

The Contribution of Sexual Education in Developing Student's Moral Behavior

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Abstract: *This study investigated the contribution of sexual education in developing student's moral behavior in public secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality. The study involved 36 respondents out of a target population of 1200, selected by using purposive sampling technique. Data collection utilized Semi-structured interview and questionnaire was the main method for collecting empirical data from headteachers and teachers. And purposive sampling was used to obtain a sample of six head teachers and thirty teachers from Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania. The interviews and questionnaire were recorded, transcribed, analyzed and interpreted, with qualitative data subjected to thematic analysis and quantitative data analyzed descriptively. The findings obtained through the research questionbased on examining contribution of sexual education in developing student's moral behavior. Findings from the study revealed that sexual education contributing to moral behavior of students, by providing them with essential knowledge on making informed and responsible decisions about their sexual lives. Additionally, its advance reasoning ability of the learner by reducing risky sexual behavior, encouraging open communication and proving sufficient information about caring of others and considering their choice according to the consequences.*

Keywords: Sexual Education, Moral Behavior.

1. Introduction

This study focuses on the contribution of sexual education in developing student's moral behavior, a case of secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality. Adolescents in Tanzania, as in many parts of the world, face numerous challenges in navigating the complexities of their developing sexuality. Factors such as peer pressure, exposure to explicit media content, and the lack of comprehensive sexual education can contribute to risky sexual behaviors (Imavike, et al., 2021). One key aspect of this inquiry is the recognition that sex education goes beyond the mere transmission of biological information about reproduction and contraceptive methods. While this knowledge is undeniably crucial, it must be coupled with discussions about values, ethics, and the development of responsible decision-making skills. Education should provide a safe and open platform for students to explore their questions and concerns about sexuality, relationships, and personal values (United Nation, 2023). The cultural diversity of Tanzania further underscores the need for a nuanced approach to sex education. Different regions and communities may have varying beliefs and norms regarding sexuality, which can influence the development of moral values. Therefore, any effective educational strategy must consider these cultural nuances and sensitivities, aiming to strike a balance between imparting universal principles of respect, consent, and responsible behavior while respecting and incorporating local values and traditions.

In most countries where the majority of children have access to formal education, a school recognized to be an important agent for promoting health of adolescents. Teachers are among the agents to promote healthy behaviour of the adolescents by teaching sexual education in school. The knowledge here should enable the adolescent to develop ability and capacity of

carrying family obligations and responsible effectively in their future life, (Shegeshe, 2015).

Tanzania, as a culturally diverse East African nation, has made commendable strides in improving its education system, including sex education programs in schools. Tanzania, like many other countries, faces the challenge of ensuring that its youth develop positive and ethical sexual behavior. In this context, the contribution of education in shaping the moral dimensions of sexual behavior among secondary school students has become increasingly significant (World Bank, 2017).

In Morogoro, like elsewhere in Tanzania, secondary schools emphasize discipline of the students. There are school rules and regulations to guide them attain the required discipline. Every student is availed a copy of the school rules and fully explained by the administration to internalize. Both day and boarding secondary schools ensure to attain reputation in moral achievement on the student as well as the teachers. The school administration tries as much as possible to see that immoral acts as homosexuality, drug abuse, and child abuse don't flourish around and within the school. In addition, there are school disciplinary committee that decides the fate of undisciplined students. Secondary school take pride when they are credited for discipline and upright moral character of the students.

2. General Objective

The main objective of the study was to examine the contribution of sexual education in developing student's moral behavior.

3. Methodology and Research design

This study employed mixed approach where by both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used. The study involved a sample of 36 respondents out of a target population of 1200, selected by using purposive sampling technique. Data collection utilized Semi-structured interview and questionnaire was the main method for collecting empirical data from head teachers and teachers. And purposive sampling was used to obtain a sample of six head teachers and thirty teachers from Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania. The interviews and questionnaire were recorded, transcribed, analyzed and interpreted, with qualitative data subjected to thematic analysis and quantitative data analyzed descriptively.

4. The contribution of Sexual Education in Developing Moral Sexual Behavior

4.1 Helps students to acquire accurate Information

Sexual education plays a pivotal role in shaping the moral sexual behavior of students in secondary schools by providing them with comprehensive knowledge about relationships, consent, and responsible decision-making. By addressing crucial aspects of human sexuality, this education empowers students to make informed choices and foster a culture of respect and responsibility in their interactions.

The results underscores the widespread recognition among the surveyed individuals that comprehensive and accurate sexual education is a fundamental component in guiding adolescents towards responsible and morally sound sexual behavior.

The researcher also noted that, the data collected via questionnaires indicates the respondent's views on crucially equipping students with proper and accurate information about moral sexual behavior through sexual education especially where by the respondents commented as follows:

..... indicates a consensus among the community that schools have a crucial role to play in equipping students with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about their sexual health and relationships.

.....

The researcher also noted that, the collected data via interview indicates the respondent's views said that,

.....provision of sexual education is likely to help adolescent who are not yet sexually active to delay sexual intercourse until they are cognitive and emotionally ready for mutual beneficial and health relationship by equipping them with proper information accordingly.....

According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological system, an individual development is influenced by series of interconnected environment systems ranging from the immediate surrounding such as family to broader societal

structure such cultural level. Whereby there are no single factor, each one are influenced by another. The environment in which child grows up will shape and affect his development, (Ecological system theory, 2017). It is necessary to provide good environment for children so that imitate good things. The environment includes teachers and parent as role model.

These comments highlight the need for ongoing efforts to raise awareness about the importance and benefits of comprehensive sexual education in secondary schools to foster healthier attitudes and behaviors among adolescents in Morogoro Municipality.

4.2 Promoting Responsible Decision-Making

Sexual education plays a pivotal role in shaping the moral sexual behavior of students in secondary schools by providing them with comprehensive knowledge about relationships, consent, and responsible decision-making. Advancement of reasoning ability of the learner provides sufficient information about caring of others and considering their choice according to the consequences. Whereby a person with adequacy knowledge or skills are easier to be understood by other people especially when someone makes a correct decision.

This agreement underscores the significance of comprehensive sexual education programs in equipping young individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to make informed and responsible choices regarding their sexual behavior.

According to SEM, our individual and collective behavior is influenced by everything from our genes to political environment. It is not possible to understand our development and behavior without considering all of this element. The main idea is everything is connected and everything can affect everything else. It is not possible to understand the whole without recognizing how the components parts interact, affect and change each other, (Howe, 2009).

It suggests that teachers and policymakers in Morogoro Municipality should continue to prioritize sexual education as a key component of the curriculum to foster moral and responsible sexual behavior among students. The researcher noted that, the data collected through interview method indicates the comments were given on how sexual education provide students with ability of making correct decisions patterning with their sexual behaviors as follows;

..... Comprehensive sexual education programs play a crucial role in empowering young people with the information and abilities required to make educated and accountable decisions regarding their sexual conduct.....

The researcher also noted that, the collected data via questionnaires indicated the comments mention few of them about the role of sexual education in empowering students with responsible decision making on their sexual practices as follows;

..... *the providing knowledge help students to make right choice and right decision patterning with moral sexual behaviors during schooling and after school life.....*

However, it's worth noting that a notable portion of respondents, about 21.7%, disagreed with the role of sexual education in promoting moral sexual behavior. While this minority opinion exists, it is essential to examine the reasons behind this disagreement.

It could be due to varying perceptions of what constitutes moral behavior, concerns about the content or delivery of sexual education programs, or cultural factors. To enhance the effectiveness of sexual education initiatives, teachers and policymakers should engage with those who hold dissenting opinions to better understand their concerns and work towards addressing them.

4.3 Encouraging Open Communication

The persons with adequate literacy skills are free to express their thoughts to solve problem by communicating clearly with their model, caregivers, learn and adopt prevents health practices and maintain better health through their ability to understand and interpret health information. The schools should open students' talk forum at school environment that will make them confident even in expressing their sexual behavior cases to their friends, guardians, teachers and other community members who can provide them assistance in solving the encountered challenges patterning with sexual practices

This overwhelming agreement underscores the recognition of communication as a fundamental tool in addressing issues related to sexuality, relationships, and ethical behavior among adolescents.

The researcher noted that, the data collected through interview method indicated the comments given on how sexual education provide students with ability of open communications patterning with their sexual behaviors as follows;

.....*dialogues and seminars should be given priority to students by class teachers incorporation with other subject teachers in a respective class to encourage students communicate in expressing their moral sexual cases as a part of asking support or advise on how to handle the encountered challenges patterning with moral sexual behavior.....*

As revealed by Begum (2020), that the persons with adequate literacy skills are free to express their thoughts to solve problem by communicating clearly with their model, caregivers, learn and adopt prevents health practices and maintain better health through their ability to understand and interpret health information. This idea supporting that

education play a greater role to individual and community well-being.

This finding underscores the need for educational institutions to prioritize strategies that facilitate open and non-judgmental discussions about sexual topics, as it can have a positive impact on shaping the moral values and behaviors of secondary school students in Morogoro Municipality.

4.4 Reducing Risky Behaviors

The findings on reducing risky behaviors through sexual education in secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality reveal a noteworthy trend in attitudes towards the effectiveness of such programs. Notably, a substantial 76.1% of respondents agreed that sexual education plays a pivotal role in reducing risky behaviors among adolescents. This is a promising outcome, as it underscores the importance of comprehensive sexual education in imparting knowledge and fostering responsible sexual behavior.

Furthermore, a relatively low percentage of 6.5% remained neutral on the matter, suggesting that the majority of individuals recognize the positive impact of sexual education. However, it's essential to address the 17.4% who disagreed with the efficacy of sexual education in reducing risky behaviors.

These individuals might have concerns or reservations about the approach, and it is crucial for educational institutions and policymakers to engage with them to understand their perspective and refine sexual education programs accordingly.

Addressing these concerns through open dialogue and adapting the curriculum to be more culturally sensitive and inclusive is essential to bridge this gap and ensure that sexual education remains an effective tool for promoting moral sexual behavior in Morogoro Municipality's secondary schools.

5. Summary of Major Findings

Study findings revealed that, a significant majority, 87.0%, recognize the role of sexual education in developing students' understanding of moral sexual behavior, while the dissenting 13.0% may hold cultural or religious beliefs conflicting with certain aspects of sexual education. Additionally, the study indicates a consensus, with 65.2% agreeing that sexual education provides accurate information, although 22.8% disagree, suggesting concerns about program effectiveness. Furthermore, 71.7% agree that sexual education promotes responsible decision-making, while 21.7% disagree. Open communication garners widespread support, with 75.0% agreeing on its importance. Overall, these findings highlight the need for inclusive and culturally sensitive sexual education programs to foster moral l behavior in Morogoro Municipality's secondary schools.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings emphasize the need for inclusive and culturally sensitive sexual education programs to address those who may have conflicting cultural or religious beliefs. The consensus on the importance of open communication is encouraging. Therefore, these findings collectively advocate for comprehensive improvements in sexual education programs and resources, with a focus on inclusivity, to better serve the needs of both teachers and students.

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