School youth and sexuality: between paths and mishaps for sex education in the Brazilian school context

Juventudes escolares e sexualidade: entre percursos e percalços para uma educação sexual no contexto escolar no Brasil

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ABSTRACT
Purpose: This article aims to analyze whether and how Brazilian school youths have access to the topic of sexuality, seeking to identify the main approaches adopted and difficulties with regard to sex education. Research Methods/Approach: A qualitative approach was chosen, grounded in a bibliographic review with a descriptive-exploratory character. For data analysis, the content analysis technique was used, involving data coding and categorization process. The research results were presented in the form of a narrative synthesis. Findings: It was observed that school youths have different ways of accessing and discussing sexuality. In some studies, young people are presented as active subjects in the construction of their knowledge on the subject and the school is seen as an important space for dialogue and the exchange of information. Conversely, other studies indicate that youths often encounter challenges in openly and candidly addressing sexuality, whether due to lack of opportunities within schools or due to cultural and religious factors. Implications: The examined studies underline the necessity of adopting a comprehensive and integrated approach to sexual education, encompassing not only biological and physiological aspects but also cultural, social, and emotional dimensions. The importance of promoting sex education that respects gender diversity and sexual orientation is also highlighted. It was also possible to identify some factors that influence the approach to sexuality at school, such as teacher training and the cultural values present in the society in which the school is inserted.

Keywords: school youth, sexuality, sexual education.

RESUMO
Objetivo: Este artigo objetiva analisar se e como as juventudes escolares brasileiras têm acesso ao tema sexualidade, buscando identificar as principais abordagens adotadas e dificuldades no que diz respeito à educação sexual. Metodologia e Coleta de Dados: Optou-se por uma abordagem qualitativa alicerçada em uma revisão bibliográfica com caráter descritivo-exploratório. Para a análise dos dados, foi utilizada a técnica de análise de conteúdo em um processo de codificação e categorização dos dados. Os resultados da pesquisa
foram apresentados em forma de síntese narrativa. Resultados e Discussão: Observou-se que as juventudes escolares apresentam diferentes formas de acesso e discussão sobre sexualidade. Em alguns estudos, os jovens são apresentados como sujeitos ativos na construção de seus conhecimentos sobre a temática e a escola é vista como espaço importante para o diálogo e a troca de informações. Em contrapartida, outros estudos indicam que os jovens muitas vezes têm dificuldades em abordar a temática da sexualidade de forma aberta e franca, seja por falta de oportunidades na escola ou por questões culturais e religiosas. Considerações Finais: Os estudos analisados apontam a necessidade da adoção de uma abordagem ampla e integrada da educação sexual, considerando não apenas aspectos biológicos e fisiológicos, mas também culturais, sociais e emocionais. Destaca-se também a importância de se promover uma educação sexual que respeite a diversidade de gênero e orientação sexual. Foi possível, ainda, identificar alguns fatores que influenciam na abordagem da sexualidade na escola, como a formação dos professores e os valores culturais presentes na sociedade em que a escola está inserida.

Palavras-chave: educação sexual, juventudes escolares, sexualidade.

1 INTRODUCTION

Sexuality has been the subject of intense discussions in contemporary Brazilian society. The appreciation of diversity and different forms of sexual expression has been increasingly emphasized. However, when it comes to addressing sexuality in schools and among young people, the topic becomes complex and controversial.

Sexual education is a right of young individuals and an essential tool for preventing sexually transmitted infections (STIs), early pregnancy, and sexual abuse. Furthermore, sexual education contributes to the development of self-esteem, self-confidence, and the formation of values and attitudes that respect the diversity of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Nevertheless, the approach to sexuality in schools is still plagued by prejudices, taboos, and resistance, often tied to moral and religious conceptions that limit discussions on the subject. Additionally, the lack of educators’ preparedness, the absence of effective public policies, and the lack of communication with families are obstacles that hinder the implementation of a
broader, inclusive, and sensitive sexual education that addresses the needs and
demands of school youths within the Brazilian educational context.

In light of this scenario, it is crucial to seek an understanding of whether
Brazilian school youths have access to information about sexuality and how they
discuss the topic, in order to identify the main challenges and potentialities for
promoting more appropriate and effective sexual education through the
implementation of educational activities within the school environment.

The first initiatives to introduce the topic of sexual education in Brazilian
schools, albeit solely from biological and hygienic perspectives, took place in the
1960s (Pirotta et al., 2015), but these were halted by the military coup in Brazil.
As a result, the necessary pedagogical approach to the subject was only officially
established in Brazil in 1996, through the National Education Guidelines and
Bases Law, particularly through its subsequent developments in the form of the
National Curricular Parameters (Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais, PCN)
publication. Reflecting on this document, Pirotta et al. (2015) observes that

The distinctive feature of this guiding document pertains to pedagogical
actions, supported by Cross-Cutting Themes, which encompass a
range of subjects that should be approached in an interdisciplinary
manner to foster critical and socially conscious individuals aware of
their rights and social responsibilities. In this manner, topics such as
ethics, the environment, cultural pluralism, consumption, health, and
sexual orientation are anchored in the perspective of education for
citizenship, which entails raising awareness and active participation
from all sectors of the school community (Pirotta et al., 2015, p.196, our
translation).

Still, the approach to sexuality in Brazilian schools remains a subject of
debates and criticisms. One of the primary arguments against sexual education
in schools is that it might encourage promiscuity and early engagement in sexual
activities. However, studies indicate that sexual education can be a significant
tool for preventing sexually transmitted diseases, early pregnancy, and for
promoting healthy and respectful relationships.

Given the aforementioned, the goal of this article is to analyze whether and
how Brazilian school youths have access to the topic of sexuality, aiming to
identify the main approaches, beliefs, and practices adopted by young individuals
regarding sexual education. More specifically, the study aims to deepen understanding of how young people interact with the subject of sexuality in schools, considering the inclusion or absence of the topic by teachers. It seeks to reflect on the potential paths and challenges faced by these youths when attempting to address the topic in the classroom.

2 RESEARCH METHODS/APPROACH

In this article, a qualitative approach was chosen, grounded in a literature review with a descriptive-exploratory nature. For data collection, the methodology of systematic search for scientific articles was employed using databases such as Scielo, BVS Brazil, and Google Scholar. The selected articles were chosen based on predefined inclusion criteria, which encompassed studies conducted exclusively in Brazil, written in the Portuguese language, and openly accessible. According to Gil (2017), inclusion criteria are essential for defining the sample and ensuring the external validity of the research.

Systematic search is a fundamental technique for literature reviews, as it enables the objective and transparent identification of relevant studies for the research. Another important aspect in conducting literature reviews is the use of reliable and recognized databases within the research field (Bereto et al., 2007). In this context, Scielo, BVS Brazil, and Google Scholar are significant databases in health and social sciences research and are widely utilized by Brazilian researchers.

The search terms used included "school youth," "sexuality," and "sexual education," as well as combinations of these terms using Boolean operators "AND" and "OR" to enhance specificity in identifying studies that simultaneously encompassed each of the outlined descriptors. These terms were selected due to their direct relevance to the topic of interest and their coverage of a wide range of studies on the subject. According to Franco (2020), the choice of descriptors is a crucial aspect in conducting a systematic search, as it requires the utilization of terms closely related to the study object, enabling the identification of relevant studies.
Following the article selection, a thorough reading of the chosen studies was conducted. For data analysis, the content analysis technique was employed, which involves a process of data coding and categorization (Bardin, 2015). According to Franco (2020), content analysis is a widely used technique in qualitative research, as it enables the identification of patterns and trends within collected data.

The research findings were presented in the form of a narrative synthesis, which, as outlined by de Souza Minayo (2017), is a presentation method for results that facilitates the construction of a coherent and clear narrative concerning the research findings, based on the categories identified during the analysis of selected articles.

3 FINDINGS

Upon analyzing the outcomes of the selected research, it becomes evident that school youths exhibit various forms of access to and discussion of sexuality. In some studies, young individuals are portrayed as active participants in constructing their knowledge about the topic, with the school being perceived as a significant space for dialogue and information exchange. According to de Paula Oliveira et al. (2014), in their research involving students from elementary and high schools in the public education system of Manaus, the capital of Amazonas state, the majority of young students reported acquiring information about sexuality through school, friends, and family. Moreover, the study participants highlighted the importance of open and nonjudgmental discussions about the subject within the school environment.

In a different way, other studies indicate that young individuals often encounter difficulties in addressing sexuality openly and candidly, either due to lack of space and opportunities within the school or owing to cultural and religious factors (Mendes & Dorne, 2022; da Silva et al., 2019).

In a study by Pinheiro et al. (2017), conducted with high school students in a Brazilian public school, adolescents acknowledge the importance of sexual education, yet many still have gaps in their knowledge about protecting
themselves against Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and unintended pregnancies. The study highlighted that major gaps in adolescents' knowledge on the subject include unprotected sex, lack of awareness about risks, misinformation, and the absence of prevention programs in most Brazilian schools. According to the authors, schools emerge as crucial spaces for fostering debates and reflections on the subject. They further suggest that educators need to be prepared to address students' inquiries and doubts and that schools should implement strategies for health promotion and protection, thereby contributing to and bolstering adolescent self-care regarding health.

The results of another study indicate that television, the internet, and social media have become increasingly important as sources of information about sexuality for young individuals. In this regard, the youth are recognized as a vulnerable group, as they are prone to misconceptions about the practice of their sexuality, often leading to early sexual initiation, which involves not only biological challenges but also psychological ones (Prioste, 2016). The author also emphasizes the significance of educators being attuned to this reality and fostering critical and reflective discussions about the use of the internet as an information source.

This underscores the fact that many Brazilian youths still encounter difficulties in accessing information about sexuality, and in numerous cases, the information sources are inadequate or unreliable. This lack of information can result in risky behaviors, such as not using contraceptives and engaging in unprotected sexual activities, thereby increasing the likelihood of unintended pregnancies and the transmission of sexually transmitted infections. The extensive printed and especially online materials, including pornography, that children and adolescents have access to, distort what constitutes a healthy sexual experience. As Prioste (2016) further elaborates the expansion of the internet has revolutionized communication methods and provided global access to information. However, many adolescents lack the maturity to select quality and age-appropriate materials, which exposes them to early sexualization without proper guidance (Prioste, 2016, p.102, our translation).
And this could be avoided if both families and schools were open to a healthy discussion about the subject and were willing to understand and address the inquiries that arise from the youth's lack of experience. Consequently, it becomes evident that the lack of proper information and the taboo surrounding sexuality continue to pose obstacles to a broader and more effective sexual education within schools. Moreover, according to a study conducted by Garcia et al. (2021), challenges in implementing sexual education in schools span from political-ideological and religious aspects to an immaturity in addressing these topics seriously in various settings, including the school environment.

Furthermore, it has also been observed that sexual education in schools often focuses solely on biological and reproductive aspects, disregarding issues related to sexual diversity, gender, and interpersonal relationships. Studies by Barbosa et al. (2019) and Pereira et al. (2021), for instance, emphasize the importance of including these themes in sexual education programs to promote a broader and more inclusive perspective of sexuality.

In the following subsections, the aforementioned findings will be elaborated upon in detail.

3.1 FACTORS INFLUENCING (NON)DISCUSSION OF SEXUALITY IN SCHOOL

The reviewed studies indicate that several factors can influence how the discussion about sexuality is approached in schools. One of these factors is the teachers' training to handle the topic. According to D'Affonseca et al. (2019), many teachers feel ill-equipped to address sexuality with students, which can lead to superficial or evasive approaches, "along with a lack of teaching materials, obstacles in getting other teachers to address the subject interdisciplinarily, lack of enthusiasm or concern to discuss the topic" (Bandeira J. et al., 2016 as cited in da Silva et al., 2019, p. 8, our translation).

Another factor influencing the discussion about sexuality in schools is the culture and values present in the society to which the school belongs. In a society marked by conservative and prejudiced values, sexual education is still viewed
as a taboo or a subject to be avoided, even though its discussion is legitimized by official documents in Brazil. Thus, educational norms and policies also play a crucial role in how sexuality is addressed in schools. In Brazil, within the school curriculum, during the 1960s, the focus of sexual education was primarily on preventing teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. From 1996 onwards, a shift occurred in sexual education in schools with the implementation of the National Curriculum Parameters (Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais, PCN) following the Law 9394/96, which established the Guidelines and Bases of Basic Education (Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação, LDB). The aim was to address sexuality more comprehensively, covering all aspects of sexual life and considering a holistic view for both males and females (Pinheiro et al., 2017).

The National Curriculum Guidelines for Basic Education (Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais da Educação Básica, DCNEB) also recommend the inclusion of sexual education as a cross-cutting theme in the school curriculum. In Article 16 of this document, it explicitly states that

The curricular components and areas of knowledge must articulate, within the possibilities offered by their references, the approach to comprehensive and contemporary themes that impact human life on a global, regional, and local scale, as well as on an individual level. Themes such as health, sexuality and gender, family and social life [...] must permeate the development of content in both the national common base and the diversified part of the curriculum (Brasil, 2013, p.134, emphasis added, our translation).

This underscores the importance of integrating topics such as sexuality and gender into the educational curriculum, reflecting a broader recognition of the need to address these issues in a comprehensive manner.

However, the implementation of these guidelines can vary based on schools' and teachers' interpretation and adherence. Prejudices and stereotypes related to sexuality can also influence how the topic is addressed in schools, as homophobia, transphobia, and misogyny remain prevalent in Brazilian society and can impact the quality of sexual education in schools. Furthermore, the lack of representation of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities in teaching materials and classroom discussions can reinforce stereotypes and prejudices. Additionally, despite the advancement represented by the National Curriculum Parameters (PCN) in the debate on sexuality and sexual education, promoting a
greater incorporation of voices from social and political movements on the subject (Leão et al., 2014), the new National Common Core Curriculum (Base Nacional Comum Curricular, BNCC), a normative document finalized in 2018, has regressed on this achievement. In its text, "sexuality is referred to solely in its biological aspect, mentioning content related to the anatomy and physiology of human reproduction" (Franco-Assis et al., 2021). Thus, as Altmann, (2007, p. 289) asserts, the school "emerges as a privileged space for the development of biopower," where attitudes are regulated in line with what a misogynistic, LGBTQ-phobic, and patriarchal society deems legitimate and acceptable. It becomes an instrument/technology capable of disciplining bodies, seeking to shape a subject that is simultaneously efficient and compliant (Foucault, 2013, as cited in Mendes & Dones, 2022, p. 387).

Lastly, the relationship among teachers, students, and families can also influence how sexuality is approached in schools. According to Silva et al. (2019), a lack of dialogue and trust among these stakeholders can hinder discussions about sexuality and impact the quality of sexual education. On the other hand, active involvement of parents and guardians in discussions about sexuality can contribute to a more open and democratic approach to the topic in schools.

3.2 CONCEPTS AND APPROACHES USED BY YOUTHS IN DISCUSSING SEXUALITY

The reviewed studies indicate that youths hold a variety of concepts and approaches when it comes to sexuality. Some young individuals possess a more biological and physiological view of the subject, while others have a broader and contextualized approach that takes into account cultural and social factors (de Paula Oliveira et al., 2014).

Another common approach among young people is viewing sexuality as a topic linked to emotions and love. Many youths value the emotional relationship and seek to engage in sexuality responsibly and safely. However, the studies also point out that there are still many young individuals who lack basic
knowledge about sexual and reproductive health, which can put them in risky situations (de Paula Oliveira et al., 2014).

Some youths adopt a more biological and anatomical approach, emphasizing the description of sexual organs and physiological processes involved in reproduction, as this is the limited approach and perspective of most teachers (Salla and Quintana 2002 as cited in Franco-Assis et al., 2021, p. 13671). On the other hand, other young people approach sexuality more broadly, discussing issues such as sexual diversity, gender roles, and emotional relationships (Franco-Assis et al., 2021).

Some youths also rely on information from various sources, such as the internet and audiovisual media, to discuss sexuality. However, according to statements from some adolescents and teachers, this approach can pose risks, as these sources are often unreliable and may spread inaccurate and prejudiced information (Silva et al., 2019). Additionally, according to the authors’ study, as some youths affirm, religion can also influence the conceptions and approaches taken in discussions about sexuality. Some religious youths may adopt a more conservative stance regarding sexuality, emphasizing abstinence and preserving virginity until marriage. Conversely, other religious youths may adopt a more inclusive approach, seeking to reconcile their religious beliefs with the appreciation of sexual diversity and the promotion of sexual and reproductive health (Silva et al., 2019).

### 3.3 IMPACT OF SEXUAL EDUCATION ON THE LIVES OF YOUTHS

The reviewed studies indicate that sexual education can have a positive impact on the lives of young individuals. Sexual education can contribute to the development of self-esteem and self-confidence among youths, as well as promote dialogue between parents and children on the subject (Araújo, 2015). Furthermore, sexual education can prevent sexually transmitted diseases and early pregnancies, among other issues related to sexual and reproductive health (da Silva Dias & Goi 2021). The authors’ study also points out that the lack of proper sexual education can have negative consequences for young individuals.
and that lack of information can lead them to adopt risky behaviors and have distorted views about sexuality. This situation "often leads them into risky situations that could be avoided if they were effectively alerted in school through the approach of health-related topics" (da Silva Dias & Goi, 2021, p. 2, our translation).

Sexual education can have a significant impact on the lives of youths, both in the short and long term. According to Almeida et al. (2016), sexual education can contribute to the development of a healthy and responsible sexuality, helping young individuals better understand their own bodies, emotions, and desires, and enabling them to make more conscious and informed decisions about their sexual lives.

Furthermore, sexual education can also contribute to the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and unplanned pregnancies, as pointed out by several authors. Among the studies, it is highlighted that access to information about contraceptives and the promotion of safe sexual practices are important components of sexual education, and they can have a positive impact on the sexual and reproductive health of young individuals (Silva et al., 2019; de Paula Oliveira et al., 2014), as well as in addressing more sensitive topics related to moral and religious inclinations of a significant portion of society, such as gender and sexual orientation issues (da Silva et al., 2019; Franco-Assis et al., 2021; Mendes & Dome, 2022).

As evident from the studies presented so far, the lack of sexual education can lead to negative consequences in the lives of young individuals, and the absence of accurate information about sexuality can result in risky behaviors, such as early initiation of sexual activity and non-use of contraceptive methods, increasing vulnerability to STDs and unplanned pregnancies. Therefore, sexual education can have a positive impact on the lives of young individuals, helping them to navigate their sexuality more consciously and healthily.
3.4 CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS IN SEXUAL EDUCATION FOR SCHOOL YOUTHS

3.4.1 Challenges in approaching sexuality in schools

The studies highlight that challenges still exist in addressing sexuality in schools. Some teachers feel uncomfortable discussing the subject in the classroom, while others consider sexual education to be solely the responsibility of the family. There are also those who believe that talking about sexuality and gender issues might encourage early sexual activity and, according to the thoughts of many parents and surprisingly educators, the promotion of non-heteronormative sexual practices. In their analysis of challenges and potentialities of sexual education in schools, Silva et al. (2008) state that it was possible to verify that even the religiosity of communities already sensitized to respond to HIV/AIDS implies challenges for strengthening secularity in democratic societies. Abortion and homosexuality are the topics that carry the strongest marks of religious moral heteronomy, intersected by the tension between modernity and tradition (Silva et al. 2008, n.p., our translation).

Sexual education is still seen by many as a matter of morality or religiosity, rather than a human right and a public health necessity, which is pointed out by de Souza et al. (2022) when they assert that sexual education practices are indispensable for promoting the health of children and adolescents, and there are already political-pedagogical guidelines as well as programs developed to address the issue. However, beliefs, moral and religious values, communicational aspects, and the lack of training among professionals are some of the factors that hinder its implementation and effectiveness (de Souza et al., 2022, p. 9, our translation).

3.4.2 Youths’ perception of sexual education in schools

Several studies demonstrate that youths value sexual education in schools, but they often feel that the content covered is insufficient or inappropriate. In a study conducted by Silva et al. (2019), for instance, young individuals reported that sexual education classes tend to be superficial and
lacking context. Moreover, there exists a taboo surrounding the discussion of crucial topics such as sexual diversity, gender, and the prevention of sexual violence. Souza et al. (2020) as cited by Franco-Assis et al. (2021) state that

the taboos emerged with the intention of establishing limits on sex and, on the other hand, condemning practices that were not intended for procreation, such as homosexuality, masturbation (both male and female), and anal sex (Souza et al., 2020 as cited in Franco-Assis et al., 2021, p.13669, our translation).

These taboos are often linked to religious, moral, and social values and serve to uphold certain standards of conduct within a society. They are frequently condemned or prohibited due to religious beliefs, social norms, and ideas about procreation and the purpose of sexuality.

3.4.3 Need for broader and more inclusive sexual education

The findings of the studies underscore the need for a broader and more inclusive sexual education that encompasses not only reproduction and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases but also sexual diversity, gender equality, and respect for differences. Sexual education should transcend moralistic discourse and mere transmission of biological information, encompassing social, cultural, political, and psychological aspects of sexuality. Fortunately, despite some political setbacks in recent years in Brazil, there has been a growing advance, as noted by Souza (2018):

[…] within the scope of Sexual Education, a set of sociocultural and political approaches (of human and sexual rights, queer), although encompassing distinct theoretical perspectives,[…] they emphasize the relevance of a political and social stance aimed at problematizing the asymmetric power relations that permeate the fields of sexuality and gender (Souza, 2018, p. 64, our translation).

This evolution in sexual education approaches reflects a more complex and inclusive understanding of sexuality and gender, with an emphasis on dismantling rigid norms and promoting human rights, diversity, and equality.
3.4.4 Importance of youth participation in knowledge building

Several studies underscore the importance of youth participation in constructing knowledge about sexuality. Sexual education should be a process of dialogue and reflection, where young individuals are encouraged to question stereotypes and prejudices, express their doubts and opinions, and build a critical and reflective understanding of sexuality (da Silva & Goi, 2021; da Silva et al., 2019; Sousa et al., 2021). In this context, Sousa et al. (2021), citing Guedes et al. (2017), express that [...] interaction among families, schools, health and assistance units, children, and adolescents to discuss sexuality is urgent. Not only to inform, but to create spaces for listening, problematization, and understanding the experiences of these actors, valuing both scientific knowledge and their own knowledge, addressing social, cultural, and subjective aspects that underpin an expanded, clear, and higher-quality sexual education [...] without adhering to heteronormativity, fostering reflection and dialogue" (Guedes et al., 2017, as cited in Sousa et al., 2021, p. 23, our translation).

3.4.5 Role of teachers in sexual education

Teachers play a crucial role in the sexual education of young individuals. According to Barbosa and Folmer (2019), teachers should be prepared to address issues related to sexuality in a manner that ensures a safe and welcoming learning environment for all students. These authors further emphasize that it's important for teachers to be equipped to discuss complex topics such as sexual diversity, gender, and prevention of sexual violence, and to be capable of addressing their students' questions.

As evident, for effective sexual education in schools, education professionals need to be trained and equipped to handle the demands of young individuals. As highlighted in the study by Furlanetto, et al. (2018), a lack of preparedness among teachers to tackle issues of sexuality can contribute to the perpetuation of prejudice and stigma, in addition to hindering young individuals' access to reliable and updated information. "The lack of systematic training can lead to diverse pedagogical and methodological strategies, which can increase the risk of repressive, punitive, and discriminatory behavior" (Nothaft et al., 2014, as cited in Furlanetto et al., 2018, p. 563).
Moreover, it is crucial for sexual education to be addressed in an interdisciplinary manner, involving various fields of knowledge, such as psychology, biology, sociology, among others. According to the study by Franco-Assis et al. (2021), interdisciplinary approaches can contribute to a broader and more contextualized understanding of sexuality, considering its diverse dimensions, including biological, cultural, historical, and social aspects.

Another significant challenge is combating prejudice and discrimination, particularly in terms of gender and sexual orientation. As outlined in the study by Furlanetto et al. (2018), schools can play a crucial role in promoting gender equality and in combating violence and discrimination against minority groups. The authors assert that "it's essential to invest in teacher training, as unconstructive and discriminatory attitudes have a dual negative impact in the school environment: on the child and/or adolescent with a different sexuality, and on the group as a whole" (Furlanetto et al., 2018, p. 567).

Absolutely, addressing sexual education in an inclusive and respectful manner, considering the diverse sexual orientations and gender identities of young individuals, is crucial. Additionally, it's important to highlight the significance of involving young people in discussions about sexual education. Young individuals need to be active participants in shaping their sexual identities and have the right to be heard and respected in their opinions and experiences. Therefore, it's essential for the approach to sexuality in schools to be participatory and dialogical, enabling young individuals to express their questions, concerns, and aspirations in a safe and supportive environment.

4 IMPLICATIONS/CONCLUDING REMARKS

It's important to highlight that the analyzed research points to the need to adopt a comprehensive and integrated approach to sexual education, considering not only biological and physiological aspects, but also cultural, social, and emotional factors. According to the authors, sexual education should be seen as an ongoing process, rather than just a one-time event in schools. The authors emphasize the importance of promoting sexual education that respects gender
and sexual orientation diversity and encourages the development of values such as respect, responsibility, and affection in sexual relationships.

In light of these findings, it can be concluded that school-aged youths have a complex and multifaceted relationship with the theme of sexuality, which involves social, cultural, familial, and religious aspects.

Another significant point is the need for a more participatory and dialogue-based approach to sexual education. As pointed out by the authors, young people have different experiences and perspectives related to sexuality, and it's important to consider these differences in the educational approach. This can be achieved through participatory methodologies such as debates, group discussions, and workshops that encourage critical reflection and dialogue among young people and between young people and educators. This is because discussing sexuality in school is a complex and challenging topic that involves subjective nuances that need to be understood and embraced.

From this literature review, it was possible to identify some factors influencing the approach to sexuality in schools, such as teacher training and the cultural values present in the society within which the school is situated. Additionally, it was evident that sexual education has a positive impact on young people’s lives, including the prevention of sexual and reproductive health problems and an enhancement of overall quality of life.

For effective sexual education to take place, it’s crucial for teachers to receive appropriate training to handle the topic, and schools should have specific teaching resources. Furthermore, society as a whole must be open to discussing sexuality without prejudice or taboos.

Lastly, it’s essential to emphasize that sexual education is not solely the responsibility of schools; it’s a collective responsibility that involves families, educators, healthcare professionals, and the community at large, as advocated by the authors. Only through an integrated and comprehensive approach can a more complete and effective sexual education be provided to school-aged youths.
REFERENCES


