Sexuality education in Uganda

de Haas, Billie

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2017

Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database

Citation for published version (APA):

Copyright
Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Take-down policy
If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): http://www.rug.nl/research/portal. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.
CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION
Proposing a Theoretical Model for Teachers’ Individual Reasoning Process and its Practical Implications for the Delivery of School-based Sexuality Education in Uganda

This PhD dissertation was initiated to improve the implementation of school-based sexuality education in Uganda in general, and of comprehensive sexuality education in particular. The literature shows that teachers can experience barriers to teaching comprehensive sexuality education. However, little is known about the cultural and religious values and beliefs and personal experiences that can restrain teachers from teaching comprehensive sexuality education, and especially how such values, beliefs and experiences motivate the provision of sexuality education. Therefore, this dissertation aimed to obtain an understanding of teachers’ motivations to teach sexuality education. By doing so, this research aims to contribute to the debate about how, and to what extent, school-based sexuality education can enhance young people’s sexual and reproductive health and rights. As discussed in the Introduction, the research questions in this PhD dissertation were as follows:

1. What are students’ perceptions of relationships and sexual practices, and how do students construct and negotiate their sexual agency in the context of abstinence-only messages largely provided in Ugandan secondary schools and the wider community level? (Chapter 5)
2. What are Ugandan teachers’ cultural schemas and personal experiences of sexuality and sexuality education, and how do these motivate them to teach sexuality education? (Intermezzo 2, Chapter 6, 7, 8 and 9)
3. Which cultural template for school-based sexuality education in Uganda visualises teachers’ shared reasoning and motivations for teaching sexuality education and reveals potential conflicts, barriers and opportunities for teaching comprehensive sexuality education? (Chapter 9)
4. Which recommendations can be given to enhance young people’s sexual and reproductive health and rights through school-based sexuality education in the abstinence-only context of Uganda? (Conclusion and Discussion)

This chapter answers these research questions and proposes a theoretical model that visualises teachers’ individual reasoning process for teaching school-based sexuality education in Uganda. The theoretical model is based on cultural schema theory, as described in Chapter 3, and synthesises the findings described in Intermezzo 2 and Chapter 6, 7, 8 and 9. After discussion of the theoretical model, the practical implications of the model are discussed for teachers’ delivery of school-based sexuality education in the abstinence-only context of Uganda, and the extent to which teachers’ delivery of school-based sexuality education may enhance young people’s sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Students’ Perceptions of Relationships and Sexual Practices
Chapter 5 discussed students’ perceptions of relationships and sexual practices, and how students construct and negotiate their sexual agency in the context of abstinence-only messages largely provided in Ugandan secondary schools and at the wider community level. The findings showed that students engage in sexual activity despite their belief that contraception is ineffective and their fears about the consequences of sexual activity. Students’ age, gender, financial capital and perceived sexual desire further increase risk and vulnerability. The findings also suggested that teachers are important gatekeepers of students’ access to information about sexual and reproductive health and rights. Therefore, the chapter concluded that it is important to recognise the key role played by teachers in the implementation of good-quality school-based sexuality education. Teachers’ role, as explicated in research questions 2 and 3, was studied in the subsequent chapters.

Teachers’ Cultural Schemas and Personal Experiences of Sexuality and Sexuality Education, and How These Motivate Them to Teach Sexuality Education
To obtain an understanding of teachers’ role in the delivery of school-based sexuality education, Intermezzo 2 and Chapter 6, 7, 8 and 9 studied Ugandan teachers’ cultural schemas and personal experiences of sexuality and sexuality education, and how these motivate them to teach sexuality education. First, Intermezzo 2 discussed the most important values and discourses in which both the students’ perceptions of relationships and sexual practices and teachers’ motivations to teach sexuality education appeared to be embedded. Fertility, religion and, especially, morality were shown to be important values that interacted both with participants’ goals as discussed in Chapter 9, such as being respected in society by living a morally upright life, and discourses such as heteronormativity motivated by biblical scriptures.
Chapter 6 and 7 discussed the role of teachers’ cultural schemas with regard to cultural values and beliefs, and teachers’ professional identity, in their motivations to teach sexuality education. Chapter 6 showed that teachers experience a separation between the situation in present Uganda and ‘traditional’ Uganda. They indicated that culture has changed — i.e. traditions have faded — and that young people’s needs are different from before. The teachers have adopted strategies to deal with conflicting schemas between ‘traditional’ and present Uganda. However, in cases where teachers were unable to integrate or compromise conflicting schemas, they were left with ambivalence which evoked negative emotions — i.e. feeling uncomfortable teaching sexuality education. The findings suggested that this ambivalence occurs because the teachers realise that the current abstinence-only education, or lack of sexuality education in general, does not cater for the needs of those students who are sexually active. The literature argues that, to construct and negotiate their sexuality, sexually active students, and young people in general, require comprehensive sexuality education which embraces a positive approach to their sexuality, including information about contraception (Bhana, 2007a; McGeeney & Kehily, 2016; Robinson, 2012). However, the findings of this study show that teachers can feel uncomfortable providing this kind of information because they feel it is immoral to discuss sexuality with young people. They fear it may encourage young people to become sexually active and that it may lead teachers to lose the respect they have in society.

Moral teaching and being respected in society are important elements of teachers’ professional identity. Chapter 7 showed that teachers see themselves as a role model, authority figure, guardian, counsellor and guide, and executor of ethics and regulations. In addition to teachers’ professional identity restricting students’ sexual citizenship, the findings showed how students’ sexual citizenship is also restricted by school regulations that try to control students’ sexuality by denying their access to accurate and complete information and to contraception, punishing romantic and sexual relationships, and infringing on their right to bodily integrity, such as through caning and obligatory pregnancy testing. Teachers’ constructions of students as being innocent and vulnerable may enforce their constructions of teachers’ professional identity as a guardian, counsellor and guide, and of the school as a safe, protective environment. However, rather than protecting, these regulations and constructions of students, in interaction with teachers’ professional identity, actually increase students’ vulnerability and risk. For instance, teachers’ perceived duty of having to control students’ sexuality while they are in school encourages restrictive, sex-discouraging and fear-based sexuality education messages that are supposed to discourage students’ sexual activity in the short term but are less appropriate for the development of students’ sexual agency in the long term.

Whereas the content of teachers’ sexuality education messages was mostly constructed based on their cultural schemas as discussed above, teachers used personal experiences to motivate why they taught this content. Chapter 8 studied the role of teachers’ personal experiences of sexual initiation and showed that teachers reconstructed, or selected, past personal experiences to support their reasoning for how they approached students’ sexual agency and sexual citizenship when teaching sexuality education. Such personal experiences
included negative personal experiences of premarital sex and positive personal experiences of abstinence. The finding that teachers reconstructed or selected past personal experiences explains why teachers could rely on similar experiences to motivate different approaches to students’ sexual agency and sexual citizenship. Furthermore, teachers’ personal experiences were shown to be important because they enable teachers to empathise with their students. This strengthens their motivation to teach sexuality education, such as their motivation to contribute to the well-being of students by preventing them from making the ‘mistakes’ teachers themselves made in the past. As such, it can be concluded that personal experiences can be an important intrinsic motivation for teachers to teach sexuality education but that, considering teachers’ reliance on cultural schemas that support abstinence-only education, a supportive and enabling environment is a prerequisite for the provision of comprehensive sexuality education.

Cultural Template for School-based Sexuality Education in Uganda

Chapter 9 presented a cultural template for school-based sexuality education in Uganda which visualises teachers’ shared reasoning and motivations for teaching sexuality education. Because the cultural template is shared, teachers working in similar contexts will understand this reasoning. The cultural template visualises how teachers’ reasoning for teaching sexuality education gains motivational force depending on higher-level goals of contributing to their own and to their students’ well-being. Teaching sexuality education may not only be motivated by providing students with accurate and complete information about sexual and reproductive health and rights for them to develop their sexual agency but may also be motivated by other schemas that support the teaching of abstinence-only education, such as protecting the school’s image by controlling students’ sexuality; contributing to students’ well-being by encouraging them to study and become morally upright individuals; and a professional identity that instructs morally upright teaching.

The cultural template also reveals potential conflicts, barriers and opportunities for teaching comprehensive sexuality education. As discussed in Chapter 6 and 9, teachers could experience conflicts arising between their cultural schemas of ‘traditional’ and present Uganda, and from living up to their professional identity while observing that their students need more comprehensive sexuality education. The findings in Chapter 6 showed that teachers have adopted strategies to deal with conflicting schemas between ‘traditional’ and present Uganda, leading to: (1) a compromised schema that students need to control their urges to engage in sexual practices until they have finished education or have reached the age of majority (instead of until marriage); and (2) integrated schemas that abstinence messages should increasingly emphasise health risks (instead of virginity) and that teachers are moral guides who should guide young people to moral behaviour (after having engaged in ‘immoral’ sexual practices or having received ‘immoral’ messages from their peers and the media). These new schemas show a reasoning that supports abstinence-only education based on fear and sex-discouraging messages. In cases where teachers were not able to integrate or compromise conflicting schemas, they were left with ambivalence which evoked negative emotions — i.e. feeling uncomfortable teaching sexuality education. Chapter 9 discussed that to deal with
the internal conflicts arising from living up to their professional identity, teachers may apply two strategies to cope with these conflicts: (1) compartmentalisation, whereby they adapt the content of their sexuality education messages to what is prescribed by the school setting; and (2) choose one and reject the other, whereby they pretend students’ sexual innocence, rather than acknowledging students’ sexual citizenship, as a coping strategy to be able to contribute to both their own and their students’ well-being when teaching abstinence-only sexuality education.

Reflection on Participatory Action Approach in this Research

Principles of a participatory action approach and the regulative cycle (van Strien, 1997) were adopted to support the improved delivery of sexuality education by linking academic research to practice. As discussed in Chapter 2, the regulative cycle was found to be a useful cycle to apply in participatory action approaches because it supports evidence-informed practice by integrating scientific theories and methodologies in practical problem-solving. Similar to participatory action approach processes, the regulative cycle adopts a cycle of knowledge generation, reflection and translation into action and enables the researcher, research participants and other key stakeholders to actively participate and co-construct knowledge.

By doing research both for and with Rutgers, a Netherlands-based NGO, this PhD dissertation aimed for social change by applying participatory action approaches in a multi-level context. The context included the active engagement of not only Rutgers employees working in the Netherlands but also of NGOs based in Uganda, the Ugandan research participants and the schools they worked at. The research participants and other stakeholders participated in the various stages of the regulative cycle to develop the research proposal, validate and interpret the findings and formulate recommendations. As discussed in Chapter 2, this research approach showed added value because it enabled the voices of the research participants to be taken further into the development of various plans of action at multiple levels. In addition, this research approach enabled a deeper understanding and interpretation of the findings, which are discussed in Chapter 9, based on revisiting cultural schema theory and a validation study in which teachers and other key stakeholders reflected on the preliminary findings (see Chapter 4).

Resulting Theoretical Model

In addition to adopting this participatory approach, this PhD dissertation also reflected on the advantages and limitations of using socio-cognitive and anthropological-cognitive theories in evaluative health research. Chapter 3 discussed these theories as they were applied to study students’ perceptions — i.e. using the socio-cognitive reasoned action approach — and teachers’ motivations — i.e. using the anthropological-cognitive cultural schema theory. Whereas the reasoned action approach showed limitations as a model for understanding behaviour and, especially, for understanding sexual practices, because it does not capture the interaction between individuals and their context, the use of cultural schema theory enabled the comprehension of teachers’ reasoning about teaching sexuality education as a reasoning that is situation-defined based on interpersonal and contextual interactions. As a result,
cultural schema theory was used to develop a theoretical model that captures teachers’ individual reasoning processes for teaching school-based sexuality education in Uganda. Figure 10 shows this theoretical model, which includes the cultural template as presented in Chapter 9. The cultural template visualises teachers’ shared reasoning for teaching school-based sexuality education in Uganda. The teachers in this study rely on this cultural template to support their reasoning about teaching sexuality education. Since the cultural template is shared, teachers will understand each other's reasoning, even when leaving their underlying motivations implicit in conversations.

As discussed in Chapter 8, the theoretical model shows how cultural schemas, as visualised in the cultural template, and personal experiences interact: teachers develop their individual schemas during the life course based on their acquired cultural schemas and their personal experiences, including the emotions these evoke. At the same time, as personal experiences are assumed to be central to a person, and thus to have strong motivational force, teachers’ personal experiences may strengthen the motivational force of related schemas. For instance, teachers’ personal experiences of sexual initiation can help them to relate with students and strengthen the motivational force of teachers’ higher-level schemas of contributing to students’ well-being. Furthermore, teachers may select or reconstruct past experiences to motivate their reasoning for teaching sexuality education.

As discussed in Chapter 7, an important aspect of teachers’ reasoning process for teaching sexuality education is the interaction between their schemas of professional identity, the school setting, and students and their sexual citizenship (interactional component). As these schemas are situation-defined, the content of teachers’ messages is not fixed. Rather, teachers will adapt the content of their sexuality education messages to what they feel is expected of them in the specific school setting and to what they feel is suitable and necessary for the students they are teaching.

Chapter 6 and 9 discussed that the interaction between teachers’ schemas may lead teachers to experience internal conflicts. The theoretical model reasons that if the interaction between teachers’ schemas does not lead teachers to experience internal conflicts, they can proceed to provide their sexuality education messages as intended. If teachers do experience internal conflicts due to this interaction, they may experience emotional distress and adopt strategies to solve the conflicts and thereby relieve their emotional distress. For instance, Chapter 9 discussed that, in such a case, teachers may adopt a coping strategy whereby they pretend students’ sexual innocence, rather than acknowledging students’ sexual agency and sexual citizenship. In cases where teachers are not able to adopt a strategy to solve the conflict, they may remain with ambivalence and feelings of discomfort as discussed in Chapter 6.
CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Figure 10. Teachers’ individual reasoning process for teaching school-based sexuality education in Uganda based on cultural schema theory

Teaching
Sexuality education

Strategy
• Compromise
• Integrate
• Ambivalence
• Compartimentalization
• Reject one

No internal conflict

Internal conflict

Teacher

Student

Interational component

Ugandan / school context

Cultural template

Past experiences
• (personal)
experience(s)
• emotions evoked
in interaction with
(cultural) schema at
the time

Present (cultural) schema

Personal experiences

Development of schemas

During life course:
Past experiences

Selected/reconstructed
to support current
(cultural) schema
The Function of Schemas in Cultural Schema Theory

Schemas have four functions: (1) the representational; (2) the constructive; (3) the directive; and (4) the evocative (D’Andrade, 1984). The evocative function is mostly apparent in the theoretical model (Figure 10): emotions underlie and strengthen the causal linkages between schemas and motivate teachers to solve internal conflicts. The representational function becomes most clear in how teachers view sexuality education and the role of sexuality education in relation to students and their sexual citizenship. As discussed in Chapter 6, the constructive and directive functions were clear to teachers in relation to their ‘traditional’ representation of sexuality education: it was the role of the ssengas, or paternal aunts, to educate teenage girls, and young people would only be taught about sexuality once they were considered ready to become sexually active. However, due to societal changes, the representational function of sexuality education has changed, leading to internal conflicts, as this requires the development of new constructive and directive functions: who is to teach sexuality education, and what should be the content of those messages?

Based on the ambivalence found between teachers’ conflicting schemas, a new cultural schema can be identified which integrates parts of the teachers’ conflicting schemas and, consequently, is hypothesised to make teachers feel more comfortable teaching comprehensive sexuality education. It concerns parts of their following conflicting schemas: (1) teachers being moral guides; (2) a need to fill the gap of sexuality educators; (3) young people being sexually active; and (4) young people obtaining incorrect information about sexuality from the media and other sources. This new, integrated schema appoints the teacher (constructive function) to teach comprehensive sexuality education (directive function) in present Uganda. It addresses teachers’ motivations of maintaining respect from society and contributing to the well-being of students by providing students with accurate and complete knowledge, thereby contributing to delayed sexual debut and the uptake of protected sexual intercourse. Although various teachers indicated that moral teaching means teaching abstinence-only, teachers also believed that providing accurate and complete information is part of their professional identity as a teacher and could, therefore, also be considered moral teaching.

Discussion and Practical Implications

Chapter 1 discussed global definitions of sexuality education programmes. It was found that definitions of comprehensive and holistic sexuality education, as formulated by international agencies such as IPPF and WHO, can be broadly distinguished by their rights- and evidence-based approaches, as opposed to morality-based sexuality education programmes, such as abstinence-only programmes. Evidence- and rights-based definitions of sexuality education programmes address young people’s need for accurate and comprehensive information to enable them to make informed decisions regarding their sexual and reproductive health. Researchers stress that, to develop their sexual agency, young people need not only accurate and complete information but also a context that acknowledges them as sexual subjects and that allows them to have a voice about their own sexual and reproductive health and rights (Bhana, 2007a; Egan & Hawkes, 2009).
CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Chapter 1 also discussed that evidence- and rights-based definitions of sexuality education appear to be individual-focused definitions that do not take into account the sociocultural contexts in which sexuality is developed and experienced and in which sexuality education is taught. Yet Chapter 5 found that understanding and reflecting on these sociocultural aspects could be inevitable for young people to understand and enjoy their sexuality. Hence, definitions of sexuality education are recommended to include the need to learn to understand, challenge and negotiate structural factors such as gender roles and sociocultural norms in which sexual agency is developed and that influence sexual well-being.

Accordingly, this PhD dissertation also aimed to understand how the inclusion of sociocultural aspects, by developing an understanding of the context in which sexuality education messages are formulated and shared, could enhance successful implementation of effective sexuality education programmes. The findings showed that, in the Ugandan context, teachers are important gatekeepers to students’ access to information about sexual and reproductive health and rights. Teachers feel that society holds them responsible for bringing up good, morally upright students and protecting them from risks by enforcing restrictive school regulations that compromise students’ sexual citizenship. Teachers’ constructions of students as being innocent and vulnerable may enforce constructions of teachers’ own professional identity as a guardian, counsellor and guide, and of the school as a safe, protective environment. However, rather than protecting, these school regulations and teachers’ constructions of students, in interaction with teachers’ professional identity, actually increase students’ risk and vulnerability. For instance, the findings showed that teachers may pretend students’ sexual innocence, rather than acknowledge their sexual activity, and that they may be encouraged to take a short-term perspective when teaching sexuality education, including restrictive, sex-discouraging and fear-based messages, which may help to discourage sexual activity in the short term but are less appropriate for the development of students’ sexual agency in the long term. Considering teachers’ own personal sexual experiences as discussed in Chapter 8, in which they stated that they would like to prevent their students from making the ‘mistakes’ they made themselves, it may seem surprising that teachers provide students with such restrictive messages that increase students’ risk and vulnerability.

To understand teachers’ motivations for providing these sexuality education messages, it is important to consider that teachers are motivated by higher-level goals of not only enhancing their students’ well-being but also of enhancing their own well-being, and that teachers are also in a vulnerable position themselves. Teachers care about their students’ well-being, but, at the same time, teaching sexuality education is only one of their many responsibilities, and enhancing students’ well-being may conflict with enhancing their own well-being. For instance, taking care of their family by safeguarding their job may conflict with teaching comprehensive sexuality education when these contents oppose school regulations and teaching it could cause them to lose their job. Furthermore, teachers may question whether demonstrating condom use — which would contribute to providing accurate and comprehensive information — enhances their students’ well-being in a context where young people can hardly access contraception. Alternatively, teachers may feel that, in this context, their students benefit more from learning abstinence strategies.
These examples suggest that Ugandan teachers’ and human rights-based organisations’ definitions of sexuality education may both pursue the goal of enhancing young people’s sexual and reproductive well-being but that their definitions of what young people’s sexual and reproductive well-being entails, and the strategies necessary to achieving these goals, may differ. Whereas evidence- and human rights-based approaches to sexuality education may emphasise young people’s need for accurate, comprehensive information, the findings of this dissertation showed that teachers in Uganda may favour enhancing young people’s sexual and reproductive well-being from a broader perspective — taking into account the Ugandan sociocultural context, and how this context limits and defines young people’s sexual citizenship and the opportunities for teaching comprehensive sexuality education without repercussions for the sexuality educator. For instance, not only does the Ugandan sociocultural context restrict young people’s access to contraception, but sociocultural norms and values also disapprove of premarital sex and fear that sexuality education may encourage sexual activity. In this context, teachers may reason that comprehensive sexuality education is not the best strategy for enhancing their students’ sexual and reproductive well-being or, more generally, students’ social well-being.

**Implementation Fidelity of School-based Sexuality Education Programmes**

Based on the findings in this dissertation, it can be questioned whether, in the Ugandan context, school is the most appropriate setting for teaching sexuality education and whether teachers are the most appropriate sex educators to reach the objectives of sexuality education, as formulated by international agencies such as UNESCO et al. (2009). Not only are teachers bound by restrictive school regulations, their professional identity and power relations in schools that increase their vulnerability to teach comprehensive sexuality education, but also the fieldwork showed a low level of implementation fidelity of the various sexuality education programmes being implemented in Ugandan secondary schools. Advocating for young people’s need to receive comprehensive or holistic sexuality education programmes, rather than abstinence-only education programmes, is important both globally and in Uganda. However, at the same time, the data collection showed that comprehensive sexuality education curricula did not lead to the delivery of comprehensive, accurate messages. As a result, this PhD dissertation discusses the implementation of ‘sexuality education’ in general, since a distinction between different sexuality education programmes in how their curriculum contents were delivered could not usually be observed. It may even be questioned whether the accumulation of scattered, ad hoc sexuality education messages received by students in Ugandan secondary schools — as they were observed during data collection — can be classified as ‘sexuality education’. Taking these observations into account, it appears that, to enhance young people’s sexual and reproductive health and rights in Uganda, the priority should not be to increase the level of evidence- and human rights-based information in Ugandan sexuality education curricula, but, rather, to adopt a pragmatic approach to improve the implementation fidelity of sexuality education programmes.
CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

School-based sexuality education implemented by teachers can be considered a low-cost and thus a sustainable implementation strategy (Kivela et al., 2011). However, if the implementation fidelity is low, leading to ad hoc, restrictive, fear-based and sex-discouraging messages, it can be questioned how sustainable this strategy actually is. Still, schools do have the potential to teach sexuality education to a large number of young people who may not otherwise be reached. Furthermore, despite the challenges posed by Uganda’s restrictive school environment, teachers do play an important role in the development of students’ sexual agency and their sexual and reproductive well-being, whether teachers are formally assigned to teach sexuality education or not. In addition, it may be questioned whether out-of-school environments would be any less restricted to provide comprehensive sexuality education information considering the cultural and religious norms and values that disapprove of premarital sex and fear that sexuality education may encourage sexual practices. Taking these considerations into account, a pragmatic approach is recommended that enhances young people’s sexual and reproductive health and rights through school-based sexuality education by investing in resources for training teachers; providing teachers with support, such as hiring external facilitators for specific sexual and reproductive health and rights topics; and reducing students’ and teachers’ vulnerability and risk by creating a supportive, enabling environment for implementing comprehensive sexuality education. These recommendations are further discussed in the sections below.

Teacher Training
Teacher training is recommended to help teachers teach comprehensive sexuality education, which will require challenging the notions of moral teaching. Furthermore, to increase its effectiveness and teachers’ comfort teaching comprehensive sexuality education, teacher training is recommended to challenge cultural discourses that portray sexual activity as an inescapable urge and of childhood innocence which suggest that students are vulnerable and unable to make informed decisions regarding their sexual and reproductive health and rights. Teachers hesitate to recognise students’ sexual citizenship and to teach sexuality education because they fear it undermines teachers’ authority. The autocratic teaching style used in Ugandan secondary schools contributes to this, because the teacher is supposed to be all knowing. Teacher training could train teachers to adopt a more facilitative, learner-centred teaching style. This will enable teachers to have students discuss issues with each other, and takes away the focus on the teacher. However, this research has shown that the autocratic teaching style is central to teachers’ professional identity, and, as such, it may be difficult to train teachers to adopt more facilitative, learner-centred teaching styles. Still, some teachers were observed to take a facilitative approach in their sexuality education lessons, and their successful examples may be used to develop teacher training. An alternative to teachers teaching sexuality education can be to invite health workers to schools to teach the students. This will enable teachers to maintain their authority and, at the same time, allow students to receive the necessary information about sexual and reproductive health and rights.
A Supportive Environment for Implementing Sexuality Education

It can be concluded that teachers’ personal experiences can be an important intrinsic motivation for them to teach sexuality education but that, considering teachers’ reliance on cultural schemas that support abstinence-only education, a supportive environment is a prerequisite for the provision of comprehensive sexuality education. At present, the institutional context of Ugandan secondary schools is restrictive for teaching comprehensive sexuality education. One of the reasons is societal fear that sexuality education encourages young people to become sexually active. This seems partly due to different interpretations of what sexuality education entails. Bringing parents, teachers, school administrations, students and other community members together to discuss the need for sexuality education, what it should entail and the role to be played by schools and teachers in the schools may reduce such fears.

To enable teachers to take on the responsibility of teaching comprehensive sexuality education, it is recommended that they feel supported by the different stakeholders within the school. For instance, this can be achieved by publicly giving teachers the mandate to teach sexuality education. In that way, providing accurate, comprehensive sexuality education would no longer be considered immoral but could become part of their professional identity. A supportive environment could be achieved through the integration of comprehensive sexuality education in broader interventions, such as the adoption of a ‘whole-school approach’. In its step-by-step manual for adopting a whole-school approach for sexuality education, Rutgers (2016) defines the following five areas for action: (1) management support; (2) collaboration with youth-friendly health services and providing accurate information about sexual and reproductive health and rights; (3) involvement and support of parents and the wider community; (4) adequate teaching capacity; and (5) a safe and healthy school environment. The last of these areas of action includes the development of new school regulations that are supportive of students’ sexual and reproductive health and rights. Preferably, such regulations should enable the provision of comprehensive sexuality education, allow young people’s access to sexual and reproductive health care and not punish students’ sexual activity. As a result, these supportive regulations may decrease teachers’ vulnerability, as they decrease their fears of losing respect from students, colleagues and parents when teaching sexuality education. But also, a safe school environment in which students’ bodily integrity is respected — for instance, because it prohibits caning and obligatory pregnancy testing — is envisaged as being a prerequisite for the successful implementation of any sexuality education programme and for students to trust teachers as their sexuality educators.

Recommendations for Further Research

This section provides three recommendations for further research: one theoretical, one methodological and one research-for-action. First, additional research is recommended to further explore and understand the evocative function of schemas. The literature pays little attention to the role of emotions in the delivery of sexuality education, yet the findings in this PhD dissertation have shown its importance for understanding teachers’ comfort teaching
comprehensive sexuality education. Especially in the theoretical model which was proposed in this chapter, emotions were shown to underlie and strengthen the causal linkages between schemas and to motivate teachers to solve internal conflicts. It would be interesting to understand which emotions are important in teaching sexuality education, and how they play a role.

With regard to participatory action approaches, it is recommended to further investigate successful strategies for achieving social change by doing academic research with and for organisations, such as the NGO in this PhD dissertation. The idea of involving practitioners as co-researchers, as suggested by Wadsworth (1998) and Boog (2003), could be worth exploring to reduce the distance between the level at which interventions are developed and the level at which they are implemented.

The most important recommendation resulting from this research is to adopt a whole-school approach to improve the implementation fidelity of school-based sexuality education, as Rutgers is currently adopting in step 4 (Intervention) of the regulative cycle (see Chapter 2). It would be interesting to evaluate this whole-school approach and to understand how, and to what extent, a whole-school approach can enhance young people’s sexual and reproductive health and rights by creating an enabling environment for the delivery of comprehensive sexuality education.