdem.haser@utu.fi).

If you wish to volunteer for the interview, please write your name and surname, date and signature on the space below.

Thank you!

Name and surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_