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**“If I jump after sex, do I still get pregnant?”
Abundance of curiosity among girls in school-based
sexuality education in a restrictive policy context**

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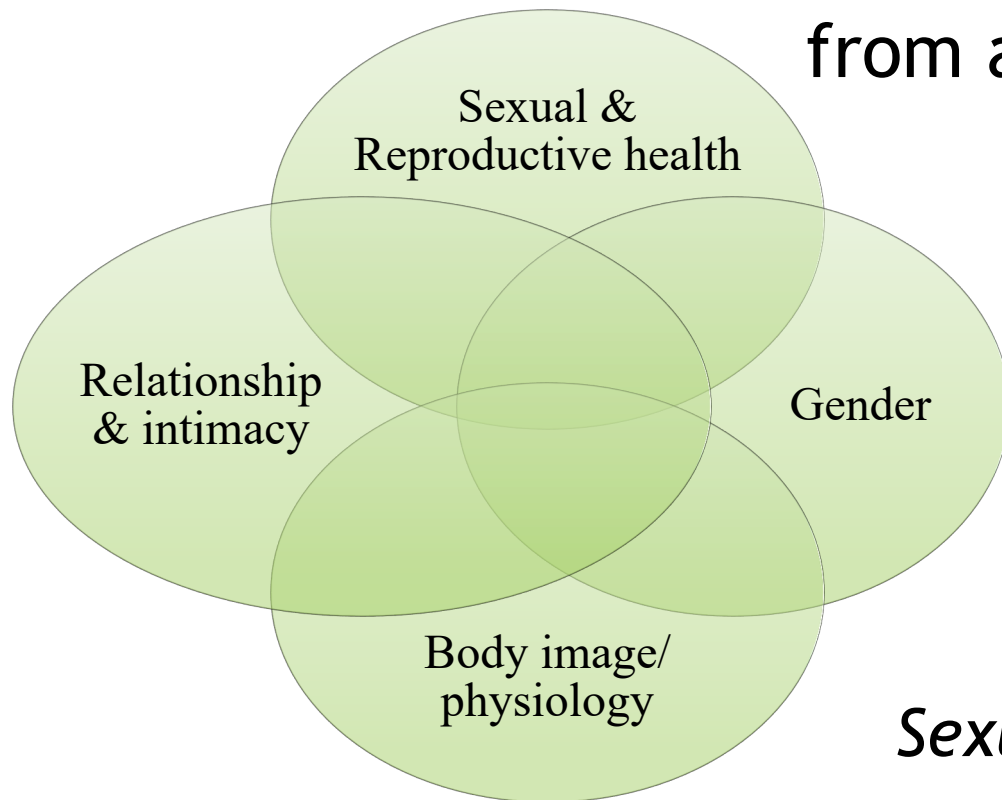
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Outline of the presentation

- ▶ Introduction: The problem and theoretical framework
- ▶ Theoretical framework
- ▶ Design and Methods
- ▶ Study Findings
- ▶ Implications

1. Introduction

The purpose of the study is to understand policy & practice of school-based SE in the case of selected primary school in Ethiopia from a gender perspective



Sexuality Education/ SE

Statement of the problem

Practical Gap

- ▶ There is big unmet SRHR information need among adolescent girls
- ▶ Existing SE resulted limited behaviour change,
- ▶ Left learners in confusion and more questions
- ▶ *Could it be because of policy gap or practice?*

Research Gap

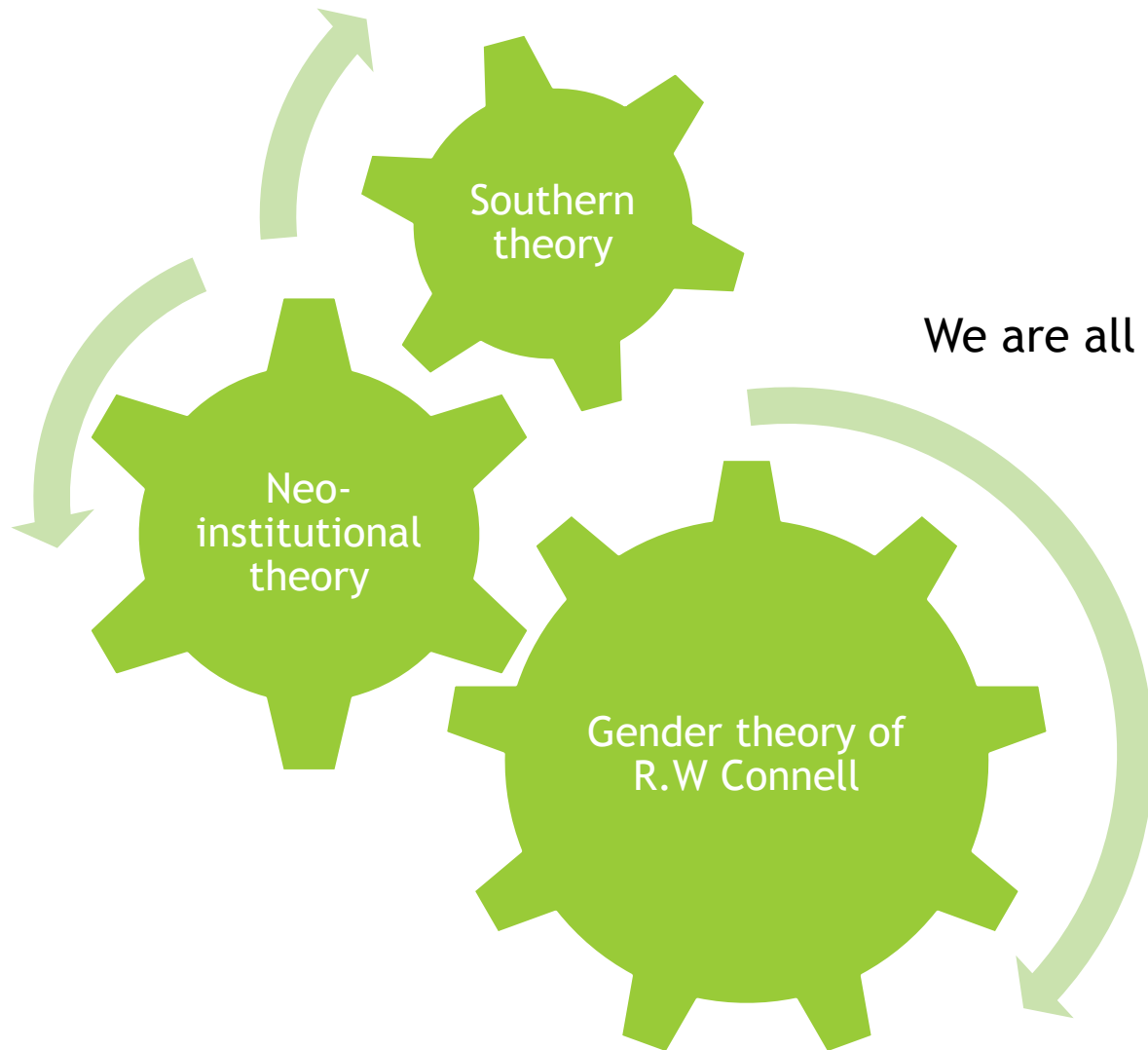
- ▶ Very little research on SE in Ethiopia, not done by local researcher
- ▶ Studies emphasize on measuring output & impact
- ▶ Studies conceptually neglected what happens in the **middle**
- ▶ Lacks policy analysis

This study discuss process comprehensively - by including students views and needs

Research questions:

- A. How do the global and local SE **policies inter-relate?**
- B. How do the **practices** of SE practiced answers to the expressed needs of learners?
- C. How do learners and teachers **interact** in SE classroom, other classes and school environment?

2. Theoretical framework



We are all doing gender, not being it! (Butler, 1990)

- Gender: fluid, dynamic, & constructed
- Women remain oppressed in global gender order, may vary in local context
- Dimensions: division of labor, power and cathexis

3. Research design and methodology

- ▶ Constructivism paradigm: multiple realities; subjective experience/ truth
- ▶ Used qualitative approach, Ethnographic design
- ▶ Purposive sampling
- ▶ Observation → FGD and In-depth Interview
- ▶ Observation took the major share



4. Study Findings

1. The politics of Global vs Local policy

- ▶ INGOs advocate for Comprehensive SE, as human right
- ▶ INGOs are undemocratic, tied aid (**coercive isomorphism**)
- ▶ When one diverts from INGOs, labelled as primitive
- ▶ Separate Local (National) SE policy is non-existent ; MOE claims its integrated
- ▶ The local policy making environment is rigidly religiously driven, hetronormative, adult male dominated
- ▶ Social media campaign against national CSE policy development



2. SE Practices in the school

a. Central contents of SE

- ▶ HIV/AIDS (ABC rules)
- ▶ Abstinence as a means, particularly for girls
- ▶ Girls as the deceiving, and also as victims
- ▶ Gender equality and GBV (father could abuse)
- ▶ Body change and menstruation (Openly discussed)

However, Culturally & religiously motivated gendered contents

Girls as passive recipients (agency denied), (determined labour & power division)

Division of labor: cover body, matured, recipient

Power relation: Shy, policed, GBV

Cathexis: Boys express their love, girls receive



b. Silenced contents

- ▶ Love
- ▶ Sex (Adult subject)
- ▶ Condom use
- ▶ Masturbation (sin)
- ▶ Sexual orientation & gender identities (sin)

That learners appear to be curious about.

Neglect right-based contents - prioritize fear based learning

Childhood innocence

“These contents are “Western”,... they are foreign to us..., they don't even align with our long lived Ethiopian culture of purity.” (Teacher)

The silenced contents in SE resulted:

- ▶ More curiosity - in search of a meaning behind the curtain e.g. asking me questions, pornography, and unsafe experiment
- ▶ Double personality - be a “good girl” by reflecting values that are perceived as “innocent” / Gender performativity
- ▶ More confusion between their needs and information

“Is love a bad thing if it doesn't distract you from your education?”

“Can a girl get pregnant before she experience menstruation?”

“How do people have sex?”

“How safe is a condom?”

“If I jump after sex, do I still get pregnant?”



C. Interaction with SE teacher

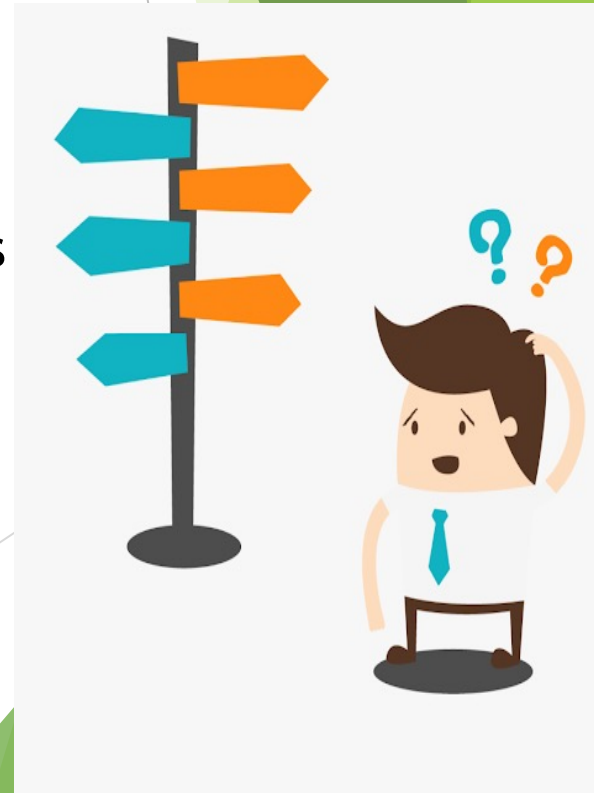
- ▶ Relatively democratic learning than regular classroom (girls participate more, no violence from the teacher and encourage more)
- ▶ Learners are enthusiastic as co-curricular is flexible to participate
- ▶ Learners prefer SE to remain co-curricular

5. Implication

- ▶ Democratization of policy development process (both global and local)
- ▶ Value the voice of adolescents
- ▶ Include religious and cultural leaders in the discourse and policy making
- ▶ Teachers capacity building to democratize learning
- ▶ Further research on the role of social media influencers & religious leaders

in SE policy development

As young people are heterogeneous, their sexuality information needs also varies.



Thank you!

