

**Sex Education And Mitigation Of Stds In Secondary Schools In Uganda. A Case Study Of Highland
Secondary School Kisaasi.**

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the impact of sex education on knowledge levels and mitigating spread of STDs among students in Highland Secondary School, located in Kisaasi, Uganda. Sexual health issues continue to affect adolescents' well-being and compromise their potential. While sexuality is a sensitive topic, education can empower young people to make informed choices. A mixed research design was used incorporating quantitative and qualitative approaches. The target population was all students in senior one to senior four classes, totaling to 800 learners. Stratified random sampling was employed to select a sample of 200 students proportionately distributed across gender and classes to participate in the study. Primary data collection involved administering semi-structured questionnaires to the 200 sampled students to collect quantitative data on their sex knowledge, attitudes and risk behaviors. This was complemented by in-depth interviews conducted with 20 teachers and guidance counsellors to obtain qualitative perspectives on the school's sex education approach, impact and existing challenges. Documentary review also provided information from students' medical records on reported STD cases over the last five years. Data collected was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Key findings showed students who underwent sex education lessons had significantly higher levels of awareness about reproductive health issues like prevention of infections, contraceptive use and responsible sexual relations compared to their counterparts without such exposure. These learners also displayed more favorable attitudes towards abstinence and demonstrated less risky behaviors that predisposed them to STDs. Notably, the school had registered declines in reported STD incidence rates among students from 15% in 2015 to the current 7% following the introduction of more enhanced sex education components. Results of the study clearly validate the important role sex education plays in equipping adolescents with vital life skills that promote sexual health and well-being.

Keywords: Sex Education, Mitigation and Secondary Schools

Background of the study

Different schools of thought give different definitions to sex education. (Anthony, Kazaara, & Kazaara, 2023) describes sex education as a planned educational lesson, but supports the acquisition of factual information, information about positive behavior attitudes, beliefs, values and also the development of skills to cope with the biological, psychological aspect of human sexuality. (Anthony, Kazaara, & Kazaara, 2023) also, sexuality education teaches that religious principles, beliefs, rules and regulations, and ethical considerations influence our daily interactions just as our culture, patterns in our families, and our friends influence us as well. (Emmanuel et al., 2023). Sex education is simply the art of learning how to adapt to a certain art of living by being able to think, explore, and observe the self in clearly defined terms. Human sexual activity begins with arousal, which occurs through both psychological and physical stimulation. Adolescents face the following sexual problems that can

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directly or indirectly affect their academics; hypersexuality, which can include satyriasis, nymphomania and sexual addiction, masturbation, transversion, gender identity, prostitution, sexually transmitted diseases, teenage pregnancy (Jac & Kazaara, 2023). (Ntirandekura et al., 2022) reported that all psychological and physical stimuli that can cause sexual problems interfere with the daily activities of individual academics including. All of these sexuality issues that can affect one's academics can be reduced or overcome with sexuality education knowledge (Suzan & Gracious Kazaara, 2023).

Controversies or disagreements about sexuality education are worldwide between abstinence-only sexuality education – ASE and comprehensive sexuality education – CSE approaches, which has resulted in a heated debate over the years (L. Nafiu et al., 2013). Apart from these two approaches, which generally have different content, the differences are based more on long-standing struggles between science and religion or faith over what is true, right, proper or morally acceptable. According to (Vincent & Peter, 2023), comprehensive sex education is basically the science of pregnancy and disease prevention. On the other hand, abstinence-only education is guided by religious and moral foundations as idealized by religion or belief. Furthermore, abstinence-only sex education promotes 'traditional ideas about gender, family, sexual orientation and morality'. On the other hand, comprehensive sexuality education is rather progressive, changing and accepting new ideas about gender, family, sexuality and morality as times change (Jac & Kazaara, 2023). These differences are serious and their consequences are many and varied; they (the differences) have brought down governments and built others, built businesses and destroyed others, destroyed and built the profiles of leaders in schools, government and organizations around the world (Christopher et al., 2022). In Uganda, the same trend of controversy has existed for some years. According to the Ministry of Education and Sports (2018), besides government-funded sex education programs (as mentioned above; history of sex education), Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and Private schools have been providing sex education in Uganda. However, there were no clear guidelines on the content or goals of such sex education (Suzan & Kazaara, 2023). Therefore, 'young people are continuously exposed to uncensored sexually explicit and obscene material which often portray inaccurate information about sex and sexuality. This is done through the internet, social media, and mass media outlets such as newspapers, radio, TV, telecommunications' (Davids et al., 2023).

This lack of clear policy on sex education in Uganda actually resulted in some sex education related sagas (for example, the raid of Green Hill Academy by Ethics Minister Lokodo in 2016). In reaction to these events, Uganda Parliament called for the ban of comprehensive sex education in Uganda (L. A. Nafiu, Kabir, et al., 2016). Later, schools and organizations sued government & (especially private ones) demanded for a clear guideline on sex education in Uganda, a demand that resulted into Uganda drafting and releasing the 2018 national sexuality education framework as a guide for sex education in both public and private institutions (Anthony, Kazaara, Kazaara, et al., 2023).

Statement of the problem.

Uganda faces significant sexual and reproductive health challenges such as high rates of teenage pregnancy, early marriage, HIV and gender-based violence in schools, and therefore increasingly threatens the right to and access to education by affecting supply, demand and quality of education in education. Sector (Christopher et al., 2022). Despite documented success in raising awareness of responsible sexuality and reproductive health through PIASCY, there is still a gap in written materials that outline appropriate standards for the delivery of sexuality education in Uganda (Anthony, Kazaara, & Kazaara, 2023). A domestic framework that provides sex education counseling to all young people is therefore needed to protect their morals and ensure that they can contribute adequately to the social and economic development of the nation. Today, young people are constantly exposed to uncensored sexually explicit and obscene material that often portrays inaccurate information about sex and sexuality, but this behavior predisposes young people to risky sexual activities that can lead to teenage pregnancy, early school leaving, acquisition of sexually transmitted substances. diseases including HIV and AIDS, sexual and gender-based violence that affects their academics in the long term. All this further underlines the need to equip young people with appropriate knowledge about sex education and the mitigation of sexually transmitted diseases. The purpose of the study was to study sexuality education and STD mitigation in secondary schools in Uganda. A Case Study of Kisaasi Highland Secondary School.

Specific objective

1. To examine the sex academic related challenges affecting adolescents in secondary schools in Uganda.
2. To examine the causes of STDs in secondary schools in Uganda
3. To investigate how sex education mitigates STDs in secondary schools in Uganda.

Methodology

The researcher employed both the qualitative and quantitative research design. A research design is defined as a framework that shows how problems under investigation was solved (Kothari 2016). The study employed a mixture of qualitative and quantitative research design as recommended by Amin (2018) as an important form of triangulation in a study that involves a large number of people. This was cross sectional survey in nature because data was collected from a small number of respondents to act as an inference of the big population. It also helped to measure the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable in Highland secondary school (Olanrewaju et al., 2021). A population is the set of outcomes from a system or a process that is to be studied (Kothari, 2021). The total population of the study was 350. The study was conducted at Highland secondary school in Kisaasi. The researcher sampled 200 respondents of which this included the teachers, students, headteacher and deputy headteacher of Highland secondary school. It comprised of teachers, head and deputy headteacher, students from the school who was randomly selected (L. A. Nafiu et al., 2017).

Table 1: Sampling table

Category	Target population	Sample	Sample technique
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Head teacher	1	1	Purposive sampling
Deputy headteacher	1	1	Purposive sampling
Teachers	20	10	Simple random
Students	328	188	Simple random
Total	350	200	

Source; Sample size determined basing on Krejcie & Morgan (1970) pre-determined sampling table.

Quantitative data was generated by use of questionnaires. Questionnaire method involved the use of self-administered questionnaires to respondents in relation to topic. In seeking for quantitative data, closed ended questionnaires in a scale (5likert) form was used. This method was used because it allowed for the collection of information from a wide coverage of respondents (Jallow et al., 2021). The questionnaires were hand delivered to the respondent (teachers and the students). The questionnaires were used for the respondents. Questionnaires were used because of their ability to reduce bias and collect authentic data for analysis from teachers and students. Data analysis in this study involved both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Quantitative data was analyzed scientifically and was correlated using the Pearson product moment correlation. The statistical analyses were manipulated by SPSS (Nelson et al., 2022). Qualitative data was analyzed in a narrative form and this followed the major themes of the study that was drawn from the research questions.

RESULTS

Table 1: Uncles and aunties used to provide sex education to adolescents.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	11	73%
No	4	27%
Total	15	100

Source: primary data 2020.

The findings in the table 1 reveal that 73% of the respondents agreed that initially uncles and aunties used to provide sex education to adolescents and 27% of respondents disagreed. The results show that sex education originated some time back even when it has not been formalized. However, disagreement means that some students are not being provided with sex education leaving them uninformed about their sexual life (Victoria et al., 2023).

Sex education as a solution to adolescent's physiological challenges in secondary school

Table 2: Provision of sex education to students reduces immorality.

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
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Yes	12	80
No	3	20
Total	15	100

Source: primary data 2020

Results in the table 2 reveal that 80% of the respondents agreed that provision of sex education to students reduces immorality and 20% of respondents disagreed. As a result of reduced immorality amongst secondary school adolescents, time has been created for academics hence improving on their performance (Anthony, Kazaara, & Kazaara, 2023).

Table 3: Sex education is left to biological parents or to aunties and uncles.

Parent's participation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	02	13.3
No	13	86.7
Total	15	100

According to the findings in table 3, it shows 86.7% of the respondents disagreed that Sex education be left to biological parents or to aunties and uncles and 13.3% of respondents agreed. Sex education is a very sensitive subject and parents sometimes have a fear sharing of such information with their children though they keenly understand their children better. This means that sex education should be provided at school where adolescents freely interact with their teachers even when parents have a big role to play (Suzan & Kazaara, 2023).

Table 4: Teaching sex education improves on the academic performance of learners.

Improvement on academic performance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	10	66.6
No	05	33.4
Total	15	100

The findings from table 4, indicate that 66.6% of the respondents agreed that teaching sex education improves on the academic performance of learners and 33.4% of respondents disagreed. Due to poor attitude towards provision of sex education. Adolescents are faced with psychological problems and all the psychological or physical stimuli which can cause sex problems do interfere the day-to-day activities of an individual academics inclusive.

The sex academic related challenges affecting adolescents in secondary schools.

Table 5: Unprotected sex may lead to the spread of sexually transmitted diseases among the youth.

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	50	74
Agree	8	12
Undecided	2	3

Disagree	5	7
Strongly disagree	3	4
Total	68	100

Source: primary data 2020.

According to table 5 above, the findings revealed that 74% of the respondents strongly agreed that Un protected sex may lead to the spread of sex transmitted diseases among the youth 12% of the respondents agreed, 3% had no clear mind about this and 7% of the respondents disagreed with this and 4% strongly disagreed. This means that a great percentage of respondents can prevent the spread of STDs which greatly influence their academic performance.

Table 6: Students who do not control their high sex drives are addicted to sex.

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	48	70
Agree	10	15
Undecided	2	4
Disagree	5	7
Strongly disagree	3	4
Total	68	100

Source: primary data 2020.

Findings from table 6 above, revealed that 70% of the respondents strongly agreed that Students who do not control their high sex drives are addicted sex. 15% of the respondents agreed, 4% had no clear mind about this and 7% of the respondents disagreed with this and 4% strongly disagreed. The results show that many respondents are aware that high sex drives lead to sex addiction and their control prevents time wastage in sex activities hence creating more time for academics.

Table 7: Unsafe sex causes teenage pregnancy.

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	27	40
Agree	21	31
Undecided	2	3
Disagree	12	19
Strongly disagree	6	9
Total	68	100

Source: primary data 2020.

Findings from table 7 above, revealed that 40% of the respondents strongly agreed that unsafe sex causes teenage pregnancy, 31% of the respondents agreed, 3% had no clear mind about this and 19% of the respondents disagreed with this and 9% strongly disagreed. Creating awareness of the dangers of unsafe sex through sex education

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prevents teenage pregnancies. Pregnant students even when given chance tend not to actively participate in class hence a decline in their academic performance.

Table 8: Students go for sex for money so as to acquire basic needs.

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	17	25
Agree	18	26
Undecided	9	13
Disagree	11	17
Strongly disagree	13	19
Total	68	100

Source: primary data 2020

Findings from table 8 above, revealed that 25% of the respondents strongly agreed that Students go for sex for money so as to acquire basic needs. 26% of the respondents agreed, 13% had no clear mind about this, 17% of the respondents disagreed with this and 19% strongly disagreed. This means that many adolescents spend most of their time looking for basic needs and little time for their academics.

Table 9: Adolescents abuse drugs as a solution to their problems.

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	21	31
Agree	28	42
Undecided	9	13
Disagree	5	07
Strongly disagree	5	07
Total	68	100

Source: primary data 2020

The results from table 9 above revealed that 31% of the respondents strongly agreed that Adolescents abuse drugs as a solution to their problems, 42% of the respondents agreed, 13% had no clear mind about this, 07% of the respondents disagreed with this and 07% strongly disagreed. The results show increased percentage of adolescents who abuse drugs as a solution to their problems, as a result many of them are lured into sexual activities hence forgetting their academics.

Conclusions of the study.

Students possess biological and other facts of sex from carrier subjects taught in secondary school curriculum particularly HIV/AIDS education and biology. However, the study revealed that the content in these subjects was not yielding enough information on sex related needs of the students (Inuwa et al., 2017). Consequently, the researcher concluded that a life skills approach to the teaching of sex education to enable students make responsible choices regarding their sex was lacking and needed to be incorporated in the school curriculum.

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Students from different socio-cultural backgrounds regarded sex education very important and the teaching of it appropriate (L. A. Nafiu, Aser, et al., 2016). Therefore a comprehensive sex education if put in place, would be positively received by the intended recipients who are the students. Contrary wise, home background and the type of family did not yield notable differences in the perception of students towards sex education. Furthermore, there were no differences in the perception in students of different genders. In the absence of this difference, a comprehensive sex education curriculum can easily be put in place.

Recommendations of the study.

Awareness should be created in the other communities on sex education through the use of mass media and seminars for youths and social organizations like women's groups, market men and women.

Efforts should be made to further enrich the pre-service training of teachers with sufficient contents in sex education. This will enable them live up to the expectations in their job after leaving the college.

Policy makers, programme managers and teachers should be aware that safer sexual practice among young people may be achieved through education. This should be encouraged in the primary, secondary and tertiary institutions of learning.

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