

Extent and Challenges of Implementing Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Selected School Districts of Leyte

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Abstract — This paper aims to assess the implementation of the Comprehensive Sexuality Education Program of public secondary schools in two selected districts in Leyte. This determined the extent of the program's implementation in terms of curriculum support systems and emerging challenges. Using a descriptive research design, a total of 54 respondents composed of 2 school heads and 52 teachers participated in the survey. The data were analyzed through frequency counts, arithmetic mean, and percentages. Results revealed that the extent of the program implementation ranged from satisfied to highly satisfied as to the teachers, materials, facilities and equipment, ICT environment and assessment, school leadership and management and schools division/region/central office technical assistance, and community industry, government organizations, non-government organizations, civil society organizations partnerships. However, the absence of a registered guidance counselor, the lack of participation and support from the community industry, government organizations, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders, the lack of comprehensive CSE teaching and learning resources, the nonparticipation of the stakeholders even though they had attended training, and the lack of trainings for teachers were among the major challenges. To address these challenges and improve the program implementation, an action plan shall be developed based on the findings of this research which may include the hiring of a registered guidance counselor and the provision of teaching and learning resources and training.

Keywords — **Sexuality Education, Public Secondary Schools, Challenges, Program Evaluation, Extent Of Implementation**

I. Introduction

In the Philippines, the implementation of the Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) was anchored to Republic Act No. 10354 otherwise known as "The Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012", and was also aligned to and within the sustainable development goals (SDGs) of the Agenda for Sustainable Development of 2030, mainly good health and well-being as SDG 3, quality education as SDG 4, and gender equality as SDG 5 (UNESCO et al., 2021). This program aimed to teach and learn about the elements of sexuality consistent with rights, appropriate to age and development, and scientific (UNESCO, 2018). In line with this mandate, the DepEd Order No. 031, s. 2018 or "Policy Guidelines on the Implementation of the Comprehensive Sexuality Education" was launched to incorporate the CSE competencies in lesson planning, and classroom and school activities and guarantee that these competencies were carefully

woven into the standards for the curriculum, ensuring that the content flows naturally with them. The core topics and subtopics include human body and human development, personhood, healthy relationships, sexuality and sexual behaviors, sexual and reproductive health, personal safety, and gender, culture, and human rights. Within this legal order, it was stated that there was a need to assess the implementation of the program using the CSE framework to determine the implementation gaps and program development opportunities.

According to the Regional Memorandum No. 451, s. 2022 of Eastern Visayas, the extent of the implementation of the program did not encounter any active opposition and was widely embraced by educators, parents, and students, despite being delivered through blended and remote learning platforms. There were also regional and national orientations. However, despite this, the program encountered several obstacles, such as a lack of understanding regarding its importance, value, and impact on community stakeholders, as well as its coverage and reach and how to effectively target them; teacher and school preparedness; cultural limitations; parental involvement and preparedness; and perception and misunderstanding.

The policy was also implemented to combat rising early pregnancies, violence, and HIV prevalence among young Filipinos. The HIV/AIDS and ART Registry of the Department of Health reported 31,651 or 92% of total HIV cases among 15-24-year-olds from 2013-2023. In addition, the press release of the Philippine Statistics Authority dated January 18, 2023, posted that 5.4% of 15-19-year-old women have ever been pregnant, about 1.6% of them are presently pregnant, and less than 1% have had a pregnancy loss in 2022. Their 2022 National Demographic and Health Survey also recorded 17.5% of 15-49-year-old women who had engaged in any form of violence by their current or most recent husband or intimate partner. The same year, the Council for the Welfare of the Children also reported almost 9000 child abuse cases throughout the country and most of these were committed against adolescents ages 15 to 17 (Flores & Mateo, 2023). These numbers were still prevalent even in the face of DepEd Order No. 031, s. 2018.

Unfortunately, these cases were also evident in the secondary schools of the selected school districts involving secondary school learners. Despite the efforts of the public secondary schools to address the problem, they were unable to make it in the absence of registered guidance counselors. The inadequate number of guidance counselors in Philippine public secondary schools exposed a concerning disparity in counselor-to-student ratios, raising significant concerns about the educational system's ability to meet students' diverse mental health needs that call for immediate attention and targeted interventions (Lacson et al., 2024). Hence, the data compel the thorough assessment relative to the current conditions of the curriculum support systems of the CSE program to improve its implementation and to provide for the reproductive health of the students.

Therefore, this quantitative study assesses the implementation of the CSE program of public secondary schools in two selected districts of the Schools Division of Leyte for the School Year, 2023-2024 to meet the SDGs on good health and well-being, quality education, and gender

equality. Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions: (1) What is the extent of implementation of the CSE program in terms of the following curriculum support systems – teachers, materials, facilities and equipment, ICT environment, assessment, school leadership and management, schools division/region/CO technical assistance, and community industry, GOs, NGOs, CSOs partnerships; and (2) What are the challenges of the implementation of the CSE program?

Literature Review

Sexuality education aims to help people understand their sexual and reproductive rights, formulate informed decisions about their sexual lives, and reach the highest possible standards of sexual health (Banerjee & Rao, 2022; Olufadewa et al., 2021). However, despite the positive studies on sex education, it was challenged by shame, cultural norms, and stereotypical public perception that forbids it from being included in the curriculum (Banerjee & Rao, 2022).

As a result, the survey from Asia and Pacific revealed that there were 28% of the respondents stated that their schools taught them sexuality education effectively (UNESCO et al., 2021). In sub-Saharan Africa, only 37% of young people can exhibit comprehensive knowledge of HIV transmission and prevention, and two out of three or 66% of the girls lack CSE information as they enter puberty and start menstruating. Also, in East and Southern Africa, a range of 15-25% was reported for pregnancy rates and some were the highest in the world (UNESCO Zambia, 2023). These worldwide cases were able to establish that quality CSE programs are critical and need to be strengthened. From that, it is necessary to determine and combat the barriers to CSE implementation.

In the Philippines, the extent of implementation of the program was also affected by the inadequacy of guidance counselors in public secondary schools (Lacson et al., 2024). In addition, Dela Luna et al. (2024) also revealed that adequate reproductive health education was not taught well in schools in the Philippines because the teachers and the parents were not comfortable explaining sex with the learners and adolescents.

Moreover, the prioritization of the CSE program implementation was primarily initiated and managed by the school head. However, the duties and responsibilities of the school heads were broad and they focused on other programs of the Department of Education which they deemed far more important and urgent. These general practices of leadership of the school heads were anchored to DepEd Order No. 024, s. 2020 or “The National Adoption and Implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads” which covers the five domains: leading strategically, managing school operations and resources, focusing on teaching and learning, developing self and others, and building connections. These require intensive effort and efficient time to perform in collaboration with the teachers as coordinators. However, these ancillary works of the teachers about administrative tasks were removed from them as mandated by DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024 or the “Immediate Removal of Administrative Tasks of Public School Teachers”

to support them to teach better. Hence, the school heads have the sole responsibility to execute all these tasks, which then affect their priorities in implementing the CSE program.

The implementation also of the program relied on the utilization and management of the Gender and Development Fund (GAD) and the Special Education Fund (SEF) as possible sources of funds based on the existing policies. According to Republic Act No. 9710 or an “Act Providing for the Magna Carta of Women” and DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017 or the “Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy”, the GAD budget shall not be less than 5% of the overall budget appropriations of the agency for the year drawn from the Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) of the agency, subject to its utilization guidelines. Meanwhile, the DepEd Order No. 10, s. 2017 or the "Revised Guidelines on the Use of the Special Education Fund" stated that the SEF provides the source of funds for the supplementary yearly budgetary needs for the operation and maintenance of public schools within the province, city, or municipality.

Furthermore, there were difficulties in implementing CSE based on pertinent studies. The findings of these studies highlighted the following issues: teachers' uneasiness in instructing sexuality education when the subject matter clashes with their diverse cultural and religious backgrounds; gender disparity in the application of CSE; a lack of emphasis on CSE in education; teachers' autonomy over what and when to teach; and a lack of support for pedagogical strategies. Additionally, the lack of comprehensive teaching resources, limited ownership of the recently introduced curriculum, inadequate teacher training, the inconsistency of CSE with local norms, issues with the teacher-parent role, the lack of interactive activities in teaching methods, the lack of comprehensive teaching resources, and the inaccurate coverage of CSE topics with the omission of contents from curricula to be in line with local norms, exclusion of youth and young adults who are not enrolled in school, as well as community opposition such unfavorable parental views (Shibuya et al., 2023; Keogh et al., 2021; Witney & Jones, 2020; Wangamati, 2020; de Haas & Hutter, 2019; Zulu et al., 2019). Crucially, a deeper comprehension of these obstacles might aid in the proposal of an intervention plan to enhance execution; yet, no research has examined these obstacles in the Philippines.

As a response to these challenges and unmet needs, several suggested tactics and interventions in the curriculum content and implementation context were made. These tactics and interventions included training teachers in curriculum content and delivery, providing them with comprehensive lesson plans to bridge the content gap, providing appropriate CSE materials, monitoring and encouraging supervision, recognizing and guiding each other, and taking ownership of the CSE program with a whole-school approach (Shibuya et al., 2023; Chavula et al., 2022; Olufadewa et al., 2021; Keogh et al., 2021; Witney & Jones, 2020; Ramirez-Villalobos et al., 2021; de Haas & Hutter, 2020; Venketsamy & Kinear, 2020; Zulu et al., 2019).

To assess the implementation of the CSE program of secondary schools in selected school districts, this paper was anchored on the Theory of Change of Carol Weiss (1995), a program evaluation theory. This theory is specific to projects and is connected to evaluation. It clarifies and

assists the goals, planning, implementation, and assessment of a particular project (Reinholz & Andrews, 2020). It also explains the presumptions that account for the intermediate phases moving towards the ultimate goal as well as the relationships between program activities and results that arise at every stage. An application of a strategy that is simple yet effective and easy to do is recommended: list the expected outcomes of an intervention in the arrangement that they should happen, and then design an assessment strategy around monitoring whether these expected outcomes are attained (The Center for Theory of Change, Inc., 2023). Reinholz and Andrews (2020) elaborated the description of the components of the theory which include the recognition of the context in which the effort for change will happen; the application of backward mapping; the articulation of specific interventions that will be utilized to attain long term outcomes paired with several indicators; and the articulation of the assumptions underpinning these elements are then clarified. In this study, this theory-guided in determining the extent of implementation of the CSE through the analysis of each specific step and the curriculum support systems within the program towards its long-term goal.

II. Methodology

Research Design

This research employed a quantitative method, particularly a descriptive research design with triangulation from the school heads and teachers using the same questionnaire, to assess the implementation of the CSE program in public secondary schools in selected school districts of the Schools Division of Leyte. According to Manjunatha (2019), a descriptive design determines, describes, or identifies the characteristics and behavior of a population or situation more completely at present with having no control over the variable. In this study, the extent and the challenges of implementing the CSE program were described using this method.

Research Respondents

A total of fifty-four (54) respondents constituted the sample of the study. They were composed of two (2) school heads and fifty-two (52) teachers and were randomly selected from the public secondary schools of the Javier Districts of the Schools Division of Leyte. There was a complete enumeration of the school heads and the teachers handling Music, Arts, Physical Education and Health (MAPEH), Araling Panlipunan, Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (ESP) and Science based on the provision of DepEd Order No. 031, s. 2018.

Research Instrument

Using the CSE Framework of DepEd Order No. 031, s. 2018, the researcher-made survey questionnaire was designed for this study and was utilized to determine the extent and the challenges of the CSE program implementation. The survey questionnaire was presented in a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated strongly disagree, 2 as disagree, 3 as somewhat disagree, 4

as neither agree nor disagree, 5 as somewhat agree, 6 as agree, and 7 as strongly agree in the interval scale level of measurement. The research instrument was also constructed into two parts. Part I assessed the extent of the implementation of the CSE program in terms of the curriculum support systems. The 22 statements/indicators/items of the curriculum support systems were based on the CSE Framework of DepEd Order No. 031, s. 2018 and were adapted from Memorandum DM/OM-CI-2022-00129 and Regional Memorandum No. 359, s. 2022 of Eastern Visayas. Meanwhile, Part II determined the challenges of the implementation of the CSE program. The items included were outcomes of the survey with the nonrespondents and the literature review. Results of the internal reliability of the items using Cronbach's alpha revealed a total reliability of 0.95 which was greater than 0.70 which means that the items have a good correlation coefficient and should be retained. Overall, this also indicates that the survey questionnaire is reliable.

Ethical Consideration

This study included the process of seeking approval from the higher authorities through a permission request letter. The informed consent forms for the school heads and the teachers were also provided. The respondents of this study were informed on certain provisions under Republic Act 10173, otherwise known as the “Data Privacy Act of 2012”. It was also emphasized that by giving informed consent, the respondent was indicating that she/he had the knowledge of the purpose of this endeavor, the nature of the research study including his/her role in the research, and affirmed to participate in the research being conducted by the researcher. In addition, they were informed that there were no probable risks in the conduct of the study and their participation was entirely voluntary; they may decline to answer any questions; and may terminate participation at any point without any given reason. Finally, it was highlighted that the respondents expressed their consent and authorized the researcher to collect, process, and keep their personal information for lawful purposes.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before the data gathering phase, the data collection tool was reviewed and evaluated by a group of experts concerning the technical aspects of the instrument including survey layout, instructions, and items. After the revision of the survey questionnaire, the researcher secured a permit requested by the higher authorities. Upon approval, this study was launched in the public secondary schools of two selected school districts. In the data gathering phase, the researcher asked permission from the school head to coordinate with the department heads of MAPEH, Araling Panlipunan, ESP, and Science to assist in the administration and retrieval of the survey questionnaire. Clear instructions were also provided to them on how to administer and retrieve the survey questionnaires from the teachers. The research instrument was retrieved from the schools on the same day.

Data Analysis

The presentation shows the scoring and interpretation guide for the variables as curriculum support systems measured in this study.

Range	Level of Agreement	Interpretation
6.50-7.00	Strongly agree	Very highly satisfied
5.50-6.49	Agree	Highly satisfied
4.50-5.49	Somewhat agree	Satisfied
3.50-4.49	Neither agree nor disagree	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
2.50-3.49	Somewhat disagree	Dissatisfied
1.50-2.49	Disagree	Highly dissatisfied
1.00-1.49	Strongly disagree	Very highly dissatisfied

The responses to the scale were scored based on a 7-point scale. Scores for every indicator were summed up together and were divided by the total number of items to get the mean score. The mean score represented the respondent's level of agreement. Lower mean scores showed a lower level of agreement and higher mean scores implied a higher level of agreement. The mean scores were interpreted using the scoring and interpretation guide. The range was based on the rules of rounding off numbers which means converting a given number to the closest desired place value. Meanwhile, the verbal interpretation according to the level of satisfaction was based on the study of Arrabaca and Base (2020). To determine the extent and challenges of the program implementation, they were analyzed through descriptive statistics using frequency counts, weighted arithmetic mean, and percentages.

III. Results and Discussion

Extent of the Implementation of the CSE Program

Table 1 shows the results on the extent of the CSE program implementation as to the various curriculum support systems using the CSE framework.

Table 1.
Extent of the CSE Program Implementation as to the Curriculum Support Systems

Indicator	School Heads		Teachers	
	M	Interpretation	M	Interpretation
Teachers				
1. All the concerned teachers attended appropriate and relevant training and were active on CSE.	6.00	Highly satisfied	5.12	Satisfied
2. Implemented CSE activities through the integration of CSE topics in the four learning areas: MAPEH, Araling Panlipunan, ESP, and Science.	6.00	Highly satisfied	5.76	Highly satisfied

Indicator	School Heads		Teachers	
	M	Interpretation	M	Interpretation
3. Conducted CSE-related classroom action research/field studies and classroom observations with teachers.	5.50	Highly satisfied	4.65	Satisfied
Grand Mean	5.83	Highly satisfied	5.18	Satisfied
Materials, Facilities, and Equipment				
1. The school guidance advocates were trained or oriented and were active on CSE.	6.50	Very highly satisfied	5.39	Satisfied
2. The students, particularly the Supreme Student Government students were trained or oriented and were active on CSE.	6.00	Highly satisfied	4.96	Satisfied
3. The school has good guidance and counseling services in the presence of a registered guidance counselor.	4.50	Satisfied	4.50	Satisfied
4. The school has developed and with sufficient number of learning resources and supplementary materials for CSE.	5.50	Highly satisfied	4.62	Satisfied
5. Used CSE contextualized learning resources and other supplementary materials.	5.50	Highly satisfied	5.12	Satisfied
Grand Mean	5.60	Highly satisfied	4.92	Satisfied
ICT Environment				
1. The school established an ICT environment through platforms for CSE information dissemination and advocacy campaigns.	5.50	Highly satisfied	4.75	Satisfied
2. Utilized the established facilities for information dissemination advocacy campaigns, and guidance services to address CSE-related issues and concerns of students.	5.50	Highly satisfied	4.89	Satisfied
Grand Mean	5.50	Highly satisfied	4.82	Satisfied
Assessment				
1. The school has functional monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for CSE implementation.	5.50	Highly satisfied	4.77	Satisfied
2. Developed and accomplished assessment tools (written activities/performance tasks) integrating CSE.	5.50	Highly satisfied	5.02	Satisfied
Grand Mean	5.50	Highly satisfied	4.90	Satisfied
School Leadership and Management				
1. The school head and department heads attended appropriate and relevant training and were active in CSE.	6.00	Highly satisfied	5.17	Satisfied
2. The school head actively supports and directs the implementation of the CSE program.	6.50	Very highly satisfied	5.71	Satisfied
3. The school formulated an Enhanced School Improvement Plan with integrated CSE or has a CSE Local Action Plan.	6.00	Highly satisfied	5.17	Satisfied
4. The funds used to implement the CSE program were sourced from the GAD fund, MOOE, and other sources of funds.	6.00	Highly satisfied	5.46	Satisfied
Grand Mean	6.13	Highly satisfied	5.38	Satisfied
Schools Division/ Region/ CO Technical Assistance				
1. The Schools Division/Region/Central Office conducted technical assistance and support on CSE implementation.	6.00	Highly satisfied	5.17	Satisfied
Community industry, GOs, NGOs, CSOs Partnerships				

Indicator	School Heads		Teachers	
	M	Interpretation	M	Interpretation
1. The parents-teacher association was trained/ oriented on CSE and was active in the CSE implementation.	4.50	Satisfied	4.69	Satisfied
2. The community industry, GOs, CSOs, and other stakeholders served as partners and were actively involved in the implementation of the CSE program.	6.00	Highly satisfied	5.06	Satisfied
3. The funds used to implement the CSE program were sourced from SEF, and other external sources of funds.	3.50	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4.85	Satisfied
4. The school developed partnerships with agencies (LGU, DOH, NGOs, etc.) and/or individuals to generate funds supported by the Memorandum of Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding.	5.50	Highly satisfied	4.94	Satisfied
5. Partnership with community industry, GOs, CSOs, and other agencies/LGUs towards the conduct of CSE-related extra-curricular activities (CSE talks, Peer Ed sessions, etc).	6.00	Highly satisfied	4.81	Satisfied
Grand Mean	5.10	Satisfied	4.87	Satisfied

For the teachers as a curriculum support system, both the school heads and the teachers were highly satisfied with the statement: *"Implemented CSE activities through the integration of CSE topics in the four learning areas: MAPEH, Araling Panlipunan, ESP, or Science"*. Hence, this is the most common activity conducted by the teachers as classroom implementers in the delivery of the program.

For materials, facilities, and equipment, both the school heads and the teachers were satisfied with the statement: *"The school has good guidance and counseling services in the presence of a registered guidance counselor"*. It indicates that improvement should be made to this activity to enhance the level of satisfaction. Every school should be assigned a registered guidance counselor. The efficiency and sustainability of the implementation will only improve if there are registered guidance counselors hired to serve every school to perform CSE-related initiatives and activities, such as the guidance services that address CSE-related issues and concerns of students.

For the ICT environment, assessment, school leadership and management, and schools division/ region/ CO technical assistance, the school heads, and the teachers were consistent in their responses per indicator, except for the statement under the school leadership and management: *"The school head actively supports and directs the implementation of the CSE program"* in which the school heads were very highly satisfied. This means that the school heads personally recognized that they performed their responsibilities of implementing the program. Overall, the school heads were highly satisfied, while the teachers were only satisfied.

For community industry, GOs, NGOs, and CSO partnerships, both the school heads and the teachers were satisfied with the statement: *"The parents-teacher association was trained/ oriented on CSE and were active in the CSE implementation"*. Efforts should be considered in this

activity to improve the level of satisfaction. Among the indicators in all the curriculum support systems, the statement: *“The fund used to implement the CSE program was sourced from SEF, and other external sources of funds”* received a neutral response from the school heads. The DepEd Order No. 10, s. 2017 or the "Revised Guidelines on the Use of the Special Education Fund" stated that the SEF provides the source of funds for the supplementary yearly budgetary needs for the operation and maintenance of public schools within the province, city, or municipality which include the operation and maintenance of public schools, construction and repair of school buildings, facilities and equipment, development of sports, educational research, and purchase of books and periodicals. In this case, the inclusion of the CSE program as one of the programs under GAD to receive funding and support from this budget is of great help to sustain the implementation of the activities of the program. The school heads were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied only with this indicator while they were satisfied, highly satisfied, or very highly satisfied with the rest of the indicators. This implies that there was a need to address and improve this indicator to attain a positive response from the school heads with a higher level of satisfaction.

Generally, the responses of the school heads and the teachers for the grand mean to each curriculum support system ranged from satisfied to highly satisfied. The school heads responded highly satisfied with almost all the curriculum support systems, except for the community industry, government organizations, non-government organizations, and civil society organizations partnerships in which they were satisfied. On the other hand, the responses of the teachers in all the curriculum support systems were satisfied. Although being satisfied was a positive response, it still required more improvement to increase the level of satisfaction with the curriculum support systems.

Challenges of the CSE Program

Table 2 presents the challenges in the CSE program implementation as to the different curriculum support systems given in the CSE framework.

Table 2.
Implementation Challenges to the Curriculum Support Systems
N=54

Indicator	F	%
Teachers		
Lack of training for teachers on CSE implementation.	38	70.37
Lack of knowledge in the conduct of CSE-related classroom action research/field studies, and other data collection procedures	35	64.81
Lack of training for guidance advocate-designates on CSE implementation.	33	61.11
Teachers are uncomfortable in teaching sex education when the content conflicts with the different cultural and religious backgrounds.	20	37.04
Materials, Facilities, and Equipment		
Absence of a registered guidance counselor in the school.	44	81.48

Indicator	F	%
Lack of comprehensive CSE teaching and learning resources for CSE integration.	39	72.22
Lack of facilities for information dissemination advocacy campaigns, and guidance services that address CSE-related issues and concerns of students.	36	66.67
Inadequate training for guidance counselors on CSE implementation.	35	64.81
ICT Environment		
The school has no facilities for CSE information dissemination and advocacy campaigns.	37	68.52
Assessment		
Inconsistent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms on CSE at the school level.	37	68.52
Teaching methods and strategies lacked interactive activities to cultivate values and abilities.	29	53.70
School Leadership and Management		
Lack of guidance on the teaching of the CSE curriculum from the technical assistance providers.	33	61.11
Lack of training for school heads on CSE implementation.	29	53.70
Inadequate financing of the CSE program from GAD fund, MOOE, and other sources of funds within the school.	28	51.85
CSE is not integrated into the Enhanced School Improvement Plan or has NO action plan.	22	40.74
Schools Division/ Region/ CO Technical Assistance		
Limited prioritization of CSE in the educational sector.	32	59.26
Lack of support and technical assistance from the Schools Division/Region/Central Office.	31	57.41
Community industry, GOs, NGOs, CSOs Partnerships		
Lack of participation and support from the community industry, GOs, CSOs, and other stakeholders in the implementation of the CSE program.	41	75.93
Stakeholders were not active even though they had attended training.	38	70.37
Lack of participation and support from the agencies (LGU, DOH, NGOs, etc.) and or individuals to generate funds intended for the CSE implementation.	37	68.52
Inadequate financing of the CSE program from SEF and other external sources.	34	62.96
Community resistance such as negative parental attitudes.	26	48.15

Out of 54 respondents, it showed that 70.37% of them determined the statement: “*Lack of training for teachers on CSE implementation*” as the major challenge to the teachers. Keogh et al. (2021) also revealed that insufficient teacher preparation showed up as teacher discomfort and a misleading message. However, the lack of training for guidance advocate designates and the lack of knowledge in the conduct of CSE-related action research and studies did not obtain the highest percentages with 61.11% and 64.81% responses, respectively. This result still implies that almost all these indicators were pressing challenges of the CSE program because of the more than 61% responses from the respondents, except with the teacher discomfort in teaching CSE when the content conflicts with the different cultural and religious backgrounds with 37.04% responses.

Hence, the provision of training on CSE implementation should be initiated to address the needs of this curriculum support system. Consistent with other studies, Olufadewa et al. (2021), Ramirez-Villalobos et al. (2021), and Venketsamy and Kinear (2020) emphasized the importance and effectiveness of teacher training to deliver CSE. All nations should continue to prioritize expanding teacher preparation programs (Keogh et al., 2021). The effectiveness of programs can be increased by concentrating teacher training on both the content and delivery of the curriculum. This will improve teachers' attitudes toward CSE (Witney & Jones, 2020). Also, the provision of adequate teacher training and support will allow them to adopt more comprehensive methods of sexuality education (de Haas & Hutter, 2020).

For materials, facilities, and equipment, it showed that the statement: *"Absence of a registered guidance counselor in the school"* got the highest percentage with 81.48%. This indicator also got the highest percentage among the indicators in the other curriculum support systems which implies that there is an immediate need to address this concern. The inadequate number of guidance counselors exposed a concerning disparity in counselor-to-student ratios, raising significant concerns about the educational system's ability to meet students' diverse mental health needs that call for immediate attention and targeted interventions (Lacson et al., 2024). On the other hand, the statement: *"Lack of comprehensive CSE teaching and learning resources for CSE integration"* was also determined as a major challenge with 72.22% of responses. Keogh et al. (2021) revealed that the absence of adequate instructional resources was one of the biggest obstacles to effective implementation and made the situation worse. Hence, the provision of CSE materials and resources was also necessary to address problems of the program implementation. Venketsamy and Kinear (2020) also suggested that comprehensive scripted lesson plans and suitable materials should be made available to support teaching and learning CSE. To improve implementation at the classroom level, all nations should continue to prioritize disseminating comprehensive CSE materials that cater to the needs of adolescents (Keogh et al., 2021).

Compared to other curriculum support systems, the ICT environment, assessment, school leadership and management, and school division/region/CO technical assistance did not contribute to the major challenges of the program. However, the responses to each of the indicators suggested that these are still top challenges about these curriculum systems because of the more than 50% responses from the school heads and the teachers. For instance, the top challenge for the ICT environment showed 68.52% of those who participated in the survey the statement: *"The school has no facilities for CSE information dissemination and advocacy campaigns"*, while the assessment also revealed the same percentage for the statement: *"Inconsistent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms on CSE at the school level"*. For school leadership and management, it showed 61.11% of the respondents agreed with the statement: *"Lack of guidance on the teaching of the CSE curriculum from the technical assistance providers"*. Meanwhile, the schools division/region/CO technical assistance revealed 59.26% responses for the statement: *"Limited prioritization of CSE in the educational sector."*

For community industry, GOs, NGOs, CSOs partnerships, two major challenges of the program were revealed. It determined the *“Lack of participation and support from the community industry, GOs, CSOs, and other stakeholders in the implementation of the CSE program”* and *“Stakeholders were not active even they have attended training”* as the major challenges of the program with 75.73% and 70.37% responses, respectively. Dela Luna et al. (2024) determined the functions of government agencies, CSOs, and the private sector in the implementation of reproductive health programs. In their study, the role of GOs such as the LGUs was to guarantee that schools have CSE programs that encompass reproductive health-related topics, while the role of the private sector and CSOs was to expand their range of services and reach more people in need. Therefore, the engagement of the external stakeholders was necessary in the delivery of other specific activities and projects of the program. Chavula et al. (2022) also made this point that there was an improvement observed through enhancing connections between schools and healthcare facilities, and collaboration between schools and communities.

Overall, the major challenges among the different curriculum support systems included the absence of a registered guidance counselor in the school, lack of participation and support from the community industry, GOs, CSOs, and other stakeholders in the implementation of the CSE program, lack of comprehensive CSE teaching and learning resources for CSE integration, stakeholders were not active even they had attended training, and lack of training for teachers on CSE implementation with 81.48%, 75.93%, 72.22%, 70.37%, and 70.37% responses, respectively.

IV. Conclusion

The extent of implementation of the program ranged from satisfied to highly satisfied as to the assessments of the respondents on the different curriculum support systems using the CSE Framework of DepEd Order No. 031, s. 2018. Teachers were satisfied with all the curriculum support systems, while the school heads were highly satisfied. Despite the positive responses, the program was still challenged by the absence of a registered guidance counselor in the school, the lack of participation and support from the community industry, GOs, CSOs, and other stakeholders in the implementation of the CSE program, the lack of comprehensive CSE teaching and learning resources for CSE integration, the stakeholders were not active even they had attended training, and the lack of training for teachers on CSE implementation. Hence, an action plan should be developed by the findings of this research to address these major challenges and improve the CSE implementation which may include the hiring of registered guidance counselors and the provision of teaching and learning resources and training.

Researchers may also implement similar studies in other research locales and/or use other research methods. They can conduct similar studies at public and private elementary schools, junior high schools, and senior high school, and at learning centers for Special Education and Alternative Learning Systems and laboratory schools of local universities and colleges and state

universities and colleges. Assessment of the implementation and integration of the CSE within the Indigenous Learning Systems and Madrasah Education Program can also be conducted. In addition, given the limited numbers of school heads and secondary schools in the data gathering of the study, the results must be further validated with more respondents from this group and with an expanded research locale.

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