



Exploring the Challenges: Teacher Reluctance in Implementing Comprehensive Sexuality Education in South Africa's Foundation Phase

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Abstract

Purpose – This study explored why South African Foundation Phase teachers are reluctant and anxious to teach Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) content to young learners. The unit of analysis was Foundation Phase teachers in public schools.

Design/methods/approach – Adopting a qualitative, interpretive approach, the study conducted semi-structured interviews with six teachers from primary schools in Gauteng Province. The study used thematic analysis to understand teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward CSE. The data was analysed using Creswell's six steps of data analysis.

Findings – Findings reveal a varied understanding of CSE among teachers, with some viewing it narrowly as sex education and others recognising its broader scope, including emotional development and safety. Primary reasons for reluctance include perceived age inappropriateness, discomfort with content, and cultural and religious constraints. The lack of adequate training and resources further exacerbates this reluctance.

Research implications/limitations – This study on South African teachers' reluctance to teach Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in the Foundation Phase has critical implications for educational policy and practice, emphasizing the need for culturally sensitive curriculum development, comprehensive teacher training, and supportive educational environments. However, its limitations include a reliance on teacher perceptions, a small sample size from a single district, and the absence of quantitative data, which may affect the generalizability of its findings. Future research should expand geographically, employ diverse methodologies, and examine the effects of curriculum and training reforms on CSE's effectiveness in varied South African educational contexts.

Practical implications – The study underscores the importance of developing a culturally sensitive, comprehensive CSE curriculum and professional development programs for South African teachers. It highlights the need for clear educational guidelines and resources to assist teachers in effectively delivering CSE content to young learners.

Originality/value – This research provides a novel perspective by focusing on the reluctance of Foundation Phase teachers in South Africa to teach CSE, a relatively unexplored area in educational research. It offers valuable insights into the intersection of cultural, religious, and pedagogical factors affecting CSE delivery, contributing significantly to the global discourse on sexuality education in early childhood.

Keywords: Comprehensive sexuality education, Teacher reluctance, Young learners

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1. Introduction

The imperative of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in South Africa's Foundation Phase education is a national concern and a matter of global and societal significance. It intersects crucially with the discipline of education, addressing critical child rights issues as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), emphasising children's protection from harm (Venketsamy & Kinnear, 2021). Integrating CSE into the educational curriculum is essential in safeguarding these rights and promoting society's overall well-being. However, teachers are reluctant to engage in this form of education, presenting a complex and multifaceted problem that demands a thorough investigation. Understanding the roots of this reluctance is vital to implementing effective educational strategies that align with national and international child protection standards.

The foundation for CSE in South Africa is deeply rooted in legislative frameworks that emphasise children's rights and educational priorities. The Bill of Rights, part of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), clearly states the necessity of protecting children from harm, which has led to the inclusion of CSE in the curriculum for Grades R-12 (Kinnear, 2018). Department of Education Manifesto of Values, Education, and Democracy (2001) further supports this integration, aiming to teach South African citizens' rights and responsibilities as part of the curriculum, thereby bringing these values to life in the classroom (Ajayi, 2023; Griffiths & Prozesky, 2020). This legislative backing underscores the significance of CSE in the educational landscape and its potential impact on societal well-being. However, implementing these policies faces challenges, particularly in their reception and execution by educators at the foundational levels of schooling.

Recent studies have highlighted the crucial role of teachers in effectively implementing CSE. The Department of Basic Education [DBE] (2015) identifies teachers as key influencers in the lives of millions of learners across South Africa's educational landscape. Their role in imparting CSE is seen as instrumental in reducing risky sexual behaviours and preventing child abuse (Venketsamy & Kinnear, 2021). Despite the critical importance of their role, many teachers express reluctance and concerns about teaching CSE content, especially to young learners in the early grades. This reluctance poses significant challenges to the effectiveness of CSE programs. It raises questions about the adequacy of current teacher training and support systems in handling sensitive and essential content like CSE (Kågesten et al., 2021; Mbizvo et al., 2023).

The need for effective CSE in South Africa is further highlighted by alarming statistics on child sexual abuse (CSA). According to Gcwabe (2021), a significant portion of girls in South Africa are at risk of experiencing sexual abuse during their lifetime, with over 24,000 children reported as victims annually (Department of Social Development [DSD], 2021). These distressing figures underscore the urgent need for comprehensive sexual education as a preventive measure against CSA. However, implementing such education faces considerable challenges, particularly in overcoming the hesitancy and concerns of educators tasked with delivering this crucial content. The gap between the need for CSE and its effective delivery in schools is a significant issue that requires immediate attention and action (Chavula et al., 2022; chilambe et al., 2023).

The concept of CSE, as outlined by international bodies like UNESCO (2018), encompasses a comprehensive approach to sexuality education that addresses the emotional, cognitive, physical, and social aspects of sexuality. Research within South Africa supports the necessity of such education, highlighting the prevalence of high-risk sexual behaviours among young people due to insufficient understanding of CSE (Reddy et al., 2009; Wood & Roller, 2014). The introduction of a well-rounded CSE program has been suggested as a key strategy in mitigating early sexual debut and reducing incidents of child abuse (Kirby, 2011). However, the successful implementation of such programs heavily depends on educators' willingness and capability to deliver CSE content effectively. This challenge remains largely unaddressed in the current educational framework (Mbizvo et al., 2023).

The existing research points to a significant gap in the implementation of CSE, primarily due to teachers' reluctance. This reluctance is multifaceted, involving a range of intrinsic and extrinsic factors that impede the program's success. The controversies and limitations in current

approaches to CSE, particularly in the Foundation Phase, necessitate a comprehensive understanding of the reasons behind teachers' reluctance. Such an understanding is crucial for developing effective strategies that encourage teacher participation and ensure the successful delivery of CSE. Addressing these issues is not only essential for the improvement of educational practices but also for the broader goal of protecting children and promoting their well-being in a society that values and upholds their rights (Ali, 2023; Amo-Adjei, 2022).

This study focuses on exploring South African Foundation Phase teachers' reluctance to teach CSE and identifying the underlying reasons for their apprehension. By delving into teachers' perspectives and experiences, the research aims to shed light on the challenges and barriers they face in teaching CSE content. The ultimate objective is to propose solutions that support teachers in delivering age-appropriate, pedagogically sound CSE. This investigation is crucial not only for its contributions to the field of education but also for its broader implications in child protection and societal well-being. It aligns with the objectives and rights enshrined in South Africa's legal framework, thereby contributing to developing more effective and responsive educational strategies in the realm of CSE.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Explanation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education and Sexuality Education

Comprehensive sex education is described as a curriculum-based teaching and learning process that focuses on the emotional, cognitive, physical and social dimensions or aspects of sexuality. While the teaching includes what knowledge children and young people need to know, it also recognises the need for the development of skills, values and attitudes that will empower them to i) understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives, ii) consider their choices and how these will affect their well-being, iii) realise their health, well-being and dignity and d) develop respectful social and sexual relationships later in their lives (UNESCO, 2018).

Comprehensive sexuality education is also described as an instruction method based on a curriculum that aims to give learners the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and values to make appropriate and healthy choices in their lives (Kirby, 2011). Further, according to the UNFPA (2015), CSE is defined as a rights-based and gender-focused approach to sexuality education, whether in school or out of school and embraces a holistic vision of sexuality and sexual behaviour and personal development. It also focuses on sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and prevention of pregnancy (Department of Basic Education, 2017). In contrast, sexuality education is a lifelong process of acquiring information and forming beliefs, values and attitudes. It aims to contribute to behaviour change, including reducing unprotected and unwanted sex and reducing harmful behaviour, including sexual offences such as assault and abuse (Kirby, 2011; UNFPA, 2015). UNESCO (2009) posits that Sexuality Education is rights-based, culturally-influenced, and age-appropriate and scientific information needs to be curriculum-based.

2.2. Role of teachers in teaching Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Most people would agree that an understanding of content matters for teaching. This content knowledge is unique, a kind of subject-matter-specific professional knowledge (Spaull, 2015). Teacher knowledge is undoubtedly a component of teacher professionalism and according to Francis (2012), teachers lack the skills and knowledge to teach sexuality education. Professional competence involves more than just knowledge. Skills, attitudes, and motivational variables also contribute to the mastery of teaching and learning. As professionals in their field, teachers can be expected to process and evaluate new knowledge relevant to their core professional practice and to regularly update their knowledge base to improve their practice and meet new teaching demands in the curriculum (Rooth, 2005).

Spaull (2015) states that while it must be recognised that a wide variety of factors interact to impact the quality of the education system, teachers' poor subject matter knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge are essential contributors. Teaching resources and learner support materials are necessary only as teachers have the knowledge and competence to interpret and utilise them effectively. In order to address these challenges, processes are needed that enable

individual teachers to identify their learning and professional development needs and access opportunities to address these needs and identify system-wide priorities for teacher development that apply to groups of teachers (Kinnear, 2022).

In a survey conducted by the final year Bachelor of Education degree students at the University of Pretoria, it was found that sexuality education was one of the five topics teachers found challenging to teach in public schools (Venketsamy, 2018). Most teachers in the public-school context have not received the appropriate training or knowledge to teach the content of sexuality education. Currently, no comprehensive approach is taken to include sexuality education in the CAPS curriculum for the Foundation Phase. Educators are well-positioned to play a role in sexual health promotion in the Foundation Phase. The subject Life Skills, within which sexuality education is taught, is now a formalised subject within the school curriculum that aims to equip learners with skills to live meaningful lives in a transforming society (Department of Basic Education, 2011). Not all teachers teaching Life Skills are trained or comfortable teaching the content within the subject (Rooth, 2005).

According to UNESCO (2015), delivering high-quality CSE requires adequate training and capacity. Teacher training remains limited in scope and, if provided at all, is usually delivered only through in-service training. Consequently, teachers often feel uncomfortable and avoid discussing sensitive issues like sexual behaviour, sexuality, and how learners and students can access sexuality education content. Francis (2012) states that teachers do not consistently use participatory methodologies to engage learners fully in health and life skills education, especially content focusing of comprehensive sexuality education.

The teachers are the most crucial factor in any family life education programme. Experienced early-grade teachers already have the personal and teaching skills necessary for good sexuality educators, and often after a brief training in the subject matter, can integrate family life units into their lesson plans (Venketsamy, 2018). Various studies point to the fact that teacher development programmes in South Africa do not prepare teachers to teach the content of sexuality education. Helleve et al., (2009) suggest that effectiveness as a sexuality education educator is not merely dependent on having the appropriate knowledge but also on displaying skills for teaching. This is corroborated by D. Francis (2010), who suggests that preparing teachers with substantial pedagogical content knowledge and developing a critical consciousness would be vital for successful teaching in sexuality education. Ahmed et al., (2006) indicate that many "teachers appeared anxious and uncomfortable in talking about sexuality" and that educators' level of comfort and confidence in teaching sexuality education depended on their level of knowledge.

Kinnear (2018) states that although much research has been done in South Africa on the value of including sexuality education in the curriculum and teacher perception and attitudes toward teaching sexuality education, the gap in the literature is that there is no specific model or approach that can be followed to support and strengthen the implementation of the policy and to have sexuality education effectively included in the Life-Skills curriculum, especially in the Foundation Phase. There is a degree of uneasiness among teachers, who felt that teaching sexuality education, in general, was culturally more challenging than teaching about HIV and Aids (Mbananga, 2004).

According to Kinnear (2022), a teacher's capacity to provide sexuality education may be hampered or enhanced by several factors. Teachers reported positive and negative interactions with parents, regarding parents as highly influential on school administrators and policy (Smart, 2022). Teachers reported many organisational-level challenges, including their administrators, district policy, and structural factors such as time and financial resources. Generally, research shows that there is a need for educators to locate teaching about HIV and AIDS and sexuality within the broader scope of 'sexuality education,' where it is taught in relation to the following: relationships, values, attitudes and skills; culture, society and human rights; human development; sexual behaviour; and sexual and reproductive health (UNESCO, 2018) but how that is done is not specified (Rooth, 2005).

3. Methods

This study adopted a qualitative research design, utilising interpretivism as a guiding paradigm to understand the phenomena of teacher reluctance in teaching Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in South Africa's Foundation Phase. As Kelliher & Menezes (2011) note, interpretivism acknowledges that reality is socially constructed, varying across individuals. This approach aligns with Creswell, (2014) and Maree (2020), who emphasise the importance of delving into participants' actions, perceptions, and experiences to comprehend social phenomena.

The research was structured as a case study, focusing on a specific cohort of early-grade teachers. This design was suitable given the specificity and depth required for examining the nuances of teachers' reluctance towards CSE content. The study encompassed six Foundation Phase teachers from primary schools in a Gauteng Province, South Africa district. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on criteria such as having at least five years of teaching experience and involvement in teaching life skills in the Foundation Phase McMillan & Schumacher (2014). This approach ensured that the study involved relevant and representative individuals of the wider teacher population encountering CSE content.

Data were gathered via semi-structured interviews comprising open-ended questions. This method facilitated deeper probing into teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards teaching CSE. Interviews were scheduled individually and conducted in the participants' schools post-school hours. The interview schedule underwent validation by department staff to ensure clarity and appropriateness of language (Maree, 2020). Data analysis followed Creswell's six-step process. This involved audio recording of interviews for accuracy, segmentation and coding of data, reduction of overlapping codes, and the consolidation of codes into themes. This thematic analysis provided a structured yet flexible approach to transforming raw data into meaningful insights.

Data were cross-checked with audio recordings to ensure the study's reliability and validity. The descriptive analysis included verbatim quotes from participants, enhancing the credibility of the findings (Okeke & van Wyk, 2017). Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Pretoria (EC 17/11/01). The study adhered to ethical principles, including informed consent, confidentiality, and privacy. Participants were assured of anonymity, with pseudonyms used in reporting findings. Respect for participant autonomy was paramount, especially in their choice to withhold responses to certain questions (Burton et al., 2009). The participants varied in their teaching grades, experience, and ages, as detailed in table 1. This diversity offered a comprehensive view of the Foundation Phase teaching context in relation to CSE.

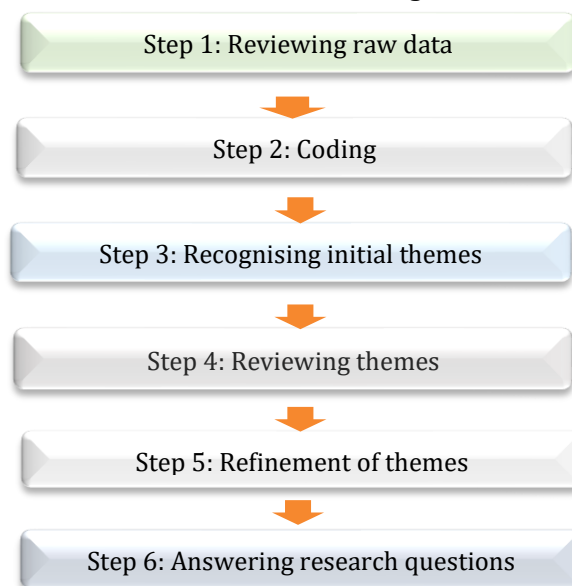


Figure 1: An overview of six-step thematic analysis (As adapted from Creswell, 2014)

Table 1. Profile of participants

| Participant code | Grade Teaching | Years of experience | Age |
|------------------|----------------|---------------------|-----|
| T1 | R | 12 | 45 |
| T2 | 1 | 10 | 40 |
| T3 | 2 | 8 | 43 |
| T4 | 2 | 10 | 30 |
| T5 | 3 | 15 | 35 |
| T6 | 3 | 10 | 30 |

4. Result

To elicit the participants' views and why they are reluctant to teach CSE content in the early grades, the author asked, 'What is your understanding of comprehensive sexuality education?' This question aimed to get an understanding of teachers' knowledge of CSE. From the participants' responses, it became clear that participants had a very 'narrow' or limited understanding of the concept of CSE. According to T1, T3 and T4, they stated that they believed that CSE content is

Teaching young learners about sex education. It is about the body parts and how to protect themselves against child sexual abuse. They also indicated that the content also focuses on reproduction and sexual activities. In contrast to the above participants, T2, T5 and T6 indicated that CSE content focuses on the holistic development of young children. It is not only about sexuality education but also about forming relationships with their friends, siblings and parents. CSE is also about peer pressure and bullying. Some of the other topics are healthy life-style, exercise and health and safety.

According to T6, it was further stated "CSE is not only about sexuality education but also more than sexuality education, which includes a healthy lifestyle, decision-making, assertive skills." The responses above indicate that only three participants understood the concept of CSE well. To delve deeper into this article's focus and why teachers are reluctant to teach CSE content, the author asked the participants, "Why are teachers (you) reluctant to teach CSE content?" The author envisaged participants sharing their personal experiences and reasons for reluctance to teach the CSE content. The verbatim quotes from the participants are presented below. According to T1, she indicated, "I don't think it is right for us to teach such young children about sexuality education. They are too small to know about sex." T3 also responded similarly by stating, "Our learners are too small to learn adult stuff. As teachers, we need to keep certain information away from young children. They should not be exposed to information on sex education." T4 responded to the same question by articulating, "Children in the early grades should not be taught such content. This can be done in high school but not in primary schools. Furthermore, I believe that parents will be very angry with us if we teach their children about sex education."

When the researcher probed further, T1 said, "I don't think I can teach CSE content because I don't know what to teach these children. I am so uncomfortable naming children's private parts. I am saying it is embarrassing to talk about such topics." T3 and T4 said they could not teach CSE content because of their religious and cultural backgrounds. T4 said, "In my African culture, the women do not talk about sex education to their children. The father or elder in the village is responsible for discussing these matters. When boys go on initiation ceremonies, they are taught about sex education and their body parts."

T1 mentioned that they felt uncomfortable teaching CSE content because they lacked knowledge about what to teach to children. They also expressed discomfort when it came to discussing children's private body parts. T1 conveyed a sense of embarrassment when addressing such topics. T3 and T4 both expressed reservations about teaching CSE content due to their religious and cultural backgrounds. T4, in particular, provided insight into their African culture, explaining that in their culture, it is not customary for women to discuss sex education with their children. Instead, this responsibility falls upon the father or elder in the village. T4 also mentioned the practice of teaching boys about sex education and their own body parts during initiation ceremonies.

Both T5 and T6 indicated that their reluctance to teach CSE content comes from limited knowledge and understanding of the content they should cover in the early grades. T5 said, "Although I have been reading about the different topics that must be taught in the early grades, I am not familiar with the scope and depth of the content that should be taught to learners in the early grades." For T6, her concern was the methodologies she should use to teach CSE content. She said, "The DBE wants us to teach CSE in the early grades, yet they don't give us the appropriate content or lesson plans on what we must teach."

Regarding the content and methodologies of teaching age-appropriate CSE content, T1 also agreed that she needs to gain the appropriate knowledge and expertise to teach the content to her Grade R class. For T2, she asked, "What kind of support will she get from her school principal and the district officials from the department." She said, "My biggest concern was the parents' attitude towards teaching CSE content. Not all parents will be willing to allow their young children in the early grades to learn content that they think might encourage them (children) to become sexually active."

Regarding the support teachers require, the author probed about the kind of support that teachers will require should the DBE make CSE teaching and learning in the foundation phase mandatory. All the participants T1, T2, T3, T4, T5 and T6 mentioned that if the DBE makes it compulsory for us to teach CSE content. Then, the DBE should provide clear guidelines on what will be taught in each grade and phase. These topics must be clearly structured with the appropriate resources. We think the DBE should develop pre-scripted lessons similar to those planned in Gauteng for Languages and Mathematics. These pre-planned lessons will give teachers an opportunity of teaching content that is correct and age-appropriate.

T4 and T5 both indicated that the school principal, together with the school governing body, should become involved and be fully aware of what the lesson content is about. Should there be problems with parents, the principal and school governing body should be able to handle these problems. T3 stated, "I would like support from the district office or subject advisor to come to my school and guide me in teaching CSE content." According to T1, "School nurses and the health services should also be involved if there is the content we cannot teach or are uncomfortable talking about. Since health workers are dealing with these kinds of topics, they will be helping us on how to present the topics."

5. Discussion

In examining the reluctance of South African Foundation Phase teachers to engage in Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), this study navigates through the complex interplay of educational methodologies, cultural norms, and individual belief systems. The resistance to teaching CSE among these educators is rooted in a multifaceted context, where their personal beliefs, professional preparedness, and societal expectations converge. This discussion, focusing on the research question and relevant literature, delves into the nuanced understanding and misinterpretations of CSE among teachers. The educators' apprehensions, shaped by their limited or narrow comprehension of CSE, highlight a significant disconnect between the curriculum's intent and its perception in the educational sphere (Goldfarb & Lieberman, 2021). This gap points towards an underlying challenge in aligning educational objectives with the realities of diverse cultural and social landscapes.

The study's results present a striking variation in teachers' interpretations of CSE, ranging from a limited view of it as mere sex education to a broader understanding encompassing holistic child development. The dichotomy in understanding CSE not only reflects the diversity in educational backgrounds of the teachers but also underscores their concerns about the maturity and receptiveness of young learners to such content. Additionally, the reluctance is amplified by perceived cultural inappropriateness and a lack of adequate resources and training in delivering CSE. These findings are pivotal, as they highlight the barriers teachers face in integrating CSE into early childhood education, thus shaping their attitudes and approaches towards the subject (Ramathuba et al., 2012; Visser et al., 2004). Understanding these factors is crucial for developing

strategies that address the teachers' concerns and ensure the effective implementation of CSE in foundational education.

The study's findings resonate with, but also diverge from, existing literature on CSE implementation. While previous research underscores the effectiveness of CSE in promoting informed choices and healthy behaviors among students (Kirby, 2011; UNESCO, 2018), the current study reveals a significant gap between theory and practice. The reluctance of teachers, influenced by cultural and religious values, contrasts sharply with the progressive ideals of CSE, highlighting a tension between educational innovation and traditional societal norms. This contrast suggests that while the theoretical framework of CSE is well-established, its practical application in diverse cultural contexts like South Africa encounters unique challenges that need to be addressed through tailored approaches (Sell et al., 2023; Swanepoel & Beyers, 2019).

The findings indicate that cultural and religious beliefs profoundly influence teachers' attitudes towards CSE. Many teachers express discomfort and a sense of inappropriateness in discussing sexual matters with young children, reflecting deep-seated societal norms and personal convictions. This cultural hesitancy is not just a matter of personal belief but also a reflection of the broader societal context in which these educators operate (Putra et al., 2021). The conflict between professional obligations and personal values presents a complex dilemma, suggesting the need for CSE programs that are sensitive to the cultural and religious backgrounds of both teachers and students (Chavula et al., 2022).

The lack of clarity in CSE content and methodology emerges as a significant barrier to its effective teaching. Teachers' discomfort with certain topics, combined with their limited understanding and training, poses challenges in presenting CSE in a way that is both effective and sensitive to the needs of young learners. This gap in knowledge and skills underscores the importance of comprehensive professional development programs for teachers. Such programs should aim not only to enhance understanding of CSE content but also to equip teachers with the pedagogical tools required to handle sensitive topics in a manner that is respectful of both cultural norms and the developmental stages of their students (Barr et al., 2014; Keogh et al., 2021).

The study underscores the critical role of support from various stakeholders in the successful implementation of CSE. The desire for pre-scripted lessons and guidance from educational leaders and health professionals reflects a broader need for a structured and collaborative approach. This finding points to the necessity of an educational ecosystem where CSE is not just a curriculum requirement but a collaborative effort involving teachers, administrators, parents, and health experts. By providing clear guidelines, resources, and ongoing support, the educational system can facilitate a more confident and effective delivery of CSE, ensuring that it is both age-appropriate and culturally sensitive (Ogolla & Ondia, 2019; Shibuya et al., 2023).

The implications of these findings are far-reaching for the field of education in South Africa. To effectively integrate CSE into the Foundation Phase curriculum, a multi-pronged strategy is essential. This strategy should encompass curriculum development that is sensitive to cultural and societal nuances, comprehensive training for educators to equip them with both content knowledge and pedagogical skills, and the establishment of a supportive educational environment where all stakeholders collaborate to facilitate the teaching of CSE. By addressing these key areas, the educational system can overcome the current challenges and ensure that CSE is taught in a manner that is both effective and respectful of the diverse backgrounds of students and teachers alike.

6. Conclusion

The study aimed to investigate the hesitance and anxiety among South African Foundation Phase teachers regarding the teaching of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) to young learners, revealing a nuanced landscape shaped by cultural, educational, and societal factors. A key finding was the diverse understanding of CSE among teachers, ranging from a narrow focus on anatomy and abuse prevention to a broader view encompassing issues like peer pressure and healthy living, underlining the need for a standardized, holistic curriculum approach. Teachers' reluctance,

centered around age-appropriateness and cultural concerns, underscores the necessity for professional development that enhances comfort levels and cultural competencies. Systemic challenges, such as the absence of clear guidelines and resources from the Department of Basic Education, further contribute to this reluctance, suggesting a need for structural support and collaborative efforts. The study's implications point towards a comprehensive strategy for integrating CSE into the curriculum, emphasizing culturally sensitive curriculum development, thorough teacher training, and the establishment of a supportive educational ecosystem. Limitations of the study include its focus on teacher perceptions and a constrained sample size and geographic scope, which may affect generalizability. Future research should expand to various cultural and educational contexts, examining the impact of comprehensive teacher training and culturally sensitive curriculum on CSE effectiveness, thereby guiding policy and practice to ensure respectful and effective CSE delivery in South Africa's diverse educational settings.

Declarations

Author contribution statement

Roy Venketsamy the presented idea and data taker, developed the teachers and sexuality education, discussed the results and contributed to the final manuscript.

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Data availability statement

The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.


Declaration of interests statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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