A Comprehensive Literature Review on Sex Education Programs

Jessica A. Neel

Louisiana State University

Author Note

Jessica A. Neel, Studying Child and Family Studies, Louisiana State University. Correspondence in reflection to this paper should be directed to Jessica A. Neel.

Email: jneel1@tigers.lsu.edu.

Abstract

The writer will conduct an academic and comprehensive literature review on the scholastic journal article, “Improving Sex Education Programs for Young Adolescents: Parents’ Views,” published in *Family Relations* and written by Sharon J. Alexander. In detailed description, the writer will summarize this academic journal article. The participants included in the research study will be specifically characterized, by including their gender, age, race, socioeconomic background, marital status, and income level in the review. The particular method conducted by the researcher will be explained. The findings and results of the scholar’s research will also be examined. In addition, the writer will discuss important and relevant issues to teach to families regarding the topic of sex education in schools. The implications these crucial issues pose on school administrators and researchers in this academic field will also be argued and explained.

A Comprehensive Literature Review on Sex Education Programs

The controversial debate of sex education in the classrooms is not so debatable anymore. Research studies support this growing number of acceptance of sex education in the classrooms, indicating 80% of Americans are in favor of these programs (Gallup, 1978). An overwhelming majority of parents approve of sex education in their children’s schools; however, these classes are not available in most adolescents’ schools. There are several reasons as to why these programs are lacking in the public school system. Foremost, people who rally against sex education usually speak out louder than those for it. Secondly, the definition of sex education is extremely broad, allowing people to agree or disagree with it based on a variety of definitions. Thirdly, these programs are not always appropriately geared towards a certain age group. Lastly, the idea of teaching this curriculum in schools is controversial, making it unappealing to school administrators. In this article, “Improving Sex Education Programs for Young Adolescents: Parents’ Views,” Alexander (1984) examined the parents’ views of the sex education programs offered at their children’s schools through the means of a research survey.

**Method**

**Participants**

The participants in this study comprised of parents from fifteen 7th grade classes and nine 8th grade classes, equaling a total of 560 students among these 24 classes. 217 surveys, or 39%, were completed and returned for analysis and evaluation. Of the 217 participants in this study, 81% were females. 71% of the surveys were completed by 7th grade parents and 29% were completed by 8th grade parents. 94% of the parents involved in this study were Caucasian, 4% were Asian, 1% was African American, and 1% was Native American. 84% of the participants in this study were classified as married, 14% were divorced or separated, and 2% were widowed. Of the responses gathered from this study, 40% of the parents are Catholic, 35% are Protestant, 11% Jewish, 8% are classified as other, and 6% of the parents surveyed did not have a preference in their religious affiliations. This researcher noted the overwhelming majority of the respondents of the survey were Caucasian, married, Christian, and middle-class.

**Procedure**

The scholar conducted this research study by selecting two districts in which the surveys would be distributed. The two districts were selected based upon the cooperation to participate, the existence of a sex education program already in the schools, and districts with multiple junior high schools. The two districts chosen to be examined in this study included the East Coast Site, referred to as Rolling Hills, and the Rocky Mountains Site, referred to as Mountain View. Rolling Hills is an upper middle-class city surrounded by many businesses and industries. The population of this suburb includes 50,000 people, whom are mostly Caucasians. Mountain View is a middle-class city, which hardly encompasses any businesses or industries. The population of this less industrialized town includes 40,000 people, whom are also mostly Caucasians. Once these two districts were chosen, the researcher received permission to disperse the questionnaires, constructed by parents and sex education experts, to 7th and 8th grade students enrolled in health classes. The children’s parents were asked to complete and return the questionnaires for analysis.

**Results**

The findings the scholar gathered from this data highlight a variety of topics regarding sex education, including the parents’ opinions about the program, their concern of who should teach this program to the children, and the topics discussed in the sex education courses. This researcher concluded that 89% of the parents approved of the sex education in their children’s schools. Furthermore, 61% of the participants believed the programs should be expanded even more in the schools. In addition, 68% of the parents considered themselves as the primary teachers of sex education to their children. They still stressed the need for schools to educate their children on this topic, but as secondary instructors. This scholar also determined various debatable areas of interests in sex education that parents would like discussed to their children. These topics included masturbation, abortion, and homosexuality.

**Discussion**

The results from this research study portray even more about the parents’ views on sex education than the experimenter originally intended. The researcher discovered the parents’ beliefs regarding this topic, including 89% of the participants believed the program can decrease the amount of STDs in their children. 84% of the parents considered sex education would decrease unplanned pregnancies. 76% of the surveyors thought the programs would not promote their children to have sex, and 68% of the participants indicated they cannot sufficiently educate their children on sex alone. Because parents want to be the primary educators of this topic for their children, this poses implications and important issues for school administrators and researchers. Surveys should be conducted to parents, enlightening the schools of parents’ concerns regarding their children’s sex education. Schools need to continuously keep their curriculums up to date. Finally, the parents stressed a desire for a program to help them communicate with their children about sex education, which in turn, could help develop a closer relationship between the parent and child. Even though parental approval of sex education is increasing, scholars and administrators need to listen to the parents’ concerns to ensure the students receive a full knowledge regarding sex education.

References

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