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**ACTIVITIES SUPPORTING SEX EDUCATION TO
ADOLESCENCE IN HANOI NOWADAYS
(RESEARCH AT ACADEMY SECONDARY SCHOOL AND THANH LIET
SECONDARY SCHOOL)**

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ABSTRACT

Activities supporting sex education in schools are basic ones with the purpose of organizing models to contribute to the completion of sex education for students, meeting the requirements of students' life and society diversity. These activities include classroom activities, extra-curricular activities, awareness-raising activities for students and educational forces, and counseling activities. The article assesses the current situation of sex education in schools nowadays, thereby proposing some feasible solutions.

KEYWORDS

Activities, sex education, school, social work.



1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is an age with many strong changes both physically and mentally, especially in sexual development. In recent years in Vietnam, the age of puberty has come earlier than before. The average age of puberty in girls is 14-15 years old, but now it has decreased to 11-12 years old, in fact, even some 8-9 years old girls have puberty. (According to Doctor Huynh Thi Thu Thuy - Deputy Director of Tu Du Hospital.

According to the Department of Maternal and Child Health - Ministry of Health, the rate of adolescents pregnant in the total number of pregnant people increased continuously over the years: in 2010: 2.9%; in 2011: 3.1%; in 2012: 3.2%, respectively the abortion rate in this age group was 2.2% (2010), 2.4% (2011) and 2.3% (2012).

Early sexual intercourse will seriously damage to both men and women not only in psychologically but also in physiologically. For women, abortion can cause many risks such as genital tract infections, bleeding, pelvic blood stasis... The mild complication may be endometritis, more serious one is uterine adhesions, fallopian tubes, and even infertility. For men, the intercourse before 20 years old will make them suffer from erectile dysfunction, premature ejaculation and especially sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. (According to Doctor Nguyen Hoai Bac- Viet Duc Hospital). In addition, according to a report by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in 2011, the number of 1,453 sexually abused children in the whole country was added to the rate of abortions and motherhood minors.

Faced with this situation, 46% of the children sought help from friends, 24% called the switchboard; 13.5% hidden and the remaining 16.5% used other methods (According to Ho Chi Minh City Development Research Institute). During puberty, children go through tremendous physical and psychological changes. This can even make them panic if there is no psychological preparation and guidance from adults. Teenagers need guidance about gender and social relationships, but who can they share their gender problems? Many of them are afraid to talk to their parents about love and gender changes because of different opinions. Others share with their friends and this can put them at risk because the information they receive is not always correct. The people who can provide the best information to children are teachers because teachers are the closest people to students at school and understand them best in terms of gender.

The development issues of children are always cared about by the Vietnamese Party and State of Vietnam. There have been many important policies and models such as: Action Program on Reproductive Health Education and HIV/AIDS prevention for secondary school students in the 2007-2010 period; the integration of sex education into the National Education Strategy 2011-2020,.... However, these activities are still very modest which has not met the needs of sex education for adolescents. This leads to the fact that adolescents are not fully equipped with knowledge related to sex education, making them confused with the rapid changes in conception of love and sex. That's why they have to bear the heavy consequences when entering the "adult world".

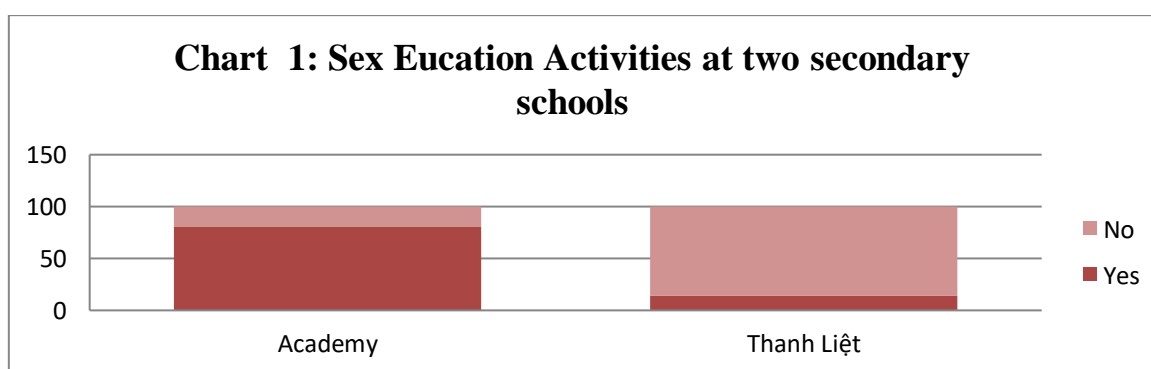
All of the above issues have prompted me to write an article about "Activities supporting sex education to adolescence at secondary schools in Hanoi nowadays". It aims to learn about the models of sex educational activities which are being carried out at some secondary schools in Hanoi with the desire to improve the quality of sex education for minors - the future owners of the country.

2. General situation of sex education activities for adolescents in Hanoi

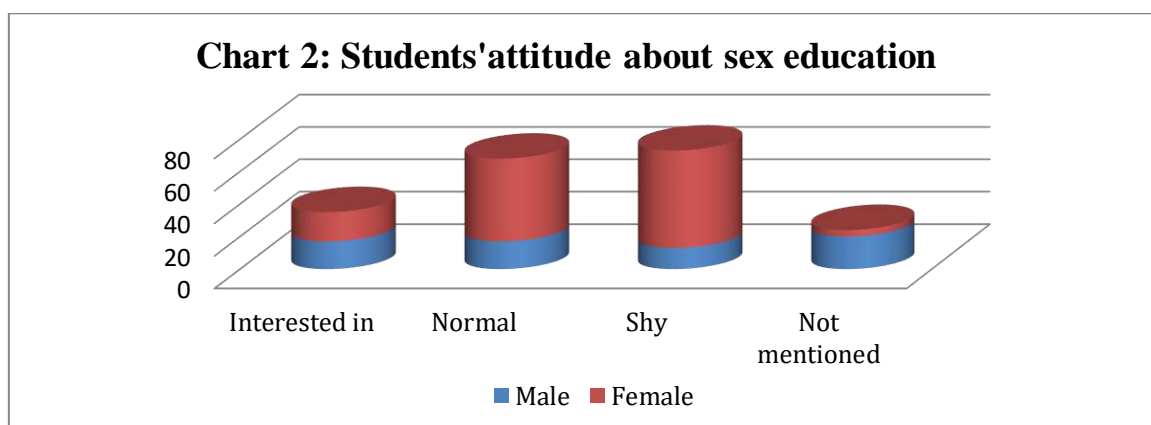
The Sex Education Program was implemented by the Ministry of Education and Training in 1981 and up to now, it has been carried out for 35 years at secondary schools with different models. In this article, we focus on two directions that are widely deployed by secondary schools in Hanoi: the integrated model and the scale model of sex education.

2.1. Contents of Sex Education Program for students at secondary schools.

School is the place where people begin to be exposed to social diversity, taught many things different from the background in the family. School plays a very important role in guiding children. We studied about the supporting of sex education activities, compared the integrated model with the scale model. Our recent survey results have shown:



From the results, I found that the issue of sex education has been concerned by the whole society. However, not all schools have activities to support sex education for students. With the question: "Does your school organize sex education activities for students?", the answer is "Yes" for 81/ 100 votes at Academy secondary school. "Our school organizes sex education activities twice a year, each time we learn more about knowledge that sometimes we don't dare to ask adults" (In-depth interview 11: female student in grade 8 at Academy secondary school). Also with this question, I only received 14 answers with "Yes" out of 100 distributed at Thanh Liet Secondary School. "We haven't learned about sex education in school yet" (In-depth interview 2: female student in grade 8 at Thanh Liet Secondary School).



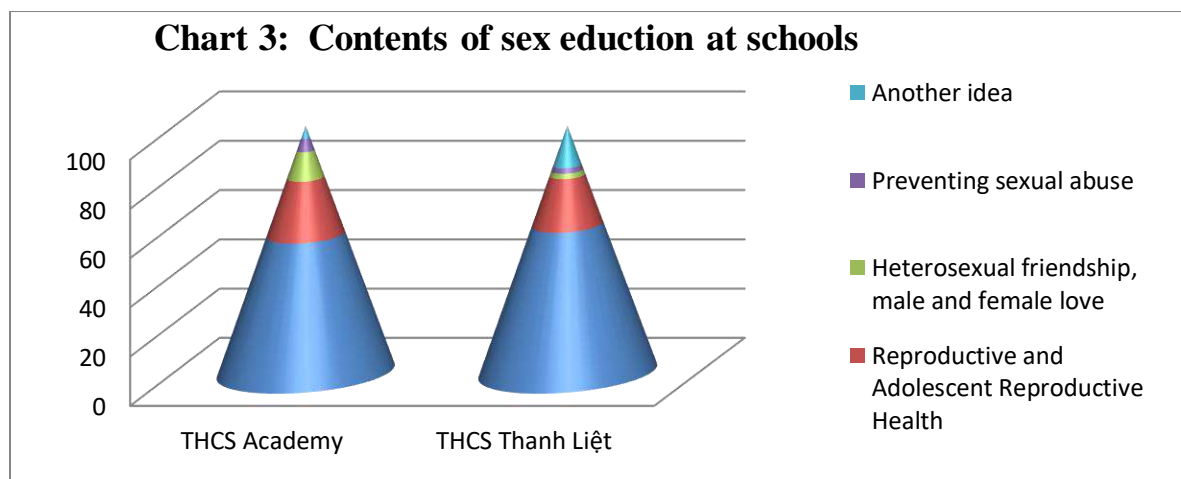
From the chart, it can be seen that there is a comparison of students' attitudes about the term of sex education. Among 200 students asked about their feelings about "sex education", 17.5% of them felt interested and they do not feel shy when talk to sex education issues; 34% felt normal; the majority of 41.5% felt shy; 12% of students do not want to hear anything about this issue. At the age of teenagers, they wanted to learn about sex education, but their understanding of this issue is different depending on the model as well as each family they live in.

I also noticed that there is a distinction between boys and girls about the term sex education. In the total of 200 girls, there are 60 girls feel shy. Puberty is a time of many changes, especially for girls. On the other hand, the sex education programs are often taught in grade 8 when many of students have been puberty. This leads to inadequacies in education.

With the question: "Are you satisfied with the sex education program at the school?" 60 responses out of 200 were satisfied with the sex education program at their school and the remaining 140 votes were not satisfied. Another question about the satisfaction of classmates with sex education at school, I also received the same answer. It is understandable that the current sex education curriculum still has many unreasonable points.

Most students are still shy about sex education (accounting for 46% of the total 200 students). Some of them want to learn but they are afraid of people's scrutiny (37.5 % of the total 200 students). When there is a problem related to sex education, students often use Internet to find out rather than ask an adult (12% of the total 200 students). Some other opinions say that not only the students but also the teachers feel embarrassed when talk about this issue.

In fact, most adults consider sex education only as the issue of intercourse, so they do not often talk too much about this issue. However, that makes the children blind to information and finds unknown sources of information instead of sharing to their parents.

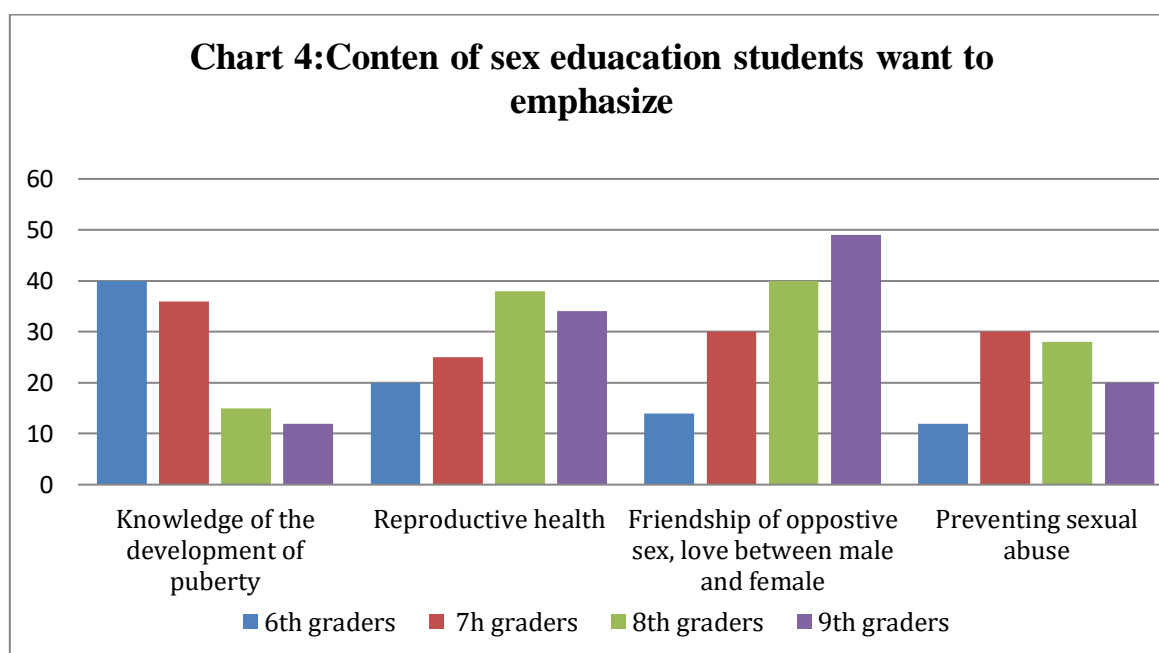


In education, the issue of sex education has also been taught throughout all levels of education. At the secondary school level, the model of sex education is integrated with other different subjects such as Biology, Civic education...

The model of large-scale sex education activities is the separation of sex education by a private activity. These programs are organized by inviting a number of lecturers at some schools such as the University of Education, the University of Military Medicine and some psychologists to teach students at the school in extra-curricular periods.

Almost all secondary schools today put great emphasis on sex education related to some basic knowledge such as human anatomy, knowledge about teenager, (60% at Thanh Liet Secondary School and 56% at Academy secondary school). The psychological problems of students are still hardly discussed in the content of sex education program at those schools.

From the results of survey, almost all students realize the importance of sex education at school (70% of the total 200 students), but they consider it as a delicate subject instead of a public subject. In sex education lessons, girls often feel shy and embarrassed when hearing the words such as "vagina", "penis", ...Some boys are joking around, making sex education lessons often be difficult to absorb. This is also one of the reasons why students are currently confused with the subject of sex.



Through the statistics of the opinions of students at different ages from 12-15 years old in the grades 6-7 at Academy and Thanh Liet Secondary School, it can be seen that, most of students in grade 6 (with up to 95% of the total 42 students in 6th grade) want to learn knowledge related to puberty. They are starting puberty with initial concerns about the body so it is necessary to focus on providing problems about height development, doing exercises or suitable nutrition....

For 7th graders, they also pay attention to the knowledge of pubertal development (61% of the 59 students), but instead of the knowledge about changes inside the body, they have cared about their appearance and the school age love. We need to provide them with issues of gender aesthetics, avoid the affect of revealing clothing, asserting themselves with shocking words or images.

For 8th graders, I realize that these students need to be given the most attention in the current period. Because the students in this age often want to assert the greatest personal ego; they are both

adults and children. Up to 83% of the total 46 students in grade 8 think that it is necessary to provide them with knowledge about the structure of the reproductive organs of their body and that of the opposite sex, what are the abnormal manifestations of the female reproductive organs, building hygiene habits to protect the genital system. They need to know what sex is, its benefits and harms; safe sex practices; scientific basis of contraceptive methods; signs of pregnancy; causes, manifestations and prevention of sexual diseases; skills to deal with if you have had voluntary or unwanted sex (forced). They need to be psychologically prepared for such cases, what they need to do to avoid shock and unfortunate consequences such as unwanted pregnancy, sexual diseases, and even psychological problems that make some children can sacrifice.

Students in grade 9 is at the age of curiosity, the fact that children often learn more about the sexes, and heterosexual feelings or love is what they worry about (92% out of 53 students in grade 9).

The exchange and sharing with children about emotional problems, love or problems about living with their own gender, but changing in psychology, ... is one of the goals of sex education geared towards this age group. Only by opening up the ideology of sex education can children have a healthy mindset to study and avoid unfortunate risks that occur with them.

3. The role of social workers in supporting sex education activities

The social worker is a social doctor who performs the functions of the social work profession to solve social problems. According to the International Association of Social Workers - IFSW, social workers are defined as people operating in a variety of fields, with formal and semi-professional training, equipped with knowledge and skills in social work to help subjects improve their ability to solve and deal with problems in life; create opportunities for subjects to access necessary resources; promote the interaction between individuals, between individuals and the environment to influence social policies, agencies and organizations for the benefit of individuals, families, groups and communities through research and practice activities.

The role of an educator

At the public secondary schools, such as Thanh Liet Secondary School, in addition to teaching specialized subjects, the teachers of Biology, Civic Education or Union officials are often given the additional task of teaching sex education. Although there are many limitations in quality, it has partly met the needs of adolescents.

For schools belonging to the private sector – at Academy Secondary School, inviting NGOs or private organizations initially facilitated the establishment of sex education service providers. It is this service system that has supplemented the operation of state services and opened a new direction for the development of diverse forms of flexible and friendly service delivery for minors, even specifically for different groups such as men, women, and students, adolescents who are injecting drug users, and have HIV. In the future, sex education service providers of non-state organizations and individuals will play an important role, making the provision of sex education services more diversified and effective.

The role of a social advocate

Communication activities to provide information and advice on sex education to minors have been carried out by the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union in many forms such as: compiling gender education materials. Computers (flyers, books, notebooks, video tapes, etc.); organizing communication campaigns; establish websites and hotlines for counseling on sex education issues.

Intervention models on sex education for adolescents have always been focused on developing by the Youth Union: Youth Counseling Center; Pre-Marriage and Reproductive Health Club; Youth friendly service corner located in Youth Union facilities; Young people volunteer to conduct education on reproductive health.... However, the response level of the Youth Union at the grassroots level is still uneven. The above-mentioned sex education interventions were organized sporadically, lacked uniformity and scale.

4. Some solutions in sex education activities at secondary schools

4.1. Content of sex education activities for students at secondary schools

Classroom sex education activities

Through the implementation of the model of sex education integrated into the two subjects above, it will provide knowledge and at the same time educate students' attitudes and practice life skills.

For Biology: the goal of integrating sex education with a focus on reproductive health education is defined as: helping students have an accurate and scientific understanding of the male and female reproductive organs, the fertilization, conception and fetal development, basic contraceptive methods, sex determination and sexually transmitted diseases. From the above knowledge, students have a sense of self-study information about adolescent reproductive health; have a sense of prevention of pregnancy, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases.

With the subject of Civic Education: integrating lessons on legal education and sex education so that students have understandings about pure friendship, prevention of social evils and HIV-AIDS infection, and rights and obligations in marriage, live ethically and obey the law. Thereby, children have the right attitude to live, be responsible to friends, build good friendships, have a sense of prevention from social evils, be responsible for themselves, their families and society in the future, comply with the law.

Sex education activities outside of class time

Sex education activities by the method outside of class time is one of the programs commonly applied by secondary schools today. Sex education activities by the after-school method have more advantages than sex education activities in the classroom because because the time of after-school activities is longer (about 2-3 hours), the organization will be more popular to more classes, more students, etc. Sex education activities are carried out according to a strict process from the preparation stage to the stage of organizing and implementing the activities and finally evaluating the results of the activities. .

School counseling

School counseling emphasizes the exploitation of the student's own resources, the family's and the society's. It aims to help students solve difficult problems that they are facing. School counseling in secondary schools focuses on academic counseling, emotional counseling and career counseling. Focusing on issues of student protection and development, encouraging and promoting the growth of students in terms of personality, social relations, and spirituality, learning ability, good practice of life skills, overcoming difficulties and obstacles before falling into evils and failures.

Raising awareness about sex education for students and educational force

For the School

The school needs to organize the integration into the class parent meeting, or organize the exchange activities on sex education with parents to create awareness for parents of students. Experts can be invited to talk about gender with parents.

The school also has many ways to communicate to parent's knowledge about sex through the school's websites with sex education content, or organize clubs to help parents exchange, give interactions between parents with positive attitudes and the ones with negative perceptions.

For teachers

Sex education activities together with classroom teaching activities provide students with knowledge in all aspects, balance the learning and teaching process to realize the educational goals of the grade level. In this process, the teacher is always the one who plays the leading role, of teaching the children through the lessons, and guiding them to learn.

For the family

The family is the first socialized environment of people, in which parents are the people who have the strongest influence on the personality development of children. Behavior between parents - is the earliest lesson for children about gender behavior between a man and a woman. Children will gradually absorb gender knowledge from their own families. Since then, over the years, male or female behaviors and attitudes are formed that are accepted by everyone and society.

For students

Nowadays, students are not fully aware of the position and role of sex education activities in the formation and development of their personality. It is necessary to propagate to help children understand properly about sex education. Sex education not only equips children with the future baggage that they all need right now. We often say that sex is instinctive, but what really affects sex is what's between the ears, not what's between the legs. To do that, it is necessary to raise awareness for students so that they need to properly understand this issue as well as share with adults what they want to learn and say.

Moreover, the students themselves in puberty have to raise their self-awareness and take more responsibility for their lives. They need voluntarily participate in sex education courses with a positive attitude and desire to learn, avoid teasing and joking attitudes towards teachers and other students. When they have questions about sex education, they can look to reliable sources such as sharing with their parents or teachers at school.

For society

Society is changing and developing rapidly accompanied by a series of evils and the early development of young people. Therefore, in public places such as parks, lawns, lakeshores, etc., adults have been showing their intimate affection at all times and places in an excessive way, causing children to be curious and to naturally learn following those images.

Developing many programs and events on sex education to attract the participation of all classes of society to influence people's attitudes towards sex education in a more positive way. Expanding information and communication channels for young people on sex education and reproductive health. Regularly organizing the game shows, programs to learn about reproductive

health, sex education. Disseminating information on external contraceptive methods, consequences of abortion, and unwanted pregnancy.

Diversifying continuously the mass media programs. The content of these programs must be attractively constructed, regardless of age and gender. Increasing face-to-face counseling to help young people gain insights into sex education. Promoting consulting services, training counselors (such as medical staff, social workers, etc.) with professional counseling skills. Strengthening the expansion of peer education activities and adopting policies to encourage young people to participate in this activity. Developing communication activities to raise community awareness about sex education. The concept of "drawing a way for deer to run" is completely wrong.

4.2. Forms of sex education activities for students at secondary schools

The form of organization of sex education is one of the important factors determining the success of the sex education program at secondary schools, the diversity of activities makes the program more lively and easier to access for students than sitting and taking notes. The form of organization should be rich, diverse and attractive.

Form 1: Organizing sex education activities in the classroom

For lessons with integrated sex education content, the social workers need to clearly define the content that will be prioritized for each topic of the lecture, through the content imparted and clearly oriented to students (for different subjects – male or female). With the contents which students still misunderstood, or not yet understood, the social workers spent more time analyzing, proving and clarifying, helping them to grasp the essence of the problem. Social workers regularly collect knowledge to supplement, enrich and increase the persuasiveness of content such as HIV infection situation, the status of students' awareness and behavior related to gender, such as aesthetic concepts in dress, speech, posture, behavior of male and female students, relationships between the sexes, friendship, love... in school and society.

Form 2: Organizing activities outside of class time

Extracurricular are subjects or educational activities outside of the formal school curriculum. Therefore, unlike classroom education activities, extracurricular activities are irregular activities, without formal programs and defined in terms of time like other forms of education. However, extracurricular activities have an important meaning in promoting self-education, adding necessary knowledge, contributing to the formation of attitudes, behaviors and building the right gender qualities for students.

Form 3: Organization of telephone consultations, online consultations

Telephone consultation

In the current information explosion situation, this form of counseling is very suitable for children's psychology and is chosen by many children. Thanks to this form, children have the opportunity to fully express their inner thoughts and "secrets" - things that cannot easily be shared with teachers, parents, friends and relatives.

Internet consultation

Nowadays, using the Internet is very common for students. They can call and write an email to a psychologist to fulfill your wish to be consulted about your difficulties.

Form 4: Opening a school counseling room at secondary schools

School counseling room promptly advise students on psychological issues, gender, friendship, love, sex, and answer questions about age.

Building a consulting force.

- Experts group: Lecturers teaching Psychology subjects at universities or social workers working in the field of schools or children in Hanoi.
- Support group: Teachers who are currently teaching at the school or retired teachers from the Education Department in Hanoi.

Form 5: Developing a library on sex education

The library is a place where provides information, creates conditions to help students develop comprehensively, especially their creative thinking, contributes to helping the school complete the career of training human resources and foster talents for the country. In order to ensure sex education activities in high quality and educational effectiveness, the library need increase the sources of materials with good content, including adequate textbooks and relevant specialized reference books with the program. Document sources must be diverse in genres: in addition to traditional books, newspapers and magazines, it is necessary to collect a full range of information products in any place and in any form. Especially, the quality of documents must be suitable and meet the requirements of students.

Form 6: Opening the clubs on sex education

Teenager clubs are groups of boys and girls in which they can share information, interests and difficulties of their own age. Sex education clubs help adolescents promote healthy lifestyles, values and behaviors, and self-control ability.

4. CONCLUSION

After researching at Thanh Liet Secondary School and Academy Secondary School in Hanoi, I have some conclusions as follows: I find that most of the assumptions made are quite close to the reality of the investigation. However, despite being well aware of the content of sex education, the educational forces rarely mention the topic of sex with children. On the other hand, schools are only talking about a few contents of sex education whereas this issue is much diversified. It shows the difference between awareness and education of educational forces. Maybe for students, gender is a delicate issue, moreover due to barriers of Eastern culture, they are still afraid to talk about this issue, but most importantly, they are not equipped skills as well as information about gender should be hesitant to know how and when to start.

Most people believe that sex education is best from schools (accounting for 60%) because the school will educate in a more scientific and methodical way. Education must be appropriate to each age, and each stage of students 'development so that they do not have a skewed view of gender. Sex education is not just about sex but all things related to gender such as adolescence psychophysics, early questions about love - marriage - family... Sex education helps adolescents become more mature in their sense of gender identity, so that they can confidently stand up before entering the world. Sex education must be adapted to the culture and social lifestyle in which children live, aimed for lasting

love and marriage, not to satisfy temporary curiosity. Therefore, sex education is only really useful when the content orientation is closely related to the psychophysiology of the child, especially the adolescent age.

But in fact, in schools today, sex education has not been fully implemented, so students are having to approach knowledge in a "halfway". Sex education activities are a component in the education system at secondary schools, playing an important role in determining children's lives. Through sex education activities, the children can compare and test the knowledge they have learned so that they belong to the students, promote their initiative and positivity, create opportunities develop skills, direct students to useful thoughts and activities. Sex education activities need to be opened and completed in terms of the program's purpose, content and form. Through investigating in secondary schools today, there are many factors affecting the sex education program that have not been popularized and have not brought interest to lecturers and listeners, partly due to the recognition inadequate awareness about the role of sex education in the formation and development of children's comprehensive personality. Social workers need to be an objective factor to support the current sex education activities in secondary schools.

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