



Assessing Managerial Strategies for Enhancing Sexual and Reproductive Health Education in Secondary Schools of Meru District Council, Tanzania

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Abstract: Globally, the increase in unhealthy sexual behaviours among adolescent students has prompted alarm and become a topic of interest for global public health researchers seeking innovative strategies to promote better sexual health outcomes. This study assesses managerial strategies for enhancing sexual and reproductive health education (SRHE) in secondary schools by focusing on two specific objectives, namely, to identify ways used by school management in enhancing SRHE in secondary schools and to find out challenges faced by school management in enhancing SRHE in secondary schools. The study used Ludwig Von Bertalanffy's systems theory. The study used a case study design to collect in-depth information from the head teachers, discipline teachers, teachers, and students in the selected secondary schools, which comprised 36 participants. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions while observing the principle of saturation. The collected data were analysed through thematic analysis. The findings revealed that the use of clubs, guidance and counselling services and organising seminars are among the strategies used to manage SRHE in secondary schools. Further, the study found several challenges faced by school management in enhancing SRHE in secondary schools, including lack of in-service training, lack of clear and proper sexual education policy, cultural barriers, lack of student readiness, and insufficient funds. The study recommends that school management create more strategies to ensure the successful implementation of SRHE within educational institutions. The study recommends further study to assess the extent to which sexual and reproductive health education promotes students' academic performance in secondary schools.

Keywords: SRHE, Managerial strategies, Guidance and counselling, Unhealthy sexual behaviour, Adolescent

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1. Introduction

The increase in unhealthy sexual behaviours among adolescent students has prompted alarm and become a topic of interest for global public health researchers seeking innovative strategies to promote better sexual health outcomes. During adolescence, increased hormonal

function causes physical, mental, and emotional alterations in adolescents. These biological alterations increase adolescent sexual interest and make them susceptible (Walcott et al., 2008). Numerous adolescents are susceptible to engaging in harmful sexual behaviours, such as engaging in sexual activity with minors, engaging in unprotected sex, and exposing themselves to potential sexual assault environments (Mlyakado et al., 2013).

During the twentieth century, several nations feared that sexual and reproductive health education (SRHE) could corrupt the youth, divert and distract them from their duties to the state, and lead to illicit behaviour (Magnan, 2012). This concern was shared not only by communist and socialist nations, such as the Soviet Union and East Germany, but also by nations where the church had a significant impact on civil society, such as Scotland. One perspective held by East Germany posited that fostering increased social interaction between genders, such as permitting nude bathing at beaches, would promote greater self-regulation of sexual impulses among young individuals. Conversely, England adopted a markedly conservative stance, actively suppressing discussions about sexuality and minimising instances of sexual exposure (Fallah, 2017).

At the national level, numerous governments have implemented policies or curricula that specifically target the sexual and reproductive health of young individuals. These programs frequently focus on teacher-led initiatives that aim to prevent HIV transmission and promote the development of life skills among young individuals within school settings. According to the study conducted by O-Saki and Pandael (2015), teachers are frequently regarded as valuable resources for providing sex education within schools. However, it was observed that students may not perceive teachers as suitable facilitators due to their existing familiarity with the students and the potential compromise of confidentiality. Furthermore, students can perceive teachers as being moralistic or judgmental, particularly about the sexual behaviours of young individuals.

Educational institutions offer a significant avenue for imparting sex education to a substantial cohort of young individuals before their engagement in sexual activities, facilitated by a structured curriculum (Gorgen et al. 2018; UNESCO, 2007). According to UNESCO (2009:18), it is imperative that sexuality education provided in schools is tailored to the age of the students and actively engages adolescents by addressing their specific needs while also building upon their existing knowledge, positive attitudes, and skills. In addition, Kirby et al. (2017) posited that the engagement of young individuals in sex education programs can enhance their appeal and efficacy. The evaluation of the needs and assets of adolescents, as well as the remediation of any deficiencies, is crucial for achieving success in the programme.

Adolescents and youth encounter numerous reproductive health challenges in Kenya, as well as in other regions of Africa. Some examples of adverse outcomes in reproductive health encompass unintended early pregnancy, complications arising from unsafe abortion procedures, as well as complications related to pregnancy

and childbirth. Adolescents face challenges in accessing adequate and supportive healthcare services, including but not limited to the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), safe abortion services, antenatal care, and skilled attendance during delivery. These limitations contribute to elevated rates of maternal and prenatal mortality, as highlighted by the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights in 2012.

Sexual and reproductive health education in Tanzania is addressed within the secondary school curriculum through the discipline of biology. The domains encompassed by sexual and reproductive health concerns encompass various aspects such as overall well-being, immune function, disease pathology, specifically sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS, lifestyle choices and their associated outcomes, risky behaviours and circumstances, responsible decision-making, assertive conduct, postponing sexual activity, engaging in protected sexual practices, provision of care and support for individuals living with HIV, family planning, access to contraceptives, and maternal and healthcare services (URT, 2004).

In Tanzania, the implementation of sexual and reproductive health education (SRHE) occurs after the prioritisation outlined in different guidelines. The Ministry of Education formulated a policy on HIV/AIDS education in 2004, known as the Guidelines for Implementing HIV/AIDS and Life-Skills Education Programmes in Schools (URT, 2004). The vocabulary utilised for these guidelines explicitly signifies that the educational regulations about sexual and reproductive health education (SRHE) in Tanzania have been prompted by the emergence of the AIDS epidemic. Furthermore, the National Adolescents Reproductive Health Strategy (2011-2015) holds significant importance as a guiding framework for addressing the diverse sexual and reproductive health requirements of adolescents within the dynamic social landscape. The needs include information and guidance, services, rights, providers' proficiency, policies and management systems, and community and parental backing (URT, 2004; Rushahu, 2015).

Despite the existence of numerous sexual health educational initiatives, how sexual health education is disseminated and put into practice remains a subject of controversy in settings with limited resources. Insufficient understanding and proficiency in the domain of sexual well-being among adolescents increase their susceptibility to engaging in unhealthy sexual behaviour (Plummer et al. 2012). The insufficient incorporation of sexual health education within educational institutions can be attributed to a range of factors, encompassing societal and cultural norms that discourage open dialogue, as well as educators'

reluctance to address topics related to sexual health (Sani et al., 2018). This study addresses the following objectives: to identify strategies used by school management in enhancing SRHE in secondary schools and to find out challenges faced by school management in enhancing SRHE in secondary schools.

2. Literature Review

According to the research conducted by Omenje et al. (2012), counselling programs are frequently employed as a strategy for enhancing sexual and reproductive health education (SRHE) in secondary schools. The role of counsellors in promoting sexual and reproductive health education (SRHE) encompasses several vital activities. These include facilitating a value re-orientation for students, implementing an enlightenment program for parents to emphasise the importance of keeping growing adolescents informed about their developmental changes, disseminating information on the inherent benefits of sexuality education, and raising awareness through various educational platforms such as lectures, seminars, workshops, and conferences on SRHE (Fallah, 2017).

According to Salgong et al. (2016), counselling services are designed to cater to individuals in various circumstances, encompassing not only those experiencing difficulties but also those seeking guidance in planning their personal lives and contributing meaningfully to society. Schwarzer et al. (2016) argue that parents can benefit from a program that provides professional advice, guidance, and information to help them change their perceptions. Additionally, this program aims to promote value re-orientation among young individuals.

The seminar aims to enhance educators' comprehension of the educational institution's responsibility to instruct and empower children in sexuality, health, and social and emotional growth (Kanu, 2011). The seminar aims to enhance educators' comprehension of the educational institution's responsibility in instructing and empowering children regarding matters about sexuality, health, as well as social and emotional growth (Kanu, 2011). The research conducted by Sule et al. (2015) demonstrates that school administrators employ diverse strategies to improve students' and teachers' understanding of sexual and reproductive health education (SRHE). These strategies include implementing well-structured plans for organising seminars on SRHE, which focus on determining the content, purpose, and timing of these educational events. The training program offers instructional resources for an initial workshop aimed at educators who teach sexual and reproductive health education (SRHE) in educational institutions.

The research conducted by Wikenfeld (2011) unveiled various challenges encountered by parents in their capacity as sexual educators. These obstacles include parental apprehension regarding the potential influence of imparting ideas to adolescents that may lead to sexual behaviour, reluctance to acknowledge their child's developing sexual desires (sexuality), and a deficiency in knowledge and proficiency in effectively communicating this information. Therefore, in developing countries, parents are frequently unable to effectively assume the role of sexual educators due to cultural norms that prioritise traditional family structures, the taboo nature of discussing sexuality, and the societal stigma associated with addressing sexual matters with adolescents, particularly girls, by parents, caregivers, and teachers.

The concealment or denial of adolescent sexual problems, particularly instances of sexual harassment, by parents can be attributed to the lack of knowledge and misconceptions held by both adolescents and parents, as well as their inappropriate attitudes towards sexual issues. This behaviour is often motivated by a desire to safeguard the family's reputation (Visser, 2014). The findings of the research indicate that a significant proportion of educators express a lack of preparedness in effectively addressing and instructing on matters about adolescent sexuality. Furthermore, it is observed that the prevailing approach among teachers predominantly focuses on the biological aspects of sexuality, neglecting its broader social dimensions.

Furthermore, Bilinga (2014) conducted a study that identified the absence of a comprehensive sex education policy as a significant barrier. The inclusion of SRHE in national education policy is insufficient for effectively integrating this component into school curricula. The present pedagogical approach is derived from the HIV/AIDS and life skills education guidelines, which have been implemented under stringent circumstances that have impeded the achievement of predetermined objectives. As per the established guideline, it is recommended that topics related to HIV and AIDS and life skills education be integrated into the school curriculum. This integration aims to mitigate the extent of sexual risks among students.

Breuner (2016) identified several potential barriers to effective teaching, including religion, culture, restrictive policies, inadequate time allocation, untrained teachers, lack of teacher confidence, insufficient infrastructure, absence of teaching aids, inadequate teacher support, and objections raised by students, parents, or school administrators. Understanding, discussing, and effectively managing student sexual behaviour within the school and community settings can present significant challenges.

The systems theory of organisation posits that organisations consist of multiple subsystems that may not be inherently interconnected but collaborate harmoniously to constitute the entirety. According to Baecker (2019), this theory provides valuable insights into organisational behaviour, change, and development. The application of systems theory facilitates comprehension of the interrelationships among different components within an organisation and their reciprocal interactions of the subsystems in implementing sexual and reproductive health education in secondary schools. The theory emphasises the need for interaction between the subsystems, input, process, output and feedback, to ensure effective management of sexual and reproductive health education in schools.

3. Methodology

This study employed a case study design to gather detailed information from 3 head teachers, 3 discipline teachers, 9 teachers and 21 students from the selected 3 secondary schools in Meru District Council, comprising 36 study participants. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews with head teachers, discipline teachers and teachers and three focus group discussions to form three and four students from the selected schools. The convenience sampling technique was employed due to the availability and willingness of study participants to participate in the study. The data collection procedure encompasses the utilization of the randomized response technique, which enable researcher to acquire sensitive information while ensuring the privacy of respondent (Creswell, 2014). The researcher obtained a research permit letter and the necessary approvals from the Meru District council.

The data was analysed through thematic analysis as a methodological approach to analysing the data obtained from interviews conducted with heads of schools and focus group discussions with students by systematically categorising the data according to the strategies aimed at implementing SRHE, as well as the obstacles encountered during the implementation of SRHE. The study observed all the research ethics before, during and after data collection.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Managerial Strategies for Enhancing SRHE in Secondary Schools

This part presents the findings obtained from study participants regarding the managerial strategies for

enhancing sexual and reproductive health education; their responses are as follows:

4.1.1 Use of Clubs

The findings from research participants revealed that the use of clubs is one of the strategies used in enhancing sexual and reproductive health education for students. In previous years, students faced several challenges concerning sexual-related issues, and there was no room for them to solve such challenges. The use of this strategy enables students to overcome challenges such as unplanned pregnancy, early marriages, the use of drugs, homosexual practices, and sexually transmitted diseases. The finding from research respondents are presented as follow:

'ever since we established such clubs, some students' problems have been solved. Before the presence of such a club, students' behaviour was somehow not attractive, especially to adolescents (interview with discipline teacher -3 on 24th March 2023).

A discipline teacher believes that clubs help shape and change some destructive behaviours in students, especially during adolescence. Another teacher added that:

'...I have witnessed the behaviour change from one student after establishing this club. Previously, there was no one she could trust or even talk to about her peer problems in the school. She was not only shy to communicate her issues but also was afraid of being condemned by society or family. She was among the youth who lived in a created social set-up of fear, taboos and shame. It wasn't until this club was established that she realised there was no need to be a victim of her problems and pushed herself to curb her difficulties and for her fellow schoolmates (Interview with head of school-3 on 24th March 2023).

Another student from a focus group discussion in school C explained that:

'...there are some clubs the NGOs establish, which help much in solving our understanding problems. The club prepares various topics to be discussed, which include puberty, abortion, sexually transmitted infections, sexual and reproductive rights and gender-based violence. In the club, we facilitated discussion of the physical, behavioural and emotional changes during puberty and ways to handle the associated challenges

that face students...' (Focus group discussion with students-2 on 23rd March 2023).

According to the findings of the study, it is evident that a significant proportion of students lack confidence when engaging in discussions about sexual and reproductive education with their teachers and parents. Occasionally, students experience feelings of timidity when their instructors discuss this particular form of instruction within the confines of the classroom. Hence, school clubs serve as a means to address the issue of students feeling inadequate when discussing sexual and reproductive health education within the classroom setting. These clubs facilitate students in discussing their concerns within the club setting, fostering an increased awareness of health-related issues.

Furthermore, the results of this study align with the research conducted by Oscar (2020), which demonstrates that implementing school clubs is one of the approaches employed to improve sexual and reproductive health education in secondary schools. In the study, Oscar recognised the significance of school clubs in facilitating a safe space for students to openly address their concerns without experiencing apprehension or inhibition. Furthermore, within this investigation, Oscar has discovered that some students experience reticence when discussing matters about sexual and reproductive health education in a public setting. Consequently, he has identified an alternative approach to address this issue by implementing a suggestion box exclusively for students who feel uneasy discussing sexual topics in the presence of others. The individual disclosed that students inscribed perplexing questions onto pieces of paper within the suggestion box and subsequently deposited them. In this manner, students' issues are resolved by responding to the questions in the suggestion box.

4.1.2 Guidance and Counselling Method

The findings from research participants revealed that guidance and counselling are among the methods that are commonly used to enhance sexual and reproductive health education in secondary school. As it is well known that sexual behaviour affects students' achievements, in this case, the school management team use various techniques in providing knowledge concerning sexual and reproductive health education to the intended learners. Therefore, one commonly used technique is guidance and counselling to students. The findings from research participants are presented as follows:

'...guidance and counselling are among the common strategies we use in our school, and it is a useful method whereby most of our students benefit from it. Teachers are

the ones who guide students when they are in a serious situation...' (Interview with head of school- 2 on 24th March 2023).

The head of the school said that guidance and counselling are the common strategies that they use, and teachers are the ones who guide students when they face any challenges regarding reproductive and health issues.

Another participant added that:

'...sometimes, I use guidance and counselling methods to train my students' concerns about sexual and reproductive health education. This method positively impacts students since it helps them develop their knowledge concerning sexual and reproductive health education. Provision of knowledge through guidance and counselling helps students to overcome various challenges that hinder their academic achievement'. (Interview with school discipline teacher- 2 on 24th March 2023).

Moreover, the same question was asked to the students during the focus group discussion; their responses are presented as follows:

Another student from school C added that:

'...teachers use guidance and counselling methods when a critical situation happens during classroom hours. Sometimes, students might show inappropriate behaviour during learning sessions, and it is when teachers apply such method to help students overcome such behaviour' (FGD, 29th March 2023).

The researcher found that the school management, discipline teachers and teachers are responsible for providing guidance and counselling to students to solve their psychological problems. In ensuring the provision of guidance and counselling, the school management should possess the managerial function of planning, organising, leading and controlling all the activities performed during guidance and counselling sessions. Through doing so, the school's mission, values and vision will be attained effectively.

The findings concurred with the study by Omenje et al. (2012), which revealed that guidance and counselling are among the most commonly used strategies in secondary school for enhancing sexual and reproductive health education. In their study, they identify various activities that are performed during guidance and counselling sessions. They further identified the benefits of guidance

and counselling to students, including but not limited to providing awareness concerning sexual-related matters, the decision-making process, and shaping students' behaviour.

In the context of systems theory, the guidance and counselling method serves as input utilised by the school management to enhance sexual and reproductive health education in secondary schools. When students receive guidance and counselling, it is called a transformation process. This implies that the school administration or teachers employ this approach to assist students in developing an understanding of their sexual matters and to promote awareness of the decision-making process.

4.1.3 Organizing Seminars

The findings revealed that organising seminars is among the strategies used in secondary school to ensure the provision of SRHE is attained effectively to the targeted group. To ensure this sort of strategy is achieved effectively, the school management sets a committee that is strictly responsible for coordinating all activities concerning sexual and reproductive health education in secondary school. The findings from research participants are presented as follows:

HoS explained that:

'...despite the financial challenges we face in our school, we sometimes manage to establish simple seminars for students concerning sexual-related matters. Sometimes, we use our teachers as the experts to train students concerning sexual and reproductive health education (interview with head of school- 2 on 24th March 2023).

Through organising seminars, the head of the school believes that students can be educated and learn about health and reproductive issues, which can make them aware and know how to defend themselves on reproductive and health matters.

Likewise, in another interview, the head of the school remarked:

'...during the seminar session, students can learn about sexual and reproductive health education. And it is the session, which is mostly liked by all students, during this session students can ask any question for their better understanding' (Interview with head of school- 2 on 24th, Mar 2023).

The head of the school viewed that students become happier during the session seminar because they can

interact and exchange their perspectives with teachers on sexual and reproductive health education.

Another participant added that:

'We are not only attending the seminar prepared by the school management, but we also have the chance to attend seminars prepared by the community. For instance, various community services in our school conduct seminars on sexual and reproductive health education (Interview with head of school- 2 on 24th March 2023).

Therefore, it seems that the school management organises seminars concerning sexual and reproductive health, and the community educates students on health and reproductive health issues.

Furthermore, students from school A added that during the focus group discussion.

'We are very grateful because of the support we get from the community; for example, the seminar prepared by non-government organisations such as WEGs and the support from government hospital helps us understand various issues concerning sexual and reproductive health education. Moreover, sometimes we are being taken as the representatives to address what has been taught to their centres. This collaboration helps expand knowledge and remember what has been taught (FGD, 27th March 2023).

Further, the findings from this study concur with the study done by Kanu (2011), which stresses the need for seminars concerning sexual and reproductive health education. In the study, Kanu claimed that seminars are beneficial not only to students but to teachers since they help educators understand the role of the school in teaching and empowering students on issues related to sex, health, social development, and so on. Therefore, through these seminars, teachers benefited greatly by increasing new information concerning sexual and reproductive health education in secondary schools. Moreover, the study done by Kanu (2011) identified the importance of conducting seminars for students as it creates awareness among students on sexual-related matters and reduces the risks of drug dealers, mainly male students. In addition to that, the seminar provided helps build personal awareness in the decision-making process.

Furthermore, the results align with the research conducted by Kanu (2011), which asserts that the training offered during the seminars regarding sexual and reproductive health education should give individuals the chance to reflect, challenge societal norms, and dismantle prevalent

misconceptions surrounding gender roles. Additionally, Kanu emphasises the importance of school managers' self-evaluation before implementing such a program. This self-evaluation should involve posing the following inquiries: what content should be included in the session, when should the session commence, who should be the responsible participants, and where should the session be conducted? Therefore, when the school administration effectively responds to the question above, it fosters operational efficiency in implementing the program within the educational institution.

In the context of system theory, the theory is associated with the findings as it highlights the importance of collaboration among subsystems to effectively manage the planned program to enhance sexual and reproductive health education. In organising seminars for secondary schools, the school administration must engage in collaborative efforts with teachers and students. Also, the school management should plan who will teach content to the students and who will answer the students' questions. The effective execution of the planned seminar can be achieved through applying system theory in school management.

4.2 Challenges Facing the Implementation of SRHE

The findings from research participants regarding the challenges faced in the implementation of sexual and reproductive health education are presented as follows:

4.2.1 Lack of In-Service Training

The findings from this subsection revealed that sexual and reproductive health education is associated with the problem of in-service training. Therefore, due to the lack of in-service training, teachers lack some necessary knowledge concerning sexual and reproductive health education. The findings from this objective are presented as follows:

'...the main challenge that hinders the effective provision of sexual and reproductive health education in our school is, in-service training is absent whereby, teachers fail to undergo some training due to several factors within the school. (interview with teacher - 2 on 24th, Mar 2023).

A teacher confirmed that in-service training is the main challenge, and teachers lack some necessary knowledge concerning SRHE.

Another respondent added that:

'Lack of in-service training is associated with several reasons, including lack of funds, time, poor management and poor coordination. When teachers lack this training, it may lead to failure in teaching effective sexual and reproductive health education in schools. Moreover, when training is undertaken, it introduces a new delivery method of sexual and reproductive health education. (Interview with head of school- 2 on 24th March 2023).

Another teacher reported that:

'...the problem with our school is that the management is not competent enough to make some arrangements concerning in-service training. As teachers, most of us are willing to attend arranged seminars or even workshops, which will help us, in turn, to select the proper method of teaching sexual and reproductive health education in school settings. (interview with discipline teacher - 1 on 24th, Mar 2023).

From the quotation above, the teacher believes that the problem is the school management, whereby the management is not competent enough to make some arrangements concerning in-service training.

Furthermore, the results of this study are consistent with the findings of Joseph et al. (2021), indicating that inadequate teacher training contributes to the dissemination of inaccurate information regarding sexual and reproductive health education among certain students. This phenomenon occurs because certain teachers impart knowledge to students without completely understanding the subject matter.

Moreover, Joseph et al. (2021) conducted a study that revealed the presence of feelings of inadequacy among certain teachers when it comes to instructing sexual and reproductive health education. This sentiment arises from a perceived lack of training, resulting in the belief that only biology teachers can handle such educational content. It is asserted that biology educators are privileged to access diverse literature about reproductive health education due to their specialised expertise in this field. Furthermore, the research conducted by Breuner (2016) corroborated the findings above, indicating that a shortage of in-service training resulted in teachers lacking the necessary competence to deliver sexual and reproductive health education to their students effectively. Many individuals neglect to provide instruction in this type of

education due to their negative sense of inferiority, which stems from a lack of training.

4.2.2 Lack of Clear and Proper Sexual Education Policy

The data collected from research respondents clearly shows that no explicit policy guides the provision of sexual and reproductive health education in secondary schools. Moreover, this was quoted from various respondents during the data collection process. The findings show that teachers complain that sexual education is not well captured in the national education policy to facilitate the teaching of this component in schools. The finding shows that the current teaching of sexual and reproductive health education is based on the guidelines from HIV/AIDS, and life skills education topics are to be mainstreamed in schools to reduce the magnitude of sexual risks. Some of their responses are presented as follows:

Head of school-3 added that:

'...the problem with our education policy is that there is unclear proper coordination of each department, whereas the ministry of education has the role of setting up the policy which will specifically direct teachers on teaching sexual and reproductive education in schools. Therefore, due to lack of this policy, it enhances the poor provision of sexual and health education in secondary schools...' (Interview with head of school- 3 on 24th, Mar 2023).

Moreover, the teacher added that:

'...the teaching of sexual and reproductive education in our school is associated with teachers' experience when teaching more, especially in biology subject and civics in the topic of life skills. Therefore, we as teachers face several challenges when implementing this sort of education to students because of improper and clear policies which support the implementation of sexual and reproductive health education in schools (interview with teacher - 5 on 24th March 2023).

According to the findings of the study, the majority of participants indicated that sexual and reproductive education primarily focuses on the implementation of HIV/AIDS prevention guidelines. The study's findings indicate that while these guidelines are well-documented in academic literature, there is a lack of effective

strategies for their practical implementation. The absence of a well-defined and comprehensive sexual education policy hinders the effective implementation of sexual and reproductive health education in secondary schools. This is primarily attributed to the insufficient allocation of human and material resources required for the successful execution of such programs.

Furthermore, the results of this study are consistent with the research conducted by Bilinga (2014), which identified the absence of comprehensive sexual education policies as a barrier to the effective implementation of sexual and reproductive health education within secondary educational institutions. The allocation of resources for sexual education is not commensurate with its significance, as the government overlooks the provision of financial assistance necessary for the implementation of sexual and reproductive health education in secondary schools.

4.2.3 Cultural Barriers

The findings from various research participants reveal that education on sexual and reproductive health varies widely in different countries, nations, cultures and religions. Sexual education is often tied to morals and personal values in addition to its status as a health topic. Whether a person sees sexuality as natural versus scared may determine how they view sex education. There are many socio-cultural challenges to sexual education around the world. One crucial concern is that in countries where sex education is not taught thoroughly or is not the same between different schools, some students may not be able to recognise signs of sexual abuse. For instance, some of the participating respondents explained that Discipline teacher explained that:

...cultural barrier is among the common challenges that hinder the provision of sexual and reproductive health education in secondary schools. The way this kind of education is taught significantly shows that some information is hidden from the targeted group. They believe that when children are taught various aspects concerning their sexual and reproductive health, it stimulates them to perform such activities. Therefore, most believe it can hinder the health of the students and community at large...' (interview with discipline teacher - 2 on 24th March 2023).

Another teacher added that:

'our cultural beliefs are an obstacle in handling sexual and reproductive health education in schools. This is because our

culture does not allow us to talk about sexual-related issues to the students openly. We only do that through initiation or indirect, making it challenging for students to think critically in understanding what they have been taught...' (interview with teacher - 4 on 24th March 2023).

The findings from the focus group discussion in school C explained that:

'...we as students face various challenges concerning sexual and reproductive health education; these challenges are early pregnancies, early marriages, forced marriage, the spread of diseases such as HIV/AIDS, as well as school dropout rate. All of these challenges are being caused by cultural barriers of not taking sexual-related issues openly to students (FGD, 27th March 2023).

Again, the presence of cultural barriers hinders students' opportunities to acquire familiarity with information about sexual and reproductive health. This phenomenon can be attributed to certain cultural beliefs, wherein the provision of sexual and reproductive health education to students is perceived as a potential catalyst for their involvement in sexual activities. Students are prohibited from openly discussing this particular form of education, which poses challenges for them in seeking support and sharing their concerns. Consequently, they may experience feelings of nervousness and anxiety when attempting to seek guidance or express their emotions regarding matters related to sexuality with their teachers or peers. Several educators have observed that early marriage continues to be upheld by traditional culture, as students' sexual behaviour is influenced by the traditional cultural norms prevalent in their communities, which actively encourage early marriage.

Several teachers expressed challenges in establishing positive relationships with students and their families, attributing these difficulties to the diverse backgrounds of the individuals involved. The research findings indicated that the prevalence of underage marriage within our society provided students with numerous instances to comprehend the potential ramifications associated with such practices. Most adolescents who enter into early marriages have subsequently discontinued their education.

Furthermore, the results of this study align with the research conducted by Roudsari et al. (2013), which indicates the existence of numerous socio-cultural obstacles to sexual education on a global scale. Child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) are prevalent practices in numerous countries worldwide,

posing significant harm to women. Consequently, imparting education on these issues to students who strongly adhere to their cultural norms and traditions becomes challenging. Despite the potential implementation of such an educational framework, it is anticipated that a subset of students will persist in adhering to their cultural heritage, thereby impeding the effective dissemination of sexual and reproductive health education within educational institutions.

4.2.4 Lack of Parental Involvement

The findings from research participants revealed that lack of parental involvement is among the challenges which hinder the implementation of sexual and reproductive health education. Almost all participants identified this challenge during the data collection process. Their findings are presented as follows:

The head of school added that:

'...when addressing such kind of education in schools, it is not teachers' tasks, but we may also look at another side. Most parents do not even talk about such kind of education to their students in a home environment. They claim that this education should be given at school and not at home...' (Interview with the head of school- 1 on 24th March 2023).

The discipline teacher added that:

Parents fail to provide education to their children due to the uncomfortable feeling of discussing such kind of education with them. The uncomfortably of the parents might lead to a negative impact on their children. (interview with discipline teacher - 4 on 24th, Mar 2023).

Moreover, another participant added that:

'...due to the economic growth and development, today's parents take their children to boarding schools since early years, which leads them to lack chances to talk with their children about sexual and reproductive health education. Moreover, this has led to the high number of homosexual practices of students at young ages. The presence of single-sex schools has led to the practices of homosexual behaviour...' (interview with teacher - 5 on 24th March 2023).

Contemporary parents often neglect their parental duties, delegating such responsibilities to schoolteachers under the pretext of being occupied with their professional obligations. It is also observed that a significant number of parents exhibit apprehension when engaging in discussions with their children regarding sexual and reproductive health education. Furthermore, some parents tend to deliver this form of education in a manner that is influenced by the gender of their children. For example, mothers tend to converse with their daughters, while fathers typically communicate with their sons. Although confident parents engage in discussions with their children regarding sexual and reproductive health education, the direct provision of such education is often hindered by apprehension surrounding the explicit mention of anatomical aspects. Consequently, this reluctance poses challenges for children in critically evaluating the information conveyed by their parents.

Moreover, the results of this study align with the research conducted by Wikenfed (2011), which suggests that insufficient parental engagement poses a barrier to the successful implementation of sexual and reproductive health education in secondary schools. The researcher identified several factors that impede parental involvement in the provision of sexual and reproductive health education to their children. Several factors contribute to the lack of effective communication about sexual issues with children. These factors encompass an absence of knowledge and skills in communication, adherence to traditional beliefs, parental ignorance, limited time due to busy schedules, and the perception that discussing sexual matters with children is a practice associated with shame. Furthermore, Visser, (2014) posited that parental ignorance contributes to the involvement of specific children in sexual practices, resulting in early pregnancies and an increased risk of abortion.

4.2.5 Insufficient Funds

As the research participants portrayed, insufficient funds are a common challenge that hinders the provision of sexual and reproductive health education in secondary schools. It is well known that it is challenging to coordinate the planned activities effectively without money. Funds are necessary for any planned activities in any sector of development; thus, concerning that explanation, the findings for these challenges are identified as follows:

'...the main problem with our education system is all about financial constraints whereby the government itself minimises the education budget per school. As school administrators, we face several challenges concerning budget allocation, whereby

sometimes we use our money for school activities' (Interview with the head of school- 1 on 24th March 2023).

Another participant added that:

'...the main problem in my school is all about financial problems, whereas the school itself does not have any projects that will help in accumulating enough funds for the effective run of managerial activities in our school. Furthermore, the money from the government does not come in time, so it is not difficult to arrange some of the workshops without the money in hand' (Interview with discipline teacher school- 1 on 24th, Mar 2023).

Another participant added that:

'...insufficient fund leads to failure in preparing seminar of some training to teachers in facilitating such kind of knowledge to teachers. It is well known that conducting such kind of training needs a lot of funds for hiring the expert who will facilitate the program as well as selecting the venue where the program should take place (Interview with teacher - 1 on 24th, Mar 2023).

Furthermore, the research conducted by Keogh (2018) aligns with the findings of this study, indicating that the absence of sufficient financial support from governments for sexual and reproductive health education has presented a significant obstacle in the execution of related programs. In the past, financial support for sexual and reproductive health education has been fragmented, primarily originating from external entities and contingent upon particular initiatives. This phenomenon is evident in a fragmented collection of region-specific initiatives administered by global organisations, frequently lacking long-term viability once the funding from these agencies is terminated. According to Schlenk (2011), the absence of financial backing from the government for the implementation of sexual and reproductive health education (SRHE) programs in secondary schools has prompted governments to seek assistance from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international donors to facilitate the development and execution of localised SRHE initiatives. The government should duly recognise the significance of incorporating this form of education into the curriculum, as it plays a crucial role in enhancing students' breadth of knowledge.

Furthermore, the research conducted by Breuner (2016) aligns with the results obtained in this study, indicating that a shortage of financial resources poses challenges in

implementing sexual and reproductive health education within secondary educational institutions. According to his statement, teachers are unable to effectively convey crucial concepts related to sexual and reproductive health education due to their lack of training or participation in short courses.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The findings identified various managerial strategies that are commonly employed in implementing sexual and reproductive health education in secondary school students, among the guidance and counselling used by secondary school teachers; however, the study identified insufficient funds as the main challenge that destruct the implementation of SRHE at school settings, whereas financial facilities promote all the activities relating the implementation of sexual and reproductive health education in school.

5.2 Recommendations

The findings from the study recommend the following:

1. The school's management ought to devise additional strategies to implement sexual and reproductive health education within educational institutions successfully. Aligned with established strategies, educational institutions should prioritise implementing these strategies to maximise their effectiveness within the school environment and enhance the academic performance of secondary school students.
2. Based on the findings, the researcher recommends further study to assess the extent to which sexual and reproductive health education promotes students' academic performance in secondary schools.

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