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Sex Education in Primary Schools an Evaluation of Parents' Perception in Uganda

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Abstract

The article examines sex education in primary schools with an evaluation of parents' perception in Uganda. Specifically, the paper focuses on the factors influencing parents' perception towards sex education to their primary school children. The study adopted a case study design, and data was gathered with the aid of a questionnaire and focus group interview. with a sample drawn from head teachers, deputy head teachers, director of studies, Parents, and teachers' association members as well as School management committee members. (*n*-132) who participated in the study. Results indicated that parents' education level, content within the sex education syllabus, and the ways of imparting sex education are the major factors influencing parents' perception towards sex education to their primary school children in Bulamagi Sub- County in Uganda. The study further revealed that to improve on sex education, there is need to have improved sex education curriculum; presence of competent sex education teachers; teachers to use participatory teaching methods; parents-teachers cooperation; adequate sex education Study materials; proper organization of education system; and empowering parents with information and life skills. The study recommended that the curriculum development division of the ministry of education should develop and ratify a sex education curricular to guide the teaching and learning as well as informing the parents. In addition to training expert educators to pass on such education and training to the children in primary schools. The article made the case that it was important to determine how politics affected the creation of techniques for teaching sex education in schools.

Keywords: Sex Education, Parents' Perception, Factors, Primary Schools, Influencing.

Introduction

From the beginning to the present, the majority of sexuality education has centered on the prohibition of sexually prior to marriage, prevention, and refusal. Children, on the other hand, were deemed asexual, and sexuality instruction was only given to adults (Kenny et al., 2015). p, 400). Adults' ban of sexuality for children, failure to offer children the freedom to express their own sexuality, and refusal to answer children's questions are all seen as symptoms of

disregarding children's sexuality (Espinosa & Barraza, 2021, p. 598). As a result, many children are unable to develop a healthy sexual identity. Due to the impact of cultural framework and ignorance on this problem, it is seen that concerns relating to sexuality are ignored in many countries. Moreover, despite the necessity of pre-school education being highlighted, there is no comprehensive sexuality education available (Ozgun & Capri, 2021, p. 122)

Consistent with the above, the preschool years are crucial for the development of all aspects of behavior, attitudes, and skills. This era, which spans the first six years of life, is critical for acquiring a number of abilities and knowledge, including self-awareness, self-care, sexual identity development, learning social rules, recognizing and expressing emotions, and building interpersonal relationships. Children's sexual development depends on an active sense of curiosity, which is one of the most significant developmental qualities in the preschool age (Kahraman, 2017, p 405). Sexuality is an important role in human development at all stages, it is especially beneficial for youngsters, as it allows them to do various developmental activities in a healthy manner. Children's great attention leads to early childhood active curiosity in birth and sex and as a result, specialist sexuality education should be provided for children's healthy sexual development (Ozgun & Capri, 2021, p. 122; Kahraman, 2017, p. 406.)

Additionally, many obstacles have stood in the way of implementing sexual education for young children, including false cultural ideas, misconceptions, fear, and misinformation (Cacciatore et al., 2020, p. 2) Common concerns in our clinical experience include the belief that children are not fertile and hence do not need to know about sexuality, the belief that any information undermines childhood innocence, and the belief that Sexual Education promotes sexual abuse, promiscuity, sex, or childbearing at a young age (Stone et al., 2013, p.228). Adults use adages like "Let them be kids!" and "Sex and a child do not belong in the same sentence!" to safeguard their children from too-early sex information, which is what they fear Sexual Education to be. Subsequently, this has prompted confusion concerning childhood Sexual Education among both parents and professionals, as well as emotional arguments, hesitancy, and a desire to dismiss the matter (Cacciatore et al., 2019, p. 320; Ketting et al., 2018). As a result, rational talks about children sexual education have been stifled.

In a similar assessment, false perceptions of sex cause parents to place a lower priority on sex education in their children's education. This syndrome is linked to an increase in child maltreatment, violence, and sexual assaults (Awaru, 2020, p.176). Despite the fact that this issue has been debated for a significant period of time, it remains divisive in many cultures in developing countries where most people believe that sex is not something that can be taught, but that it will become apparent as the child grows and develops (Marshall et al., 2020, p.38). Parents have a critical role in their children's sexual education. As such, parents are children's very first main teachers, and the family is their first social milieu. The primary source of socialization is the family. It is based on earlier studies that, in addition to the backing of doctors, educators, and psychiatrists, parents and relatives are the key agents for the propagation of fascinating sexuality. To strengthen this understanding further, Awaru (2020, p.177) argues that family is a location where teenagers should receive sex education.

Efforts to define and assess the success of sex education have been hampered by opposing definitions, goals, and ideologies. When it comes to assessing impact and outcomes, preventative strategies targeted at lowering sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy

rates have dominated research. The main focus of investigation in these prevention programs is sexual behaviors and behavior modification (Lameiras-Fernandez et al., 2021, p.01).

Sexuality education has been defined as a lifetime framework for implementing the acquisition of personal skills such as identity development, communication, decision-making, and accountability, as well as the formation of information, attitude, belief, and value such as affiliation (Awaru et al., 2018, p. 946; Michielsen, 2016). Sexuality education as argued by Ozgun & Capri (2021, p. 124) is an element of general education in schools and training in this area has a direct impact on children's personality development. Schools serve as institutions for the normalization of sexuality concerns to a large extent. The school is the second most significant source of information and guidance for children in sexual education throughout the preschool years, after the family (Ozgun & Capri, 2021, p. 123). The multidimensional character of school-based sexuality education programs in terms of physical, social, mental, emotional, psychological, and intellectual components explains why schools are important for sexuality education.

Besides, sexuality Education (SE) is a key evidence-based intervention to promote adolescent sexual and reproductive health. It aims to "equip young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that will empower them to: realize their health, well-being, and dignity; develop respectful social and sexual relationships; consider how their choices affect their own and others' well-being; and, understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives." Despite overwhelming proof of its importance, Sexuality Education remains a contentious political topic in the developing as well as developed countries (Jarpe-Ratner, 2020, p.284; Goldfarb & Lieberman, 2020). Although some funding is available at the federal level in developed countries such as the United States, there are no national policies mandating the provision of sex education, and most decisions are made at the state or even local level. As a result, the availability of sex education, as well as the quality and scope of the curriculum used to provide it, varies greatly across the country, and is largely influenced by community acceptance or opposition (Wiley et al., 2020, p.54).

Similar to the above argument, any combination of learning experiences aimed at facilitating voluntary behavior conducive to sexual health is referred to as sexual education (Butler et al., 2018, p.150). The delivery of content (abstinence-only vs. complete instruction) by teachers, parents, health practitioners, or community educators during adolescence has centered on the context (within school and outside) of such delivery. In terms of substance, proponents of abstinence-only programs hope to assist young adults avoid unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) by assuming that, while contraception lessens risk, abstinence completely eliminates it.

On the other hand, holistic and comprehensive approaches to sex education, in accordance with internationally established guidelines and the 2030 Agenda go beyond risk behaviors and acknowledge other important aspects such as love, relationships, pleasure, sexuality, desire, gender diversity, and rights (Kirana et al., 2020, p. 1246). Sexuality Education (SE) "plays a crucial role in the preparation of young people for a safe, productive, and meaningful life", and adolescents who receive sex education are more likely to delay sexual initiation and use contraception during sexual initiation (Kirana et al., 2020, p.1248)

UNFPA (2014) stated that in Africa, the responsibility and role of imparting sex education should be shared among community, parents and the schools altogether. This should be done to rescue the adolescents from darkness of suspicious taboos, utter confusions and those prejudices in the changing political, cultural, socio-economic scenario those ruled by on draw from westerner influence and porn pictures of sex abuse. Katchadourian & Lunde (2018), in agreement with the above author(s) on the need of sex education among pupils, they emphasized sex education on ground of better preparing children on sex related health areas, in addition to developing them to become ready for marriage and later parenthood. On the other side, there is considerable controversy and disagreement among parents regarding sex-education because of their different backgrounds. This disagreement and controversy among parents has blocked the programs of sex-education in primary schools; and post primary institutions for long in Sub Saharan Africa. However, with the scientific intervention by United Nations Family Planning Association (UNFPA), and countries like Ghana with the financial aid from UNESCO; a big number of Family Life Education Programs (FLEP) have been emphasized, encouraged and implemented in most parts of Ghana; and most of Sub-Saharan African countries. Additionally, sex education has remained a crucial program before the country(s) in Sub Saharan Africa (Mahajan & Neeru, 2015). From this background, the urgency of sex education programs in primary education across African is paramount; and this should be through proper arrangement of educational systems. Sex education remains of great importance in developing healthy attitudes and perception among the learners in upper primary.

In this regard, ANPPCAN (2011) noted that in East African countries, schoolteachers being more traditional and much orthodox in their social outlook; they do not like getting engaged in imparting and initiating sex education in schools as part of their noble-work (Goldman, 2013, p. 448) In most cases, adolescent learners tend to make their instincts get satisfied through getting mythical and irrelevant information on sex and sex education from various sources. Such sources include household workers, relatives, peer friends, television and radio programs, and other social media sources, to mention but a few. Some of this information from various sources tends to be false (incorrect); thus, have spurious negative consequences on such school going children.

Indeed, Uganda has continued to experience significant reproductive and sexual related health complications; and these include abortion, teenage pregnancy, early or forced marriages; gender-based discrimination, HIV/AIDS pandemic and teasing in some schools. These have henceforth boosted the threats to the rights of children and their access to education. Despite the presence of well documented achievement in knowledge and awareness, increase more especially on reproductive health and sexuality matters with the aid of sex education, the gap in published and other written materials is observed especially those that outline the appropriate guidelines, procedures and required standards to be adopted to provide sex education (Mutoni, 2016). Indeed, a framework which is home that provides adequate information and guidance on matters concerning sex education among children is of paramount importance in protecting the morality of children; in addition to ensuring that such sex education related materials which can appropriately contribute to the country's cultural and socio-economic development aspects (UNFPA, 2014).

As presented by Nabimanya (2018), in 2016, Uganda had a flurry of heated disputes around sex education, which one journalist described as a "raging controversy among the population." After public outcry over reports that students were being taught "homosexuality" in elite schools, notably using a curriculum given by a Dutch assistance group ("At least 100 schools misled," Daily Monitor, 2016), the government outlawed sex education in school and non-school settings. Uganda's Ministry of Education and Sports created its own sex education strategy, the National Sexuality Education Framework (NSEF), in 2018 in response to claims that foreigners were "tricking" local institutions. Despite the fact that the policy looked to please critics by imposing restrictions on same-sex partnerships and encouraging abstinence until marriage, it was generally rejected. District-level political leaders claimed the framework will "ruin the lives of children" destroy a headline that appeared on the main page of Uganda's English-print daily newspapers (Nabimanya, 2018)

Literature Review

According to Katchadourian & Lunde (2018), perception of parents shows and indicates that, they support and favor the teaching of sex education to their children in the primary level. The level of parents' literacy affects their perception towards the imparting and teaching of sex education to children. In this therefore, one can say that parents' education level is not the only factor which has an influence on the parents' perception towards sex education teaching. There are more other factors for instance the family structure, socio-economic status and environment of society, to mention but a few, which has an influence on the perception of parents towards teaching of sex-education. Indeed, parents tend to be the primary and core educators of their sons and daughters, particularly on issues concerning sex education. Thus, in the past, children used to access information concerning sex education more especially from their relatives, friends, grand-parents, parents, and others from the members of the community, which is not the case nowadays. The researcher agrees with the above authors in that parents' literacy level have an influence on imparting sex education in primary schools in Bulamagi Sub-County which the research need to ascertain.

Additionally, the religious and socio-cultural institutions have increasingly been getting involved in promoting the use and application of indigenous and local knowledge on sex related issues; in addition to support from traditional systems/structures in disseminating relevant information. They are also involved in upholding observance of local cultural practices, values and norms which are relevant to sexual related matters. In a similar manner, Kumar (2013) added that religious sectors have been at the forefront of promoting morality. On the other hand, due to presence of western influence and other on-going transformation in the communities, country and the whole world as a result of dynamic changes in national and local circumstances; technological advancement, globalization, and socio-economic development; the country is forced to play a greater work in spearheading matters of sex education among its youth than ever before in history. In practice, sex education content in Ugandan primary schools is less emphasized and supported by both the cultural institutions, school administration and the Ministry of Education and Sports respectively, and the researcher wonders and wants to find out whether this is the case in primary schools in Bulamagi Sub County Besides et al (2016) as well as (Fazio et al., 2020, p.90).

maintain that sex talks or talking about sex is mostly considered as a taboo in most societies of Africa. Children or those pupils cannot freely approach their guardians and parents for reproductive health talks or any other form of guidance in sex related matters (Espinosa & Barraza, 2021, p. 591). Further, those pupils who sometimes seek guidance or help from their

parents tend to not get required information for their satisfaction. This could be as a result that their parents try to evade sex talks and discussions (Iyer & Aggleton, 2013, p.42). In some cases, they are unable to give satisfactory answers to their children. Few pupils keep on gathering information from other sources like published books, films, videos, relatives and friends.

In addition, beliefs have been explored from numerous perspectives in this regard. People's lives are shaped by their ideas, which are placed ahead of their seen reality. They are usually not consciously aware of themselves, but they act invisibly. When someone sincerely believes in something, they don't have to state it explicitly; their ideas are just integrated. Furthermore, according to psychologists' beliefs are a person's subjective probability assessments about some aspect of their world; they relate with the subjects' understanding of themselves and their surroundings. In a similar vein, Dez (2016, p.132) claims that believe is a psychological concept that refers to the desire to act as if one's beliefs are true.

In support of the above, Nozawa (2018) notes that parents, guardians and teachers act as a main source to provide sex knowledge in only 16.3% of urban educated populace in most developing countries in Africa. Looking at the above statistics, it is clear that young generation in Sub Saharan Africa have to be provided with relevant knowledge and information in regard to sex and other related issues (Fazio et al., 2020, p.90). This should be accomplished in schools by implementing sex education programs. In this regard, sex education has been emphasized in schools with the goal of promoting the growth and development of children to have positive feelings for sex; as well as instilling in children the truth that love is required to nourish trust and love; and ensuring that feelings that interfere with sex and love do not pile up inside the health and minds of students. The researcher agrees with the above authors in that education stakeholders in primary schools in Uganda especially parents and teachers have emphasized teaching of sex education in some schools; however, some schools do not have proper coordination among various school stakeholders towards imparting of sex education in primary schools in Bulamagi Sub County which the research needed to ascertain. In addition, according to Otago (2016), family norms, values, communication, and information about a variety of sex education tactics used in society, schools, and households influence parents' perspectives (Iyer & Aggleton 2013, p.42). Parents tend to worry a lot about the presence of too much information provided to their children that could not all be genuine and right; others about providing too little to their children that could mislead them in the forthcoming future. Children nowadays are routinely exposed to sex and sex information in society, particularly through entertainment, to the point where healthy sex education has become critical for them (Fazio et al., 2020, p.90). For example, in the case of abstinence until marriage, which should be ideal for many, parents are unrealistic in neglecting the fact that adolescents are more likely to become sexually active in their mid-teens. In this regard, appropriate preparation on managing family life, in which they choose not to accept or comply with adolescent regulations, is a smart 'risk management' technique for caregivers, which might easily be accomplished through sex education. Unfpa (2014) noted that adolescence tend to be a time for one to grow independence. Children usually choose a different path to that of their parents in their social lifetime style. Parents express their fear of losing their child if they agree to retain their abstinence position in the face of their child's decision to engage in a sexual relationship; sex education could clearly explain all of these gaps. Schools tend to fill the knowledge gap that is left for children, particularly if they are

unable to interact successfully with their caregivers or, in certain situations, feel estranged from their parents.

Additionally, Ocrum (2021, p.154) underscores the fact that there is also the presence of inadequate written and well documented materials that deal with standards for providing sex education. In addition to the financing issue, there is a shortage of comprehensive teaching resources to assist teachers in integrating sexual education to specific circumstances (Keogh et al., 2020). After non-state actors quit financing arrangements, the sustainability of sex education programs is also jeopardized due to a lack of constant support from government sources. This has an impact on consistency and proper resource allocation to enable instructors to offer sex education effectively. There is also a scarcity of rigorous impact evaluations that teachers might use to build an evidence base for future programs (Ogolla and Ondia, 2019, p.112). In this sense, various written materials and other printed available documents, primarily those generated outside Uganda, are either fully or partially adopted to cover and match the country's local context; and this is done without the government's acceptance, approval, or knowledge. Some of these written materials fail to take into account Uganda's cultural, traditional, and religious beliefs, which can make it difficult for parents to allow schools to teach their children sex education because they are afraid of learning or acquiring more dangerous information that could lead them to engage in early sexual activity (Young et al., 2019). All the above underscore the desired need for the national procedures and framework which should provide streamlined guidelines on coverage and scope covering sex education to all the youth in educational sectors in Uganda; and this should be done irrespective of different religious, cultural and social backgrounds. Therefore, this study bridged this information gap necessary for the general public (Otage, 2016)

Methods

A case study design was adopted for the study (Shaban et al., 2017, p.19). This study's case involved a current complex functional aspect that was evaluated in its natural setting. And to ensure that there was a thick description this study considered multiple cases (Larrinaga, 2017, p.149) where Head teachers, deputy head teachers, director of studies and Sex Education teachers, PTA and SMC representatives purposively selected from the four selected primary schools which were considered as the multiple cases in this study. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were also used for this study. With the qualitative research approach, the researchers believed that this would allow the researchers to have a full understanding of social behavior in order to collect a thorough and exhaustive interpretation of the research participants' viewpoints. In addition to Inductive techniques generally being classified qualitative since they are founded on the belief that reality is socially created, and gathered facts entailed an insider's perspective (Edwards & Brannelly, 2017, p.272). While the quantitative approach utilized statistical, mathematical strategies to verify observable facts (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2013). The study was conducted in Bulamogi sub-county in the Eastern district of Iganga and the sample of 132 participants was drawn determined by Krejcie & Morgan (1970) table of determining the sample given the population of 200.

Data Quality Control

The validity of the questionnaire was determined during the pilot phase by calculating Cronbach's alpha using SPSS. Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency and was suitable for multi-item scales such as the ones that were used in the questionnaire. The alpha

coefficient of reliability that was 0.7 and above for the instrument was regarded reliable and accepted for the study. To safeguard the trustworthiness and rigor of the focus group interview findings, 'three constructs namely credibility, dependability and transferability were considered' Several data gathering approaches, such as a questionnaire and focus group interviews, were used to establish credibility in this study (Moser & Korstjens, 2018:124). Peer debriefing was also defined as the act of asking peers questions regarding the research process in order to augment the analysis and interpretation (Pelto, 2017, p.242; Johnson et al., 2017, p.6). In this study, Member checking was an element of the data gathering procedure that occurred throughout the inquiry and involved playing back recorded data to participants for reactions and correctness verification (Thomas, 2017, p.30). Additionally, to ensure dependability, the researchers detailed the study design and operation, including methodologies and technique, data collection specifics such as field notes, and reflexive review to reduce bias and increase study transparency (Moser & Korstjens, 2018, p.123). The researcher increased dependability by keeping track of all code resolutions between participants as well as using memos to track changes in the due process (Reis et al., 2017, p.286). Furthermore, audio recordings and documented explanations of the participants' accounts of the frameworks of each study portion, as well as audit logs of the data sources that contextualize the results during reporting on every non-numeric element of the research, aided transferability (Cleland, 2017, p.68; Guba, 1981, p. 80).

Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

Close ended Questionnaires as well as focus group interviews were administered to the participants which gathered both qualitative and quantitative data. A Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 20 was used to derive descriptive data through a table illustrating the mean and standard deviation while inferential statistics were a regression model analysis and the F-ratio. The qualitative data was analyzed by gathering field notes and recordings which were examined and coded to ensure accuracy, consistency and completeness. pattern's themes and theme categories were also generated and handled thematically while observing patterns qualitative data was presented with verbatim.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers sought ethical clearance from the Uganda Christian University Research Ethics committee, (UCUREC), an accredited Research Ethics committee of the National council for science technology and sports (UNCST) further administrative clearance was also sought from the four gate passes or primary schools to access participants. written consent in acceptance to participate in the study was also obtained from the participants with guarantee to ensure that they are anonymous with utmost confidentiality ensured.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1

Descriptive statistics of factors influencing parents’ perception towards sex education to their children in selected primary schools in Bulamagi Sub-County

Descriptive Statistics

Factors influencing parents’ perception towards sex education to their children	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Parents education level influences their perception towards sex education in schools	81	4.8642	.34471
The content within the sex education syllabus influences parents’ perception towards sex education	81	4.6296	.48591
The teaching methods employed by teachers influence parents’ perception towards sex education	81	4.5802	.49659
The availability of sex educational materials influences the parents’ perception towards sex education	81	4.5309	.50216
Myths and misbelieve influence parents’ perception towards sex education in primary school	81	4.4074	.58689
Cultural beliefs and taboos influence parents’ perception towards sex education in primary school	81	4.4321	.49845
Ways of imparting sex education in primary school’s influence parents’ perception towards it	81	4.3333	.52440
Ignorance has an influence on parents’ perception towards sex education in primary schools	81	4.2593	.64765
Western influence has an influence on parents’ perception towards sex education in primary schools	81	4.1111	.72457
Religious affiliation and beliefs influence parents’ perception towards sex education in primary schools	81	3.1235	1.15523
Valid N (list wise)	81		

Source: Primary data, 2021

Findings from the table 1 indicate that on average parents agreed to the fact that parents’ education level influences their perception towards sex education in schools as depicted by mean score of 4.8642 and standard deviation of 0.34471. In relation to the above, FGB005 participants noted that,

Most of our parents most especially those with limited exposure especially those who did not take studies at a higher-level look at sex education to be unhealthy education program to their children...they consider it as immoral and going to negatively affect their children upbringing since they shall be exposed to sex information at an early stage of development instead of waiting for them to grow.

This could mean that sex education is unwelcomed education program by parents and most of those parents tend to criticize it basing on incomplete information or hearsays.

They lack adequate information concerning sex education in general, that is, its content, how it's taught and its relevant benefits.

Findings further indicated that on average parents agreed that the content within the sex education syllabus influences their perception towards sex education as shown by means score of 4.6296 and standard deviation of 0.48591. In relation to the above, FGA002 participants noted that,

Content within the sex education syllabus has encouraged parents to support willingly the teaching of sex education; however, this has been welcomed to the small population (parents) especially those who were able to access information of the sex education syllabus composition.

The finding above is strengthened by Awaru (2020, p.179) who argue that teenagers are expected to obtain true, clear, and accurate knowledge of sexual life, such as reproductive organs and their functions and treatments, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), healthy sexual behavior. This means that limited number of parents who have been able to understand and access the sex education packages; they have been willingly supporting sex education programs in primary schools, compared to their counterparts, who are the majority of populace.

Results further revealed that on average parents agreed that the teaching methods employed by teachers influence parents' perception towards sex education as shown by the mean score of 4.5802 and standard deviation of 0.49659. In support of the above participant FGA008 noted that,

Parents have bias on the sex education methods of teaching applied by teaching staff and this have a great influence on parents' perception towards sex education. In some cases, parents fear of teachers to use vulgar words which are shameful and not good to be used in teaching such young generation.

This implies that parents have a fear of teachers to use complicated words in teaching sex education that may be later used by their children within a society. Much as the above is observed, Brayboy et al (2018) argue that the internet is now becoming a more vital source of knowledge and assistance on these subjects. Adolescents in high-income nations have almost ubiquitous access to the internet. Children and teens spend a lot of time on the internet because of the prevalence and accessibility of digital platforms, and the primary goal of health-related internet use is the search for information. The challenge comes with the regulation of what content they exactly read. At the same time, given the ease of access, availability, low cost, and capacity to participate remotely, this widespread use of technology by young people opens up exciting prospects for sexual health education initiatives.

The findings further indicated that on average parents agreed that the availability of sex educational materials influence the parents perception towards sex education; myths and misbelieve influence parents perception towards sex education in primary school; cultural beliefs and taboos influence parents perception towards sex education in primary school; and ways of imparting sex education in primary schools influences parents perception towards it as indicated by; Mean =4.5309, SD = 0.50216; Mean =4.4074, SD=0.58689; Mean = 4.4321,

SD = 0.49845, and Mean = 4.333, SD = 0.52440 respectively. In relation to the above Participant FGID002 noted that,

The availability of sex education teaching-learning materials in most primary schools encourages and motivates parents to support the teaching of sex education.

This implies that parents have not fully supported sex education in most primary schools, and this is because of inadequate sex education materials available there thus creating fear on the appropriateness of effective teaching-learning of the subject content. This finding is consistent with Ocrum (2021, p.154) who argue that there is a shortage of comprehensive teaching tools to assist teachers in adapting sexual education to specific circumstances, he further reveals that the sustainability of sex education programs is also jeopardized due to a lack of constant support from government sources which has an impact on consistency and proper resource allocation to enable instructors to offer sex education effectively.

More to the above, participant FGIC007 further noted that,
..hmnnn this is weird. How do you expect a parent to be vulgar to her child at such an early age? How will you teach sex education without calling a spade a spade? It's against the culture are you not aware...? That is a taboo. Some cultures do not believe in exchange of sex health matters with young children below the age of 18, which are the most in primary schools, looking at it as a program going to mislead their children at an early stage of development.

This means that sex education is imparted to those children who are mature (above 18years), so that they can easily differentiate good from bad. The results here strongly speak to Diez (2016, p.132); Fazio et al (2020, p.90); Iyer & Aggleton (2013, p.42) as well as (Espinosa & Barraza, 2021, p. 591).

Results also revealed that on average parents agreed to the fact that; ignorance has an influence on parents' perception towards sex education in primary schools as shown by the mean score of 4.2592 and standard deviation of 0.64765; and that western influence has an influence on parents' perception towards sex education in primary schools as indicated by mean score and standard deviation of 4.1111 = 072457. In relation to the above one participant FGIA002 noted that,

Ignorance of parents has contributed to their less information and knowledge on the sex education. They lack knowledge on how it is imparted, the subject content and its significance to the children, which greatly influences their perception.

This means that those parents without adequate information concerning sex education, less support and encourage the teaching of sex education in primary schools. To emphasize more the role of western influence and religious beliefs on parents' perception towards sex education in primary schools. Participant FGIB003 stated that.

Parents tend to look at sex education as a westerner and being imparted to us (Africans) so as to change our cultural, moral and social beliefs and proper child upbringing.

This means that some of the parent’s sections look at sex education as such external programs being fully funded in developing countries like homosexuals in a long-term consequence to tarnish the name of Africans and make us lose our moral values in the long run.

On average parents were not sure whether religious affiliation and beliefs influence parents’ perception towards sex education in primary schools as indicated by a mean of 3.1235 and Standard deviation of 1.15523.

Regression Analysis

To determine the level of prediction and significance of the factors influencing parents’ perception towards sex education to their children in selected primary schools in Bulamagi Sub-County; the researcher used a regression model analysis and the F-ratio to determine specific significance levels of factors influencing parents’ perception. The researcher used the time spent in this school as the predictor in the regression model as presented below.

Table 2
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.931 ^c	.866	.843	.23481

According to the results in the table 2 above, the Adjusted R Square value of 0.843 implies that the weighted combination of all the predictor variables explains approximately 84.3% of the variance in the factors influencing parents’ perception towards sex education to children in selected primary schools.

Table 3
ANOVA^d

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	24.276	12	2.023	36.692	.000 ^c
Residual	3.749	68	.055		
Total	28.025	80			

From the ANOVA table, the prediction model was statistically significant, $F(12, 68) = 36.692$, $p\text{ value} < 0.000$. This means that the model was goodness of fit.

Table 4

The factors influencing parents' perception towards sex education to primary school children in Bulamagi Sub-County in Uganda.

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	-.310	.134		-2.321	.023	-.576	-.043
	Parents education level	.710	.122	.413	5.806	.000	.466	.954
	The content within the sex education syllabus	.500	.108	.373	4.635	.000	.285	.715
	The teaching methods employed by teachers	-1.912-14	.271	.000	.000	1.000	.541	.541
	The availability of sex educational materials	.230	.146	.228	1.575	.120	-.061	.521
	Myths and misbelieve	-.95	.254	-.080	-.373	.711	-.601	.412
	Cultural beliefs and taboos	-.261	.152	-.220	-1.717	.091	-.564	.042
	Ways of imparting sex education	.201	.082	.246	2.445	.017	.037	.365
	Ignorance	1.464E-14	.179	.000	.000	1.000	-.358	.358
	Western influence	-.074	.168	-.061	-.443	.659	-.409	.260
	Religious affiliation and beliefs	.029	0.114	.032	.259	.796	-.198	.257
		-.129	.145	-.114	-.888	.377	-.418	.160

Dependent Variable: length of time in the school

Predictors: (Constant), the factors influencing parents' perception towards sex education to primary schools children in Bulamagi Sub-County include parents' education level, the content within the sex education syllabus; the teaching methods employed by teachers; the availability of sex educational materials; myths and misbelieve; cultural beliefs and taboos; ways of imparting sex education; ignorance, western influence and religious affiliation and beliefs influence parents perception towards sex education in primary schools.

Based on the coefficients of this model, the findings of the study offer evidence for the positive and significant relationship between Parents education level and parents' perception towards sex education to primary school children ($B=0.710$, $P<0.001$). This implies that a unit change in parents education level leads to 0.710 change in parents' perception towards sex education to primary school children.

A positive and significant relationship also exist between the content within the sex education syllabus and parents' perception towards sex education to primary school children ($B=0.5$, $P<0.001$). This implies that a unit change in the content within the sex education syllabus leads to 0.5 change in parents' perception towards sex education to primary school children.

A positive and significant relationship also exist between the ways of imparting sex education and parents' perception towards sex education to primary school children ($B=0.201$, $P<0.05$). This implies that a unit change in the ways of imparting sex education leads to 0.201 change in parents' perception towards sex education to primary school children.

All the other factors portrayed an insignificant relationship.

Correlation Analysis

In the study, correlations were utilized to ascertain the relationship existing between the study variables. The correlation was distinctively helpful in order to get preliminary insights into the link between parents' perception and the various dependent variables under sex education; that is, career guidance, classroom teaching, remedial classes, face-to-face discussions and group discussions. The control variables were also included in the relationship to show how they are correlated with the crucial variables of interest before inclusion in the regression analysis.

The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was used to establish the relationship between parents' perception and sex education to primary schools' children in Bulamagi Sub-County, as follows.

Table 5

The relationship between parents' perception and sex education to primary schools' children in Bulamagi Sub-County

CORRELATION		PARENTS' PERCEPTION	SEX EDUCATION
PARENTS' PERCEPTION	PERSON CORRELATION	1.000	0.79.3**
	SIG. (2. TAILED)	-	.012
	N	81	81
Sex education	PEARSON CORRELATION	0.79.3**	1.000
	SIG. (2-TAILED)	.012	-
	N	81	81
** CORRELATION IS SIGNIFICANT AT THE 0.05 LEVEL (2-TAILED).			

Source: Analysis of data, 2021

The results revealed a significant positive relationship between parents' perception and sex education to their children in selected schools at primary level in Bulamagi Sub-County, ($r = 0.79.3^{**}$, Sig. = .012). The Pearson coefficient r reflects the degree of linear relationship between the two variables, it ranges from negative one and positive one that is $-1 \leq r \leq 1$. If $r=0$, then, there is no relationship between the two variables, if r ranges between $+/-0.1$ to $+/-0.4$ the relationship is weak, if r ranges between $+/-0.4$ to $+/-0.6$ the relationship is moderate and if r lies between $+/-0.6$ to $+/-0.9$ the relationship is strong. Besides if $r=+/-1$ there is perfect relationship between the two variables. However, since the correlation coefficient ($r=0.79.3^{**}$) lies between $+/-0.6$ to $+/-0.9$ the researcher concluded that parents' perception and sex education to primary school children are significantly correlated.

Discussion

The study aimed to identify the factors influencing parents' perception towards sex education to primary school children in Bulamagi Sub-County.

The study findings revealed that academic exposure levels influence their perception towards sex education to primary school children. This particular result is energized by Mutoni (2016) who noted that sex education is an unwelcomed education program by parents and most of those parents tend to criticize it basing on incomplete information and hearsays. Experts agree that most parents lack adequate information concerning sex education in general, specifically in terms of content, and the way its imparted or taught as well as its benefits. Besides, Katchadourian & Lunde (2018) in supplement, argues that the level of parents' literacy affects their perception towards the imparting and teaching of sex education to children. Parents consider it as an immoral aspect with significant effect to their children upbringing once they are exposed to sex information at an early stage of development.

The sex education syllabi were also proved to be influencing parental perception towards sex education of their children, Muzaale & Sabano (2016) sustains that a limited number of parents who have been able to understand and access the sex education packages; have been willingly supporting sex education programs in primary schools, compared to their counterparts, who are the majority of populace. In a similar manner, Kumar (2013) further nails it that content within the sex education syllabus has encouraged parents to support willingly the imparting of knowledge of sex education; On the other hand, this has been welcomed to the small population (parents) especially those who were able to access information of the sex education syllabus composition.

The mode of delivery of sex education employed by the instructors or knowledge experts influences parents' perception towards sex education. Ahimbisibwe (2016) maintained that different teaching methodologies and written materials and other printed available documents, mainly those that are developed from outside Uganda tend to be either wholly or partially adopted to cover and fit the local context of the country; and this is done without the acceptance, approval and knowledge of the government. In this sense, the methods of teaching applied by academic professionals have a great influence on parents' perception towards sex education. In some cases, parents fear that teachers use vulgar words which are shameful and not good to be used in teaching such young generation.

The findings further indicated that the availability of sex educational materials influences the parents' perception towards sex education; myths and misbelieve influence parents' perception towards sex education in primary school; cultural beliefs and taboos influence parents' perception towards sex education in primary school; and ways of imparting sex education in primary schools' influence parents' perception towards it. In support of the

above, Nozawa (2018) notes that parents have not fully supported sex education in most primary schools and this is as a result of inadequate sex education materials available there thus creating fear on the appropriateness of effective teaching-learning of the subject content.

More to the above, it was noted that some parents do not like teaching of sex education and this is as a result of their cultural beliefs and taboos. This concurs with Hovell (2014) who argued that sex education is still looked at and/or considered to be equal to a taboo and complicated subject of study in most societies. Besides, Muzaale & Sabano (2016) further reveal that sex education is considered to be imparted to those children who are mature (above 18years), so that they can easily differentiate good from bad. This means that some cultures do not believe in exchange of sex health matters with young children below the age of 18, who are the most in primary schools, looking at it as a program going to mislead their children at an early age.

Implications

This study could contribute to the growth of research connected to Variables of parents' perceptions regarding sexual education for primary school children in bulamagi sub-county, Uganda on a conceptual level. The findings of this study could contribute to the current literature on sex education for academic audiences, particularly those interested in filling up the gaps identified by this study.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that three major factors have a significant and positive influence on parent's perception towards sex education to primary schools. The three factors are Parents education level, content within the sex education syllabus, and the ways of imparting sex education. All the other factors portrayed an insignificant relationship in Bulamagi Sub-County, according to the findings.

Recommendations

It is suggested that a well-designed and updated sex education curriculum tailored for primary schools be developed. In this regard, stressing the usage of well-designed sex education curriculum in elementary schools could assist teachers in efficiently imparting sex education content, making it easier for students to understand. It is also suggested that educated and competent sex education trainers be engaged. In this regard, competent and certified sex education educators who can effectively implement the curriculum are needed to improve sex education teaching in elementary schools.

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