**Acceptance Level of Teaching Sex Education among Elementary Teachers in Davao del Sur**

**ABSTRACT**

Teachers experience conflict in Comprehensive Sex Education (CSE) due to differences between beliefs and cultural background. Teachers frequently struggle to give developmentally appropriate knowledge while navigating the varied cultural beliefs of families, resulting in insufficient or contradictory information. This study aims to determine the level of teachers acceptance in teaching sex education and determined the socio-demographic profile among teachers and it’s significant differences. The participants of this study were 150 public elementary teachers in Davao del Sur. This study used the adopted research questionnaire and utilized Kruskall-Wallis H and Mann-Whitney U, to treat the data statistically. The results showed that the overall acceptance level of sex education among teachers was very high across three (3) indicators; approval, job effectiveness and confidence. Also, the acceptance level of teachers in teaching sex education when grouped by age, gender, civil status, and years of teaching, showed no significant difference. Among all the indicators, *confidence* received the lowest mean score out of all the measures. This means that teachers needs more trainings to be more confident in their teaching approach towards the CSE. Additionally, the school administration must holds workshops and seminars to boost teachers' confidence in teaching sex education.

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*Keywords: sex education, descriptive statistics, comprehensive sex education (CSE)*

*SGD Thrust: Quality Education, Good Health and Well-Being*

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Teachers experience conflict in Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) due to differences between beliefs and cultural backgrounds [1]. Lack of direction on how to teach the curriculum was linked to teachers' decisions regarding the CSE program, particularly about integrating sex education into existing subjects [2]. Due to the absence of related studies, it highlights the fact that Filipino governing cultures and practices may have a significant impact. It is concluded that despite initiatives to put in place a thorough strategy for sexuality teaching that acknowledges sexuality as a human right [3]. Moreover, primary school teachers still encounter challenges in delivering sex education in schools as a result of inadequate training and concerns that parents prohibit their kids from learning about and having conversations about sexuality. Zhuravleva and Helmer [4] on including sex education regardless of their academic environment or personal background, many require greater confidence or comfort to impart it adequately. The rising use of sex education or CSE in educational contexts [5] necessitates bettering student teachers' readiness for dealing with sex education through teacher education.

Teachers encounter conflicts in implementing CSE when teaching sexuality topics in local contexts, especially when traditional religious and cultural norms often prohibit the transmission of knowledge about sexuality and contraception [1]. It is known that implementing sex education faces many difficulties due to the differences between the beliefs and cultural backgrounds of society and community. According to Rotondano [7], the school still lacked staffs, a group deemed "most prepared to address such a complex theme," which is why teacher training in sexuality was labelled as a "problem".

In the international realm, the effectiveness of sex education in Ugandan classrooms mostly depends on the level of competency of the teachers engaged. Established by the Ugandan government as a "National Framework for Sexuality Education," it is expected to include several topics, including sexual development, gender identity, and interpersonal interactions. Moreover, owing to its dependence on convictions and cultural norms regarding morality and virginity, the system primarily promotes sexual abstinence and, according to Ugandan law, does not endorse sexual inclusivity [8]. Education centred in schools plays a crucial role in providing insights into students' sexual and reproductive health. As Darabi et al. [9] noted, educators significantly enhance Ugandan students' comprehension of sexual and reproductive health and rights. Moreover, UNESCO has identified in-curricular school-based sex education as the most economically efficient and ecologically advantageous method for educators to interact with a multitude of young children.

In Indonesia, school-based Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) is essential in shaping children’s attitudes, behaviors, and decision-making skills related to relationships and personal boundaries. It helps individuals make informed choices, build a positive self-image, and avoid negative sexual health outcomes. CSE emphasizes children’s rights to accurate information, skill development, and active participation. When combined with a counseling approach, it effectively raises children’s awareness of personal boundaries and healthy relationships Fadhilah & Mulyani, (2024). Counseling promotes open dialogue and active engagement, which positively influences children’s understanding and attitudes toward their bodies and personal limits.

The imperative of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in South Africa's Foundation Phase, education is a national concern and a matter of global and societal significance. It intersects crucially with the discipline of education, addressing critical child rights issues as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), emphasising children's protection from harm (Venketsamy, 2023). Integrating CSE into the educational curriculum is essential in safeguarding these rights and promoting society's overall well-being. However, teachers are reluctant to engage in this form of education, presenting a complex and multifaceted problem that

demands a thorough investigation. Understanding the roots of this reluctance is vital to implementing effective educational strategies that align with national and international child

protection standards.

In addition, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO [10] encourages conceptual and broad sexuality as a methodological assumption, as this proposed curriculum for CSE education proves that pupils begin learning at a young age. Living fully and entirely with their sexuality, exercising accountability and respect for others. That implies that the foundation of CSE is human rights and that its goals include encouraging individuals to shatter the taboos. In the study by Herat et al. [11], eight curriculum points in CSE interact with one another. Others cover subjects including values, relationships, and rights - knowing gender, sexuality and culture, violence, safety, health, well-being skills, the development, sexuality, and anatomy of the human body, sexual and reproductive health, as well as behavior. Professors and educational [12] communities need to establish protocols to identify, report, and follow up on the population. However, teachers may contribute to the culture of silence surrounding this phenomenon by avoiding it due to their own stand and beliefs.

In the Philippine context, the Philippine Institute of Development Studies (PIDS) claims numerous obstacles to implementing comprehensive sex education, including a lack of school resources and facilities and necessary training [13]. The Philippines is adopting sex education, but slowly. First, rather than combining sex education with other topics, the Department of Education is thinking of [14] creating a stand-alone course on the subject. Rather than asking other educators to change their curriculum, it enables schools to employ teachers who specialize in this area. Although it is not taught in secondary or even primary schools, Perez [15], sex education is not a subject in the Philippines. To ensure that young people are safe when they become older, there is a push for sex education in the Philippines.

Teachers experience conflict in CSE due to the differences between beliefs and cultural backgrounds [1]. Students want sex education classes to be taught by credible people [16]. Low-income families prefer to have sex education included in the school curriculum. However, [17], [18], the majority still shun education on the Reproductive Health (RH) Bill, according to a recent survey by the city's largest university. According to the author, the literature on receptivity to organizational innovation needs to be more accurate in emphasizing the theoretical assessment of receptivity correlates. It wrongly implies that people are generally resistant to change. For example, he presents research on hypothesis testing based on information from a poll of public-school educators' reactions to sex education being taught in elementary schools [19].

The Reasoned Action Theory of Martin Fishbein [20] was the foundation for this study. This theory suggests that individual behaviour influences personal actions. Moreover, it is affected by points of view on behaviour and personal standards. Understanding teachers' acceptance of sex education can benefit from this theory since their readiness to educate depends on their attitudes and the expected standards of peers and society. It provides evidence of theoretical and empirical grounds to assume that conservative worldviews significantly influence behavioral intentions concerning sex education [Grigoropoulos](https://www.qeios.com/profile/59166) [21].

This study aims to determine the elementary school teachers' acceptance level in teaching sex education. The paragraph discusses how cultural and religious variables make it difficult to administer Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE). Although sex education rules are in place in 85% of the nations assessed, their efficacy is hampered by inadequate curricula and teachers' lack of confidence. Teachers feel uneasy when social conventions and personal beliefs influence their teaching. There are obstacles to using CSE because of community context, culture, and religion. For CSE implementation in school health policies to be successful, it is stressed how important it is to consider cultural and religious backgrounds.

Thus, the findings of this study may benefit the school, administrators, teachers, and students as a guide in assessing the acceptance level of teachers teaching sex education. Hence, the research questionnaire aims to determine this level. Despite the challenges of teaching sex education in the classroom, teachers are committed to understanding the function the educational system performs in providing students with good health by leading the execution of thorough sex education (CSE).

**2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

This study aimed to determine the acceptance level of elementary teachers in teaching sex education. It sought to answer the following:

1. To determine the profile of the respondents in terms of:
   1. Age;
   2. Civil Status;
   3. Gender; and
   4. Years in Teaching.
2. To determine the level of acceptance of elementary school teachers on the implementation of sex education in the classroom in terms of:
   1. Approval
   2. Job effectiveness; and
   3. Confidence.
3. To determine the significant difference between the teacher’s profile and acceptance level in teaching sex education

**3. METHODS**

**3.1 RESPONDENTS**

This study's participants were 150 elementary teachers in the Division of Davao del Sur. Simple random sampling [22] was employed to choose respondents based on Age, Gender, civil status, and years of teaching. According to Thomas [23], simple random sampling ensures that each member of a population has an equal probability of selection in their response. Only teachers who agreed to participate in the data collection are eligible for this survey.

In choosing the research participants of this study, the following criteria were strictly followed: (1) must be a teacher in a public school, (2) the teacher must have at least one (1) year of teaching experience, and (3) the teacher is willing to participate in answering the survey questionnaire. Moreover, the withdrawal criteria are the following: (1) not a public-school teacher, (2) less than one (1) year of teaching experience, (3) not responsive to any questions, and (4) not meeting the criteria during the conduct of data collection.

**3.2 INSTRUMENTS**

Teachers' Perceptions of the Teaching of Sexuality Education in the Pinetown Schools. The instrument used by the researcher to gather data is a validated questionnaire adopted from (Namisile Joyce Mchunu, 2007). The instrument was composed of two parts. Part I deals with the demographic profiles of the

The instrument was composed of two parts. Part I deals with the demographic profiles of the respondents in terms of age, gender, civil status, and years of teaching. Part II deals with the acceptance level of teachers teaching sex education, which has three indicators: approval, job effectiveness, and confidence. The second part was a 16-item questionnaire adopted from Mchunu [24], with six (6) items for approval, five (5) items for job effectiveness, and five (5) items for confidence. Hence, the reliability test of the 16-item scale suggested that the items have a relatively high internal consistency.

In this study, the researchers used a 5-likert scale to interpret the teachers’ responses to the level of teachers teaching sex education. The scale below was used to analyze the data adopted from the work of Malasarte et al, (2024)

**3.3 DESIGN AND PROCEDURE**

This study utilized descriptive statistics to systematically synthesize data by elucidating the association between variables within a sample or population Kaur et al. [25]. It also provides appropriate and precise explanations of such information with, without, or sometimes with minimal statistical procedures that focus on the acceptance level of teachers teaching sex education. The researchers began by sending letters to the Division Office of Davao Del Sur to request permission to conduct the study. Once approval was granted, additional permissions were obtained from the school heads for the appropriate survey schedules. Subsequently, the researchers met with the teachers to explain the study's purpose and significance and distribute the survey questionnaire.

**Table 1. *Table for Interpretation for Acceptance Level.***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Scale** | **Range of Means** | **Description Levels** | **Interpretation** |
| **5** | **4.20-5.00** | **Very high** | It indicates that the items relating to the acceptance level of elementary teachers in teaching sex education embodied in the item were always present. |
| **4** | **3.40-4.19** | **High** | It indicates that the items relating to the acceptance level of elementary teachers in teaching sex education embodied in the item were sometimes present. |
| **3** | **2.60-3.39** | **Moderate** | It indicates that the items relating to the acceptance level of elementary teachers in teaching sex education embodied in the item were often present. |
| **2** | **1.80-2.59** | **Low** | It indicates that the items relating to the acceptance level of elementary teachers in teaching sex education embodied in the item were seldom present. |
| **1** | **1.00-1.79** | **Very Low** | It indicates that the items relating to the acceptance level of elementary teachers in teaching sex education embodied in the item were absent. |

The survey questionnaire was developed with the assistance of the Research Publication Center (RPPC) at UM Digos College, and the RPPC office validated it to ensure reliability. Following data collection, the researchers coordinated with the RPPC and provided the collected data to the statistician. The researchers totalled and catalogued the survey results before passing them to the statistician. After data analysis, the statistician forwards the findings to the researchers. Strictly and morally, the procedure was followed to ensure that the results would significantly enhance the sex education initiative.

The research study used the following descriptive statistical analysis, including the respondents' frequency, percentages, means, and standard deviation testing, to represent how well the method measures something about the study. The frequency of the value in the number of times it occurs in a dataset [26]. The percentage generally represents data that indicates the proportion of observations for each data point or collection of data points [27]. Moreover, the mean was used to define the entire sum of the values in a sample Hurley & Tenny [28] divided by the total number of values in the sample. Finally, usually about

the mean value of the data set, the standard deviation (SD), was used to gauge the degree of scattering in a set of values. Standard deviation computation in the study Omda & Sergent [29] depends on whether the dataset reflects a sample or the whole population.

**3.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Throughout this investigation, ethical guidelines and practices of the University of Mindanao Ethics Committee were rigorously observed. Often, the researchers asked for and got letters from important institution officials. Permission is needed to do this research. The researchers assessed the risks and safety measures to be taken against the identified recruitment parties and verified that they were suitable (including social, psychological, and physical dangers). The study's sample also provides proper authorization and consent, and they are assured that all of their rights will be respected, especially when processing the data, which includes but is not limited to:

**Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation.** Every participant was under the obligation to provide signed informed consent. Individual potential volunteers were

**Table 2. *Demographic Profile of the Respondents (n=150****)*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Profile** | **f** | **%** |
| **Age**  20-30 years old  31-40 years old  41-50 years old  51-60 years old  Above 60 years old | 14  31  40  64  1 | 9.3  20.7  26.7  42.7  .7 |
| **Civil Status**  Single  Married  Separated  Widow(er) | 38  50  31  31 | 25.3  33.3  20.7  20.7 |
| **Gender**  Male  Female | 75  75 | 50.0  50.0 |
| **Years in Teaching**  3-5 years  6-10 years  More than 12 years | 37  47  66 | 24.7  31.3  44.0 |

contacted and advised of the study's goals and data collection method. They were given a reasonable time to ask questions and communicate any concerns. Their participation was voluntary; hence, opting to join or stop the study during its term would not affect their employment or care [30].

**Anonymity and Confidentiality.** Data collection, analysis, and release of the study findings preserved participants' anonymity and confidentiality by hiding their names and identities. Throughout phone contact, interview sessions, data processing, results distribution, privacy, and confidentiality in the interview environment were painstakingly upheld [30].

**4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS**

Table 2 represents the demographic profiles of 150 respondents in several categories namely; their age, civil status, gender, and years in teaching.

The demographic profile of the respondents highlights key trends in age, civil status, gender, and years in teaching. This indicates a stable institution and may or may not be characterized by high expertise. Nevertheless, the high number of teachers aged between 51 and 60 (42.7%) poses a significant challenge to succession planning; it is imperative to recruit and train younger teachers to maintain their institutional knowledge and prevent advancing beyond the current skill gap. A positive outcome of the gender distribution (50% male, 50% female) is that it is almost equal, which may lead to equitable representation and potentially favorable policy formulation. Teachers' varied personal circumstances and needs, as well as their marital statuses (married; single; separated; widowed), necessitates the need for inclusive policies & support systems that foster well-being and promote better working conditions. The majority of teachers (44%) possessing over 12 years of experience supports the idea of institutional knowledge and stability, but highlights the importance of succession planning to maintain continuity and avoid teacher turnover. Why is this important? Ultimately, these figures show that it is important to plan for the future retirement of many years’ experience but also for an inclusive environment (positive and supportive) in which all teachers can feel welcome.

Most participants are in the 51–60 age group (42.7%), suggesting that the teaching population is largely composed of mid-to-late career professionals. A small portion (0.7%) are over 60, while those aged 41–50 account for 26.7%. In terms of civil status, married respondents dominate at 33.3%, followed by single (25.3%), separated (20.7%), and widowed individuals (20.7%). This indicates a diverse range of family situations that may influence work-life balance and career perspectives.

Gender distribution is perfectly balanced, with 75 males and 75 females (50% each), suggesting inclusivity and equal representation in the teaching workforce. When considering years of teaching experience, the largest group has more than 12 years of service (44%), followed by those with 6–10 years (31.4%), and 3–5 years (24.7%). This distribution reveals a seasoned workforce, potentially rich in pedagogical expertise and institutional knowledge, which could positively affect mentoring practices and classroom effectiveness.

The predominance of experienced and married educators in the sample implies a stable teaching force likely committed to long-term service. However, the aging workforce may present challenges in succession planning and innovation adoption. The balanced gender ratio supports equitable policy development, while the presence of various civil statuses calls for responsive support systems addressing different personal circumstances among teachers.

**4.2 ACCEPTANCE LEVEL OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SEX EDUCATION**

Table 3 shows the acceptance level of elementary school teachers regarding the implementation of sex education, based on three indicators: Approval, Job Effectiveness, and Confidence. The mean scores (x) indicate a high level of approval (4.70), suggesting sex education is being well-liked by the instructors. The slightly lower mean scores for Job Effectiveness (4.40) and Confidence (4.22) indicate that teachers may have some reservations about teaching sex education, as well as lack confidence in their abilities. All three indicators have relatively similar SDs, indicating relative agreement among the teachers. Even though the differences between these two approaches are not significant, they could point to a need for professional development focused on building teacher confidence and providing them with the tools and training needed to deliver effective and perceived job delivery in delivering sex education.

Table 3 shows elementary school teachers' acceptance level: approval, job effectiveness, and confidence. The overall level of teachers' acceptance (x̄=4.44; SD=0.36). This indicates that the level of teachers' acceptance of the implementation of sex education was very high. This implies that most of the respondents in the study favoured the implementation of sex education in the curriculum.

Sex education is mandated on a state level, whereas different states, districts, and school boards have the autonomy to determine the implementation of federal policies and funds for sex education. The system has been criticized for being a "highly diverse patchwork of sex education laws and practices Leung et al. [31]. Shin et al. [32] claimed that although most people agree that formal sex education is important for schools, teachers also have a great need to provide natural and ongoing sexual guidance. Examining [1] requires one to take national values and culture into account in order to progress the integration of CSE into educational health programs. Beliefs and cultural elements affect the execution of CSE. Teachers' confidence in implementing CSE is compromised by the beliefs and cultural backgrounds of their communities, along with concerns about adverse outcomes, like promoting unhealthy sexual behaviour among students.

**APPROVAL:**

Table 3 also shows that the level of teaching sex educationin terms of approval was very high (x̄=4.70; SD=0.37). It indicates that this level of acceptance of elementary teachers in teaching sex education was always observed. It implies that most of the selected elementary teachers in Hagonoy Davao Del Sur favoured implementing sex education in the curriculum.

According to the DepEd Order No. 031, s. 2018, Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) is a curriculum-based process encompassing the cognitive, emotional, physical, and social dimensions of sexuality, characterized by scientific rigour, age and development appropriateness, cultural and gender responsiveness, and a rights-based framework. Teachers are frequently uneasy or defensive about teaching sex education since social standards and personal experiences heavily impact it, Ngabaza & Shefer [33]. Moreover, Adonis and Baxen [34] stated that providing sex education in the classroom is a practical and emotional endeavour where educators actively build the knowledge they impart to their learners. In sex education in the curriculum, teachers are integral in delivering content that will not lead to students' misconceptions and interpretations.

In addition, Buston et al. [35] indicated that insufficient time is critical for comprehensive implementation. Given the sensitive nature of sex education, educators in both public and private institutions allocate considerable time deliberating on appropriate materials and information for classroom delivery, Mkumbo [36]. Moreover, Helleve et al. [37] noted that curriculum reforms in general and specific domains of health and physical education necessitate teachers acquiring knowledge of sports training methodologies and sports health through a certification system, thereby diminishing the time for sex education. The scope of health and physical education content has expanded significantly. Educators need enhanced training or confidence to convey the information accurately. Inadequately trained teachers often exhibit reluctance to

**Table 3. *Acceptance level of elementary school teachers on the implementation of sex education, n=150***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicators** | **x̄** | **SD** |
| Approval | 4.70 | 0.37 |
| Job Effectiveness | 4.40 | 0.43 |
| Confidence | 4.22 | 0.71 |
| **Total** | **4.44** | **0.36** |

teach sex education and frequently lack a sustained commitment to introducing these topics Haignere et al. [38].

**Job Effectiveness:**

Table 3 also displays high work effectiveness levels accepted by the teacher (x̄=4.40; SD=0.43). This suggests that the degree of teacher approval for applying for sex education was consistent. This implies that adding sex education will ensure a comprehensive teaching approach instead of negatively influencing the teacher's obligation and responsibility.

Moreover, as said in the 2018 Policy Guidelines on Implementing Comprehensive Sexuality Education, the Department of Education is dedicated to helping teacher preparation in CSE. It intends to collaborate with the Curriculum and Learning Management Division to create CSE training programs. This division explicitly trains school leaders and educators to integrate CSE across various learning domains and coordinate with the School Governance and Operations Division. According to research done in South Africa, teachers regularly assume several roles, including those of a parent, peer, and social worker in imparting sex education.

Conversely, teachers could be reluctant to start these projects because of anxiety. These roles can be judged as connected to their teaching responsibilities or call for further training to provide student direction. Ahmed et al. [39] say that many educators feel that teaching sex education is immoral and that talking about a topic in class will cause "losing students' respect." The general understanding of sex education may not be covered until teachers are fully trained or instructed before teaching it.

Moreover, the recommended teaching approaches and guidelines should also be introduced to the teachers who are about to teach sex education to ease some identified barriers. Natividad [40] states that most teachers do not usually integrate these topics and do not provide enough information to their students, resulting in poor knowledge about sex education. Moreover, without proper guidance and education from the teachers, problems concerning sex education will arise due to cultural orientations where an open discussion about sexuality results in the lack of job effectiveness of the teachers teaching sex education in the classroom [41].

**Confidence:**

Table 3 also shows that the level of teacher acceptance of implementing sex education in terms of confidence was very high (x̄=4.22; SD=0.71). This indicates that this confidence level towards implementing sex education was always observed. It also implies that most of the selected elementary teachers were confident in teaching sex education in the curriculum.

The results are a consequence of Mukambika’s [42] statement that work experience in teaching helped teachers become confident in understanding the role of sex education in schools and its effects on students. Bola et al. [43] state that teachers' positive attitudes toward sex education make them confident to teach the subject. It implies that they have a high indication understanding of sex education, like ensuring that in teaching,

**Table 4. *The difference in acceptance level when analyzed by age***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Age | N | Mean Rank | Chi-square | df | Asymp. Sig. |
| **Approval** | 20-30 yrs. Old | 14 | 70.29 | 2.589 | 4 | 0.629 |
| 1-40 yrs. Old | 31 | 79.66 |  |  |  |
| 41-50 yrs. old | 40 | 70.43 |  |  |  |
| 51-60 yrs. Old | 64 | 77.02 |  |  |  |
| Above 60 yr. old | 1 | 125 |  |  |  |
| Total | 150 |  |  |  |  |
| **Job Effectiveness** | 20-30 yrs. Old | 14 | 101.5 | 5.799 | 4 | 0.215 |
| 1-40 yrs. old | 31 | 73.05 |  |  |  |
| 41-50 yrs. old | 40 | 74.64 |  |  |  |
| 51-60 yrs. old | 64 | 71.55 |  |  |  |
| Above 60 yrs. old | 1 | 75 |  |  |  |
| Total | 150 |  |  |  |  |
| **Confidence** | 20-30 yrs. old | 14 | 84.61 | 6.523 | 4 | 0.163 |
| 31-40 yrs. old | 31 | 87.35 |  |  |  |
| 41-50 yrs. old | 40 | 72.63 |  |  |  |
| 51-60 yrs. old | 64 | 70.63 |  |  |  |
| Above 60 yrs. old | 1 | 7 |  |  |  |
| Total | 150 |  |  |  |  |
| **Overall** | 20-30 yrs. old | 13 | 84.18 | 4.086 | 4 | 0.395 |
| 31-40 yrs. old | 31 | 84.97 |  |  |  |
| 41-50 yrs. old | 40 | 73.44 |  |  |  |
| 51-60 yrs. old | 64 | 71.08 |  |  |  |
| Above 60 yrs. old | 1 | 26 |  |  |  |
| Total | 150 |  |  |  |  |

\*p<0.05

sex education should be developmentally appropriate to avoid misconceptions among students. However, Kasonde [44] found that teachers have less Confidence in Teaching education because of the cultural and religious barriers and lack of formal training. Thus, before the implementation of sex education, school administrators may provide their teachers with formal training to enhance their general understanding of sex education and somehow modify their cultural beliefs that might be affecting their behaviour towards sex education. Lastly, the school institution should provide adequate resources to address all the gaps in teaching sex education.

Furthermore, Javadnoori et al. [45] and Martin et al. [46] stated that sex education knowledge and confidence in teaching sex education were slightly below the threshold. Teachers should continue to develop and broaden their understanding of sex education. According to Pokhrel and Chhetri [47], teachers' sex education competency criteria should be changed to account for social changes, and policymakers should use these findings to support training initiatives. As a result, Aventin et al. [48] recommend improving the confidence of school personnel and instructors in teaching sex education in the classroom.

**4.3 SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE IN THE LEVEL OF ACCEPTANCE OF SCHOOL TEACHERS IN TEACHING SEX EDUCATION AS ANALYZED BY AGE**

Table 4 examines the difference in acceptance levels of sex education among teachers, categorized by age group. The analysis uses mean ranks and a chi-square test. The relatively high p-value (Asymp. The level of approval for sex education does not vary significantly among teaching age groups, as indicated by Sig. = 0.629 (equivalent). The mean ranks differ, but not so much that they are statistically significant at a standard alpha level (e.g, 0.05). Thus, we can conclude that age is not a significant factor in teachers' support of sex education. Understanding the subtleties of teacher acceptance of sex education may require further consideration beyond age.

Based on age, Job Effectiveness, Confidence, and an Overall assessment of three dimensions, this table displays the acceptance level of sex education among teachers. The analysis employs a Kruskal-Wallis test (based on Chi-square values and degrees of freedom). Crucially, the p-values (Asymp. Job Effectiveness (0.215), Confidence (0.163), and Overall assessment (0.395) score significantly exceed the mean significance level of 0.05. This means there are no statistically significant differences in the acceptance of sex education for any of the three dimensions by teachers across different age groups. There are some variations in the mean ranks across age groups for each dimension, but these differences are not substantial enough to be considered statistically significant. Accordingly, teachers' age does not seem to have a significant impact on their job performance, confidence levels or general acceptance of sex education.

Table 4 shows the age-related differences in the level of acceptance of elementary school teachers in teaching sex education. The results show that there is no significant difference when analyzed by age, with a mean rank of 84.18 for 20-30 years old, 84.97 for 31-40 years old, 73.44 for 41-50

**Table 5. *The difference in acceptance level when analyzed by Civil Status***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Civil Status** | **N** | **Mean Rank** | **Chi-square** | **df** | **Asymp. Sig.** |
| **Approval** | Single | 38 | 87.82 | 8.444 | 3 | 0.038\* |
| Married | 50 | 79.98 |  |  |  |
| Separated | 31 | 66.66 |  |  |  |
| Window(er) | 31 | 62.02 |  |  |  |
| Total | 150 |  |  |  |  |
| **Job Effectiveness** | Single | 38 | 74.01 | 1.035 | 3 | 0.793 |
| Married | 50 | 75.27 |  |  |  |
| Separated | 31 | 81.9 |  |  |  |
| Window(er) | 31 | 71.29 |  |  |  |
| Total | 150 |  |  |  |  |
| **Confidence** | Single | 38 | 67.3 | 9.609 | 3 | 0.022\* |
| Married | 50 | 70.98 |  |  |  |
| Separated | 31 | 96.56 |  |  |  |
| Window(er) | 31 | 71.77 |  |  |  |
| Total | 150 |  |  |  |  |
| **Overall** | Single | 38 | 70.67 | 6.349 | 3 | 0.096 |
| Married | 50 | 74.75 |  |  |  |
| Separated | 31 | 91.94 |  |  |  |
| Window(er) | 31 | 66.19 |  |  |  |
| Total | 150 |  |  |  |  |

\*p<0.05

years old, 71.08 for 51-60 years old, and 26 for above 60 years old. This means that their acceptance level is similar to their age. The Department of Education said that the program to include sexuality education fits the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law of 2012, which requires the delivery of age and developmentally appropriate reproductive health education for teenagers. According to them, teenagers need adult direction to understand the core of sex education properly and to avoid misreading its primary goals. By arming future mistakes with the necessary counselling and healthcare treatments, this project seeks to prevent them, Cruz & Chua [49]. The effort to provide sex education conforms with the law that guarantees teenagers’ right to health and education, according to the education department, Miedema & Oduro [50]. According to the education departments, education conforms to the law that guarantees teenagers' right to health and education, Miedema & Oduro [50].

Gacoin [51] asserts that the objective of incorporating sex education into the curriculum is to enable students and educators to make informed decisions that positively impact their overall well-being. Educators, mainly guide-friendly counsellors, must possess the requisite knowledge and skills to integrate sex education into various subjects effectively. Adolescents are currently unprepared for the obligations and hardships that adult sexuality brings, McCormack [52]; UNESCO [53]. Many young and older adults are exposed to exploitation, coercion, and violence without enough sex education. Furthermore, more and more young people are beginning to develop sexual consciousness in their early years, UNESCO [53]. Given this, comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) should be delivered sensibly and adapted to the developmental level of the learner.

**4.4 SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE IN THE LEVEL OF ACCEPTANCE OF SCHOOL TEACHERS IN TEACHING SEX EDUCATION AS ANALYZED BY CIVIL STATUS**

**Table 6. *The difference in acceptance level when analyzed by gender***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Gender** | **N** | **Mean Rank** | **Sum of Ranks** | **Mann-Whitney U** | **Z** | **Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)** |
| **Approval** | Male | 75 | 3.8 | 5535 | 2685 | -0.497 | 0.619 |
| Female | 75 | 77.2 | 5790 |  |  |  |
| Total | 150 |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Job Effectiveness** | Male | 75 | 76.16 | 5712 | 2763 | -0.188 | 0.851 |
| Female | 75 | 74.84 | 5613 |  |  |  |
| Total | 150 |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Confidence** | Male | 75 | 66.83 | 5012 | 2162 | -2.471 | 0.013\* |
| Female | 75 | 84.17 | 5613 |  |  |  |
| Total | 150 |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Overall** | Male | 75 | 69.47 | 5210 | 2360 | -1.702 | 0.089 |
| Female | 75 | 81.53 | 6115 |  |  |  |
| Total | 150 |  |  |  |  |  |

\*p<0.05

Table 5 analyzes the influence of teachers' civil status status on their acceptance of sex education, using a Kruskal-Wallis test. The results show a statistically significant difference (p = 0.038) in approval levels show a statistically significant variation (p = 0.038) between different civil statuses. The significant difference in Job Effectiveness (p = 0.793) and Overall acceptance (ap=0.06) is not discerned. Confidence shows a significant difference (p = 0.022). While marital status doesn't impact teachers' overall assessment of sex education or perceived job effectiveness, it does affect their level of approval and confidence in teaching. More investigation is needed to explain why certain marital statuses are associated with different degrees of approval and confidence in teaching sexual education.

Table 5 shows the differences in the level of acceptance of elementary school teachers in teaching sex education by civil

status. When analyzed by civil status, the result shows no significant difference, with a mean rank of 70.67 for singles, 74.75 for married, 91.94 for separated, and 66.19 for widows(er). This means that their acceptance level is similar to their civil status.

This study revealed no appreciable variation in the opinions of single, married, separated, and window(er) instructors about the instruction of sexuality education Eko et al. [54]. Consequently, it identifies early marriages, insufficient education, and inadequate family planning as factors contributing to population growth, emphasizing the academic institution's role in mitigating teenage pregnancy rates through value reformations. Tomol and Narida [55] corroborate this theme, asserting that sex education should encompass values and interpersonal skills as essential components for fostering comprehensive sexual development among students. However, participants in this study did not fully disclose their preferences for delivering sex education at specific grade levels.

Various studies have provided significant insights into the integration of sex education that promotes comprehensive

development. Unis and Sällström [56] discovered through their phenomenological analysis of adolescents that they internalize various facets of sex and relationships as they progress through their school years, aligning with their maturity levels. Despite their differences, they exhibit similar knowledge and attitudes regarding the instruction of sex education.

**4.5 SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE IN THE LEVEL OF ACCEPTANCE OF SCHOOL TEACHERS IN TEACHING SEX EDUCATION AS ANALYZED BY GENDER**

Table 6 uses a Mann-Whitney U test to compare the acceptance of sex education among male and female teachers. A statistically significantdifference (p =0.013) is observed in theanalysis only for teachers' confidence in teaching about sex education. Compared to male teachers, female teachers have higher mean ranks and greater confidence. Teaching sex education male and female teachers do not exhibit any significant differences in their approval or job effectiveness, as indicated by the overall assessment (p = 0.089). According to this finding, although female teachers are more confident in their ability to teach sex education, both genders have comparable levels of approval and perception of it as an effective way of teaching. Additional research may focus on the reasons for the discrepancy in confidence levels between male and female teachers, potentially examining factors like previous training, experience, or social assumptions.

Table 6 shows gender differences in the level of acceptance of elementary school teachers in teaching sex education. The result showed no significant difference when analyzed by Gender (*U=2360, p=0.73).* Whether the study subjects are male or female, they have similar perceptions of the acceptance level.

According to Macabago [57], there is no significant difference in terms of gender among teachers in sex education. CSE is also considered an essential tool in efforts to promote gender equality Miller [58]; UNESCO [10], including intimate partner violence Kantor et al. [59]; Makleff et al. [60], and in achieving the Sustainable Development Goal Starrs et al. [61].

**Table 7. *Difference in acceptance level when analyzed by Years of Teaching***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Civil Status** | **N** | **Mean Rank** | **Chi-square** | **Df** | **Asymp. Sig.** |
| **Approval** | 3-5 years | 37 | 83.04 | 1.788 | 2 | 0.409 |
| 6-10 years | 47 | 75.11 |  |  |  |
| More than 12 years | 66 | 71.55 |  |  |  |
| Total | 150 |  |  |  |  |
| **Job Effectiveness** | 3-5 years | 37 | 78.05 | 2.151 | 2 | 0.341 |
| 6-10 years | 47 | 67.94 |  |  |  |
| More than 12 years | 66 | 79.45 |  |  |  |
| Total | 150 |  |  |  |  |
| **Confidence** | 3-5 years | 37 | 65.22 | 2.851 | 2 | 0.24 |
| 6-10 years | 47 | 77.9 |  |  |  |
| More than 12 years | 66 | 79.55 |  |  |  |
| Total | 150 |  |  |  |  |
| **Overall** | 3-5 years | 37 | 70.41 | 1.552 | 2 | 0.46 |
| 6-10 years | 47 | 72.64 |  |  |  |
| More than 12 years | 66 | 80.39 |  |  |  |
| Total | 150 |  |  |  |  |

\*p<0.05

Implementation support from external change agents was described as instrumentals in mainstreaming programmed contents beyond the classrooms and offices by addressing gender policies, providing gender training and seminars to teachers, and undertaking a gender focus Joyce et al. [62]; Kearney et al. [63]; Robertson-James et al. [64]. The letters were feedback to schools as part of the interventions in one study, thus serving as a feedback loop that enhances an overall change process, Kearney et al. [63]. Hence, this study shows no significant difference in gender and racial grouping perceptions of the new information teaching sex education. Furthermore, Ruane-McAteer et al. [65] suggest that in terms of acceptance level analyzed by gender, there is no significant difference in the potential of gender transformative approaches across the educational programming seeking to improve and the guidance of the school head, administrator, and division heads.

**4.4 SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE IN THE LEVEL OF ACCEPTANCE OF SCHOOL TEACHERS IN TEACHING SEX EDUCATION AS ANALYZED BY YEARS IN TEACHING**

Table 7 investigates the relationship between years of teaching experience and the acceptance of sex education using a Kruskal-Wallis test. The results show no statistically significant differences across the three experience levels (3-5 years, 6-10 years, more than 12 years) for any of the measured aspects: Approval (p = 0.409), Job Effectiveness (p = 0.341), Confidence (p = 0.24), or Overall acceptance (p = 0.46). Although there are variations in mean ranks across the experience groups, these variations are not substantial enough to be considered statistically significant at a conventional alpha level. Therefore, the data suggests that years of teaching experience do not significantly influence teachers' approval, perceived effectiveness, confidence, or overall acceptance of sex education. Other factors beyond teaching experience may be more influential in shaping teachers' attitudes and beliefs regarding sex education.

Table 7 shows the differences between the level of acceptance of elementary school teachers in teaching sex education in terms of years of teaching. The results show that there are no significant differences when analyzed by years of teaching (, with a mean rank of 70.41 for 3-5 years, 71.64 for 6-10 years, and 80.39 for more than 12 years. This means that whether the respondents have years of teaching experience, they have similar perceptions about the acceptance level.

Teachers generally regard sex education favourably Achora et al. [66]. They demonstrate commitment and a willingness to participate in seminars and training to obtain comprehensive and precise knowledge of sex education Adogu & Nwafulume [67]. Consequently, they are competent and dependable in delivering sex education to students effectively. However, teachers dedicate inadequate time to sex education due to a lack of qualified personnel and limited expertise La Bella, [68]; Chaiwongroi et al. [69].

In addition, Ameh [70] states that teachers must be highly competent in teaching sex education because students believe they are the best people to discuss the matter. Goldman [71] emphasized that teachers may be sufficient in teaching if they use, develop, and apply accurate teaching strategies in sex education to assess the learning of the various cognitive levels of the students. Students find it awkward to discuss topics about sex education and the reproductive health of their parents Bikila et al. [72]. To produce educated and competent sex educators, teachers must also have enough teaching experience through seminars and workshops funded by the institution and the school division.

**5. CONCLUSION**

The findings of this study reveal a very high level of acceptance among elementary school teachers in Davao del Sur regarding the implementation of sex education. The respondents demonstrated strong approval, job effectiveness, and confidence, indicating that they are not only supportive of the integration of sex education into the curriculum but also prepared to teach it responsibly and effectively. The balanced gender representation, predominantly experienced teaching force, and wide range of civil statuses among the respondents provide a stable and diverse foundation for the successful implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE).

However, despite the generally high acceptance level, it is important to address several barriers that may hinder the consistent and effective delivery of sex education. Cultural and religious beliefs, lack of formal training, and limited instructional time were cited as significant challenges that may compromise teacher confidence and performance. Teachers’ readiness to implement sex education varies based on their personal background and experience, and while age does not significantly influence acceptance, external factors like community norms and available support systems play a critical role. These must be taken into account to ensure that all educators are equally equipped to handle the subject matter sensitively and confidently.

**6. RECOMMENDATION**

School administrators and the Department of Education should conduct mandatory training programs on Comprehensive Sexuality Education for both new and veteran teachers. This training should address not only the technical knowledge of CSE but also strategies to overcome cultural taboos and personal discomfort, enhancing both content mastery and pedagogical confidence.

Support teachers in overcoming cultural and religious barriers, sex education materials should be designed to be age-appropriate, culturally sensitive, and inclusive. These materials should align with national education policies while being adaptable to local contexts. Involving community stakeholders such as parents and religious leaders may also foster acceptance and reduce resistance.

Educational institutions should strengthen their support systems by ensuring that teaching loads allow time for sex education delivery, providing access to guidance counselors, and reinforcing policies that uphold CSE as a vital component of health and personal development education. Regular monitoring and evaluation should also be in place to assess implementation progress and identify areas needing improvement.

**Ethical Approval:**

As per international standards or university standards written ethical approval has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

**Consent**

As per international standards or university standards, Participants’ written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

**Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence)**

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

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