

Enhancing Comprehensive Sexuality Education In Science To Promote Health, Inclusivity, And Well-Being Among Grade 12 Students in San Pascual Senior High School 1

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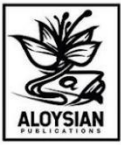
Abstract

This study aimed to assess the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and its contribution to promoting health, inclusivity, and well-being among Grade 12 students at San Pascual Senior High School. Using a descriptive quantitative research design, the study explored students' perceptions across eight key areas: peer interaction, interest level, awareness of school programs, instruction and learning delivery, extra-curricular activities, gender mainstreaming, cultural responsiveness, and challenges encountered. Data were collected through a structured survey questionnaire administered to a purposively selected group of Grade 12 students who had direct exposure to school-based sexuality education practices.

Findings revealed that students reported very high levels of engagement and comfort in peer-led discussions and real-life connected topics, indicating that interactive and relatable approaches foster respectful relationships and inclusive learning environments. Students also demonstrated strong awareness and understanding of sexuality education through school programs, instructional delivery, and extra-curricular activities, although gaps in consistency and accessibility were noted. The integration of gender equality and cultural responsiveness was positively perceived, yet opportunities for deeper cultural dialogue remained limited. Challenges such as discomfort due to cultural beliefs, peer pressure, and limited resources were identified as barriers to full participation.

In response to these findings, enrichment activities were proposed, including peer-led workshops, cultural dialogue circles, inclusive wellness fairs, and teacher capacity-building seminars. These aim to create safe, supportive spaces and enhance instructional quality. The study concludes that strengthening culturally responsive, inclusive, and student-centered approaches is essential for maximizing the impact of sexuality education. Recommendations include expanding peer-led initiatives, improving teacher training, and integrating sexuality education themes into school-wide programs to foster holistic student development.

Keywords: Comprehensive Sexuality Education, inclusivity, student well-being, gender responsiveness, secondary education



Introduction

Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) is a rights-based and age-appropriate approach that equips learners with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to make informed decisions about their health, relationships, and well-being. In the Philippines, the need for effective sexuality education has become increasingly important due to concerns related to adolescent reproductive health, gender awareness, and responsible decision-making among youth. Reports from national agencies highlight persistent issues such as teenage pregnancy and limited reproductive health awareness among adolescents.

In response, the Philippine government institutionalized sexuality education through Republic Act No. 10354 and through Department of Education Order No. 31, s. 2018, which mandate the integration of CSE in the K–12 curriculum. These policies aim to provide learners with accurate, inclusive, and culturally responsive information about reproductive health, gender equality, and respectful relationships. However, challenges remain in the implementation of sexuality education, including teacher discomfort in discussing sensitive topics and cultural barriers that may limit open classroom discussions.

At San Pascual Senior High School 1, observations revealed that Grade 12 students demonstrate varying levels of understanding of topics such as gender identity, reproductive health, and respectful relationships. Some learners actively participate in discussions, while others remain hesitant due to cultural beliefs or fear of peer judgment. This action research therefore aims to assess the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education among Grade 12 students and examine how school programs, instructional delivery, and extracurricular activities contribute to promoting health, inclusivity, and well-being while identifying challenges and proposing enrichment activities to strengthen sexuality education in the school setting.

This study aimed to assess and enhance the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education among Grade 12 students at San Pascual Senior High School 1 during the School Year 2025–2026.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do school-based sexuality education practices contribute to promoting inclusivity and well-being in terms of:
 - 1.1 Peer interaction; and
 - 1.2 Interest level of the students?
2. What is the level of awareness and understanding of students regarding sexuality education in terms of:
 - 2.1 School programs, projects, and activities;
 - 2.2 Instruction and learning delivery; and
 - 2.3 Extra-curricular activities?
3. How do students perceive the integration of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in relation to:



- 3.1 Gender mainstreaming in education; and
- 3.2 Cultural responsiveness?
4. What challenges do students encounter in achieving inclusivity and well-being through sexuality education practices?
5. Based on the findings, what enrichment activities may be proposed to enhance sexuality education implementation?

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a **descriptive quantitative research design** to assess the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education among Grade 12 students. The design allowed the researcher to systematically collect numerical data regarding students' awareness, perceptions, and experiences related to sexuality education practices in the school.

Participants of the Study

The respondents consisted of **one section of Grade 12 students from San Pascual Senior High School 1** during the School Year 2025–2026. The participants were selected using **purposive sampling** to ensure that the respondents had direct exposure to sexuality education activities implemented by the school.

Research Instrument

The primary data-gathering tool used in the study was a **structured survey questionnaire**. The instrument was developed based on relevant literature, policy documents, and existing frameworks on Comprehensive Sexuality Education.

The questionnaire included several sections covering:

- Promotion of inclusivity and well-being
- Level of awareness and understanding of CSE
- Integration of gender mainstreaming and cultural responsiveness
- Challenges encountered in sexuality education implementation

A **four-point Likert scale** was used to measure student responses.

Data Gathering Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the school head of San Pascual Senior High School 1. After approval, the researcher distributed parental consent forms and oriented the student respondents regarding the purpose and procedures of the research.



The questionnaires were administered in a classroom setting. Students were informed that participation was voluntary and that their responses would remain confidential. After completion, the questionnaires were collected, checked for completeness, and prepared for data analysis.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the following statistical tools:

- **Weighted Mean** – to determine the level of students' awareness, perceptions, and experiences regarding sexuality education practices.
- **Ranking** – to identify the most and least significant indicators in each category.
- **Composite Mean** – to summarize the overall assessment of each major variable.3.

Results

1. School-Based Sexuality Education Practices

1.1 Peer Interaction

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Sexual education helps me respect the gender identity and expression of my classmates.	3.97	Very High
I feel more comfortable discussing sensitive topics with peers because of sexuality education.	3.54	Very High
I include others in group activities regardless of their background or beliefs.	3.79	Very High
Sexuality Education encourages me to listen and understand different perspectives.	3.81	Very High
I feel safe expressing my thoughts in class because of the inclusive environment promoted by CSE.	3.45	Very High
Composite Mean	3.71	Very High

The results indicate a **very high positive impact of sexuality education on students' attitudes and inclusivity (composite mean = 3.71)**. Students strongly demonstrate respect for gender identity and show openness to understanding diverse perspectives.

While students generally feel inclusive and respectful, slightly lower ratings in comfort discussing sensitive topics and expressing thoughts suggest that some may still experience hesitation despite the supportive environment.

1.2 Level of Students' Interest in Sexuality Education

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
I am aware of school programs that promote gender sensitivity and reproductive health.	3.84	Very High
I have participated in school-led campaigns or seminars related to sexual education.	3.31	High
Our school celebrates events that promote inclusivity (e.g., Women's Month, LGBTQ+ awareness).	3.43	High
I understand the objectives of sexuality-related school projects and how they benefit students.	3.79	Very High
Sexual education programs in school help promote respect and well-being among students.	3.75	Very High
Composite Mean	3.63	Very High

The results indicate that Grade 12 students have a **very high level of interest in sexuality education**, as shown by a **composite mean of 3.63**. This suggests that students recognize its importance in both their personal and academic development.

The highest-rated indicator highlights that students view sexuality education as beneficial to their personal growth and well-being, while the lowest-rated indicator suggests slight hesitation in actively participating in related activities, likely due to the sensitive nature of the topic.

2. Level of Awareness and Understanding of Sexuality Education

2.1 Awareness of School Programs, Projects and Activities

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
I am aware of school programs that promote gender sensitivity and reproductive health.	3.84	Very High
I have participated in school-led campaigns or seminars related to sexual education.	3.31	High
Our school celebrates events that promote inclusivity (e.g., Women's Month, LGBTQ+ awareness).	3.43	High
I understand the objectives of sexuality-related school projects and how they benefit students.	3.79	Very High
Sexual education programs in school help promote respect and well-being among students.	3.75	Very High
Composite Mean	3.63	Very High

The findings show a **very high level of student awareness of school sexuality**

education programs (composite mean = 3.63), indicating that initiatives effectively promote knowledge on gender sensitivity, reproductive health, and respectful relationships.

While awareness is strongest in school programs on these topics, lower participation in campaigns and seminars suggests that not all students actively engage despite being informed.

2.2 Instruction and Learning Delivery

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Sexual education topics are clearly discussed in subjects like MAPEH, ESP, and Science.	3.54	Very High
Teachers explain sexuality-related concepts in a respectful and inclusive manner.	3.72	Very High
I understand the lessons on gender, relationships, and reproductive health taught in class.	3.75	Very High
Our classroom discussions allow students to express their views on sexuality-related issues.	3.68	Very High
Instructional materials used in class promote awareness of sexuality and well-being.	3.70	Very High
Composite Mean	3.68	Very High

The results show a **very high level of student awareness of how sexuality education is delivered in the classroom (composite mean = 3.68)**, indicating that instruction is generally clear and effective.

While students best understand lessons on gender, relationships, and reproductive health, the lower rating for integration across subjects suggests some inconsistency in how these topics are incorporated in different areas.

2.3 Extra-Curricular Activities

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
I have joined clubs or groups that promote health, gender equality, or youth empowerment.	3.22	High
Sexuality education is integrated into some extra-curricular activities in our school.	3.63	Very High
I learn more about sexuality and inclusivity through peer-led activities or student forums.	3.52	Very High
Extra-curricular activities help me understand the importance of respectful relationships.	3.45	High
I feel more confident discussing sexuality-related topics because of my involvement in school events.	3.45	High
Composite Mean	3.40	High

Students perceive extracurricular activities as helpful in reinforcing sexuality education (**composite mean = 3.40, High**). They recognize learning opportunities outside the classroom, but lower participation in related clubs suggests limited student involvement.

3. Students' Perception on the Integration of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)

3.1 Gender Mainstreaming

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Sexual education promotes equal respect for all genders in our school.	3.68	Strongly Agree
I am encouraged to challenge gender stereotypes through classroom discussions.	3.38	Agree
Teachers integrate gender-sensitive examples and materials in sexuality-related lessons.	3.50	Strongly Agree
I feel that both male and female students are given equal opportunities to participate in CSE.	3.68	Strongly Agree
Sexuality education helps me understand the importance of gender equality in society.	3.68	Strongly Agree
Composite Mean	3.58	Strongly Agree

Students **strongly agree that gender equality is promoted through sexuality education**, with a **composite mean of 3.58**.

The highest indicators include:

- Equal respect for all genders
- Equal participation opportunities
- Understanding gender equality

Each obtained a **weighted mean of 3.68**.

3.2 Cultural Responsiveness

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Sexual education respects and acknowledges diverse cultural beliefs and practices.	3.72	Strongly Agree
I feel that my cultural background is considered during sexuality-related discussions.	3.56	Agree
Teachers explain sexuality concepts in ways that are sensitive to different cultural values.	3.59	Strongly Agree
I am encouraged to share my cultural views on relationships and gender during class activities.	3.45	Agree
Sexual education helps me appreciate the diversity of beliefs and traditions in our community.	3.59	Strongly Agree
Composite Mean	3.58	Strongly Agree

The results show that students perceive sexuality education as **culturally sensitive and inclusive**, with the highest indicator being **respect for diverse cultural beliefs (WM = 3.72)**.

4. Challenges Encountered in Achieving Inclusivity and Well-Being Through Sexuality Education

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
I feel uncomfortable discussing sexuality-related topics due to cultural or religious beliefs.	2.72	Agree
Some teachers avoid or skip sexual education topics during instruction.	2.65	Agree
There is limited access to accurate and age-appropriate education materials.	2.70	Agree
Peer judgment or teasing discourages me from participating in sexuality education activities.	2.81	Agree
I find it difficult to relate sexuality education lessons to my personal experiences and needs.	2.98	Agree
Composite Mean	2.77	Agree

The findings show that students face notable barriers to effective sexuality education (composite mean = 2.77, Agree). These include discomfort due to cultural beliefs, limited learning materials, teachers skipping topics, peer judgment, and difficulty relating lessons to personal experiences, all of which reduce student engagement.

- Based on the findings, which indicate strengths in peer interaction, student interest, instructional delivery, cultural responsiveness, and gender mainstreaming, alongside challenges such as discomfort, limited resources, and peer pressure, the following



enrichment activities are proposed to enhance the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE):

1. **Gender and Culture Dialogue Circles**
Structured, safe spaces for guided discussions on gender roles, cultural beliefs, and personal experiences. These aim to promote respectful dialogue, cultural awareness, and confidence in expressing ideas without fear of judgment.
2. **Peer-Led Sexuality Education Workshops**
Student-facilitated sessions on reproductive health, gender identity, and relationships, designed to strengthen peer interaction, increase engagement, and encourage open communication.
3. **Inclusive Health and Wellness Fair**
A school-wide event featuring interactive booths and mini-talks on sexual health, gender equality, and well-being, aimed at increasing access to accurate information and promoting inclusivity.
4. **Teacher Capacity-Building Seminars**
Professional development activities focused on culturally responsive and gender-sensitive teaching approaches to enhance instructional delivery and address challenges in discussing sensitive topics.
5. **Creative Expression Campaign: “My Voice, My Story”**
A multimedia initiative that encourages students to share reflections and creative outputs related to sexuality, gender, and culture, fostering self-expression, confidence, and inclusivity.

Discussion

The findings emphasize the significant role of **Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)** in promoting an inclusive and supportive learning environment. High levels of peer interaction and student interest suggest that participatory teaching strategies and real-life applications enhance student engagement and encourage respectful communication. The integration of sexuality education into classroom instruction and extracurricular activities also strengthens students’ awareness and understanding of gender equality, reproductive health, and responsible relationships.

Students’ strong agreement regarding **gender mainstreaming and cultural responsiveness** indicates that CSE contributes to promoting diversity, inclusivity, and social awareness among learners. These findings support previous studies highlighting the effectiveness of culturally responsive and inclusive teaching practices in sexuality education.

Despite these positive outcomes, several challenges were identified, including cultural beliefs, peer pressure, and limited instructional resources that may hinder open discussions about sensitive topics. Addressing these barriers requires continuous teacher training, institutional support, and the development of engaging and culturally appropriate learning materials. Enrichment initiatives such as peer-led workshops, gender dialogue sessions, wellness fairs, and



teacher capacity-building programs may further strengthen the implementation of sexuality education and improve student engagement.

Conclusion

The results indicate that peer interaction and student interest play significant roles in creating a supportive learning environment where learners feel comfortable discussing sensitive topics related to health, relationships, and personal development. Students also showed a high level of awareness and understanding of sexuality education through school programs, instructional delivery, and extracurricular activities, suggesting that these school initiatives contribute to improving knowledge and fostering respectful relationships among learners.

Moreover, the integration of gender mainstreaming and cultural responsiveness in sexuality education was positively recognized by students, indicating that inclusive teaching strategies can help promote gender sensitivity, respect for diversity, and social awareness. However, challenges such as cultural beliefs, discomfort in discussing sensitive topics, peer influence, and limited instructional resources remain barriers to full participation and understanding. These findings highlight the need for continuous improvement in the delivery of sexuality education through more engaging, culturally responsive, and student-centered approaches. Strengthening teacher capacity, promoting peer-led initiatives, and integrating enrichment activities can further enhance the effectiveness of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in supporting the holistic development, well-being, and informed decision-making of senior high school students.

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