Knowledge, Attitude and Practices on H.E.A.R.T Advocacy among High School Students in a Municipality in Cebu Province

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ABSTRACT

Adolescent reproductive health remains a major public health concern due to the increasing risks of HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections, early sexual encounters, and teenage pregnancy. Despite ongoing health promotion efforts, gaps in adolescents' knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding reproductive health continue to exist, highlighting the need for strengthened advocacy programs. This study determined the knowledge, attitudes, and practices on H.E.A.R.T. (HIV/AIDS, Early Sexual Encounters, Adolescent Sexuality, Reproductive Health, and Teenage Pregnancy) advocacy among high school students in a municipality in Cebu Province and examined the relationships among these variables. A descriptive-correlational research design was utilized involving 341 high school students selected through appropriate sampling procedures. Data were collected using a researcher-adapted questionnaire and analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. Findings revealed that respondents demonstrated high knowledge, very positive attitudes, and high levels of practice regarding H.E.A.R.T. advocacy. Significant relationships were found between knowledge and attitude, knowledge and practice, and attitude and practice, indicating that these variables are interconnected in promoting healthy adolescent behaviors. The findings affirm Rogers' Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) Model, which explains that knowledge influences attitudes and subsequently affects practices. Based on the findings, a H.E.A.R.T. Advocacy Enhancement Plan was developed to sustain positive outcomes and further strengthen adolescent reproductive health promotion in schools and communities.

Keywords: H.E.A.R.T. advocacy, Adolescent reproductive health, High school students, KAP Model

INTRODUCTION

Adolescent sexual and reproductive health remains a major public health concern because of the increasing incidence of HIV infection, early sexual encounters, teenage pregnancy, and limited access to reproductive health education. Adolescents and young people continue to account for a substantial proportion of new HIV infections globally due to inadequate knowledge, risky behaviors, and limited access to preventive services (World Health Organization [WHO], 2023). Likewise, teenage pregnancy remains prevalent in developing countries, including the Philippines, where misinformation, cultural stigma, and inadequate reproductive health education contribute to poor health outcomes (United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], 2022). In response, advocacy frameworks such as H.E.A.R.T., which focuses on HIV/AIDS prevention, early sexual encounter awareness, adolescent sexuality education, reproductive health promotion, and teenage pregnancy prevention, have been developed to strengthen health education and behavioral interventions. However, the success of these initiatives depends largely on adolescents' knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding sexual and reproductive health.

Knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) are important determinants of adolescent sexual and reproductive health behaviors. Adequate knowledge enables adolescents to make informed decisions, while positive attitudes encourage the adoption of safe practices and utilization of reproductive health services. Previous studies have shown that higher levels of reproductive health knowledge are associated with safer behaviors and greater use of preventive services (Bingenheimer et al., 2021; Decker et al., 2021). Nevertheless, many adolescents continue to rely on peers, social media, and other informal sources for reproductive health information, contributing to

misconceptions and unsafe practices (Department of Health [DOH], 2022). Negative attitudes toward HIV prevention, condom use, and reproductive health services, often influenced by stigma and cultural beliefs, may further discourage adolescents from seeking accurate information and appropriate health services (Amare et al., 2021; UNESCO, 2021).

The H.E.A.R.T. advocacy framework provides a comprehensive approach to addressing HIV prevention, adolescent sexuality awareness, reproductive health, and teenage pregnancy among high school students. In Sibonga, Cebu, increasing HIV cases and teenage pregnancies, together with the low utilization of adolescent-friendly health services despite ongoing awareness campaigns, underscore the need to examine adolescents' knowledge, attitudes, and practices under this framework (Cebu Provincial Health Office, 2024; Philippine Statistics Authority [PSA], 2025). Therefore, this study assessed the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of high school students regarding H.E.A.R.T. advocacy to provide evidence that may strengthen school-based health education, improve adolescent reproductive health services, and support the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being) by promoting healthy behaviors and reducing HIV transmission and teenage pregnancy (United Nations, 2023)..

Research Questions

This study was to assess the interrelationship among knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) on HIV/AIDS transmission, prevention, early sexual encounters, adolescent sexuality, reproductive health, and teenage pregnancy risks (H.E.A.R.T) advocacy among high school students in the municipality of Cebu, Province for the 1st quarter of 2026.

The study specifically answered the following queries:

1. What was the level of knowledge on HIV/AIDS transmission, prevention, early sexual encounters, adolescent sexuality, reproductive health, and teenage pregnancy risks (H.E.A.R.T) advocacy among high school students?

2. What was the attitude on the HIV/AIDS transmission, prevention, early sexual encounters, adolescent sexuality, reproductive health, and teenage pregnancy risks (H.E.A.R.T) advocacy among the high school students?

3. What was the level of practices on HIV/AIDS transmission, prevention, early sexual encounters, adolescent sexuality, reproductive health, and teenage pregnancy risks (H.E.A.R.T) advocacy among high school students?

Counterproductive work behavior?

4. Was there a significant relationship between:

4.1. knowledge levels and attitudes towards H.E.A.R.T advocacy;

4.2. knowledge and practice towards H.E.A.R.T advocacy; and

4.3. attitude and practice towards H.E.A.R.T advocacy?

5. What H.E.A.R.T advocacy enhancement plan could be proposed based on the findings of the study?

Statement of Null Hypothesis

H_{o1}: There was no significant relationship between knowledge and attitude towards H.E.A.R.T advocacy among high school students.

H_{o2}: There was no significant relationship between knowledge and practices towards H.E.A.R.T advocacy among high school students.

H_{o3}: There was no significant relationship between attitude and practices towards H.E.A.R.T advocacy among high school students.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

H.E.A.R.T. Advocacy. H.E.A.R.T. advocacy, which focuses on HIV prevention, early sexual encounter awareness, adolescent sexuality education, reproductive health promotion, and teenage pregnancy prevention, has been recognized as an important strategy for improving adolescent sexual and reproductive health. Recent evidence demonstrates that structured educational and advocacy interventions significantly enhance adolescents' health knowledge, attitudes, and preventive behaviors while reducing misconceptions and stigma related to HIV and reproductive health (Ratnawati et al., 2024). School-based advocacy programs have likewise been shown to improve HIV awareness, promote responsible health behaviors, and strengthen adolescents' acceptance of reproductive health education, highlighting the value of integrating health promotion initiatives within educational settings (Seminars in Medical Writing and Education, 2025).

In the Philippine context, H.E.A.R.T. advocacy remains particularly relevant because misinformation and limited access to accurate sexual and reproductive health information continue to affect many adolescents, especially those in rural and school-based communities (Pasay-an et al., 2022). Collectively, the literature emphasizes that comprehensive advocacy programs are essential in strengthening adolescent health literacy, reducing risky behaviors, and promoting informed decision-making regarding HIV prevention, reproductive health, adolescent sexuality, and teenage pregnancy prevention.

Knowledge on H.E.A.R.T. Advocacy. Knowledge is a fundamental component of H.E.A.R.T. advocacy, as it enables adolescents to understand HIV transmission, reproductive health, adolescent sexuality, contraception, and teenage pregnancy prevention, thereby supporting informed decision-making and reducing risky behaviors. Although many adolescents demonstrate moderate to good levels of reproductive health knowledge, misconceptions and knowledge gaps remain prevalent, emphasizing the need for continuous and structured health education (Nubed et al., 2021). Studies have consistently shown that adolescents exposed to reproductive health education and H.E.A.R.T.-related interventions demonstrate significantly higher knowledge levels than those without such exposure, particularly in understanding HIV prevention, contraception, and available reproductive health services (Habib et al., 2024; Pasay-an et al., 2022).

Recent international evidence further supports the effectiveness of comprehensive sexuality education in improving adolescents' reproductive health knowledge. Structured educational programs have been shown to enhance understanding of HIV/AIDS prevention, sexually transmitted infections, reproductive health rights, and responsible decision-making, thereby promoting healthier behaviors among adolescents (Atuyambe et al., 2022; UNESCO, 2023; World Health Organization [WHO], 2023; United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], 2024). Collectively, these findings highlight the importance of sustained H.E.A.R.T. advocacy and reproductive health education in strengthening adolescent health literacy and reducing misconceptions related to sexual and reproductive health).

Attitude on H.E.A.R.T. Attitudes play a crucial role in shaping adolescents' acceptance of reproductive health education and their willingness to engage in healthy behaviors. Positive attitudes toward HIV prevention, reproductive health services, and sexuality education are associated with greater participation in health promotion activities, while stigma, cultural beliefs, and embarrassment often discourage adolescents from seeking accurate information and preventive services (Ratnawati et al., 2024). School-based H.E.A.R.T. advocacy programs have been shown to improve adolescents' attitudes by reducing stigma, promoting openness in discussing reproductive health, and increasing acceptance of HIV prevention and reproductive health initiatives (Seminars in Medical Writing and Education, 2025).

Recent studies consistently demonstrate that exposure to comprehensive sexuality education and reproductive health information fosters more favorable attitudes toward reproductive health programs, HIV prevention, gender equality, and healthy relationships (Keogh et al., 2021; Bolarinwa et al., 2022; UNESCO, 2023). Likewise, supportive learning environments and positive educational experiences encourage adolescents to appreciate the value of reproductive health education and participate in preventive health interventions (Yakubu

& Salisu, 2023; United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], 2024). Collectively, these findings underscore the importance of sustained H.E.A.R.T. advocacy in cultivating positive attitudes that support informed decision-making and healthy adolescent behaviors.

Practice on H.E.A.R.T. Practice represents the actual behaviors adolescents demonstrate in applying their knowledge and attitudes toward HIV prevention, reproductive health, adolescent sexuality, and teenage pregnancy prevention. Although educational interventions improve knowledge and attitudes, translating these into consistent preventive practices remains a challenge because fear, stigma, and other social factors often influence adolescents' health-seeking behaviors (Ratnawati et al., 2024). Studies have shown that adolescents exposed to H.E.A.R.T. advocacy and reproductive health education are more likely to engage in preventive behaviors, seek counseling and reproductive health services, and participate in health promotion activities than those with limited exposure (Bridging KAP Study, 2025; Pooc National High School Study, 2026).

Recent evidence further indicates that reproductive health education significantly improves adolescents' preventive health practices by encouraging responsible decision-making, greater utilization of reproductive health services, and avoidance of risky behaviors (Mmari et al., 2022; Bankole et al., 2022; Melesse et al., 2023). International organizations likewise emphasize that adolescent health programs should strengthen not only knowledge but also practical skills and active participation in health promotion to achieve sustained behavioral change (World Health Organization [WHO], 2023; United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2023). Collectively, these findings highlight the importance of continuous H.E.A.R.T. advocacy in bridging health knowledge into responsible reproductive health practices among adolescents.

Knowledge and Attitude on H.E.A.R.T. Knowledge and attitude are closely related components of adolescent reproductive health behavior, with adequate knowledge providing the foundation for developing favorable perceptions toward HIV prevention, reproductive health education, and health promotion programs. Studies consistently demonstrate that adolescents with higher levels of reproductive health knowledge exhibit more positive attitudes toward reproductive health services and are more accepting of educational interventions designed to promote healthy behaviors (Habib et al., 2024; Mbachu et al., 2023; Bolarinwa et al., 2022). H.E.A.R.T. advocacy has likewise been shown to strengthen both knowledge and attitudes, with adolescents exposed to educational interventions demonstrating significant improvements in awareness and acceptance of HIV prevention and reproductive health initiatives compared with those who were unexposed (Bridging KAP Study, 2025; Pooc National High School Study, 2026).

Recent literature further supports the positive relationship between knowledge and attitudes, emphasizing that comprehensive sexuality education enhances reproductive health literacy and fosters favorable attitudes toward preventive health measures, gender equality, healthy relationships, and reproductive health services (Kesterton & Cabral de Mello, 2021; Yakubu & Salisu, 2023; World Health Organization [WHO], 2023; UNESCO, 2023). Collectively, these findings indicate that strengthening adolescents' reproductive health knowledge through H.E.A.R.T. advocacy contributes to more positive attitudes, greater acceptance of health promotion programs, and increased support for responsible reproductive health behaviors.

Knowledge and Practice on H.E.A.R.T. Knowledge is widely recognized as a key determinant of adolescent reproductive health practices because it enables young people to make informed decisions and adopt behaviors that reduce the risk of HIV infection, sexually transmitted infections, and teenage pregnancy. Studies consistently show that adolescents with higher levels of reproductive health knowledge are more likely to engage in preventive health practices, seek accurate health information, utilize reproductive health services, and participate in health promotion activities (Chairani & Izzah, 2023; Mmari et al., 2022). Similarly, H.E.A.R.T. advocacy has been shown to improve adolescents' knowledge of HIV prevention and reproductive health, which positively influences their adoption of responsible health practices, although behavioral implementation may still be affected by external social factors (Bridging KAP Study, 2025; Pooc National High School Study, 2026).

Recent evidence further demonstrates that structured reproductive health education contributes to improved health-related practices by promoting responsible decision-making, greater utilization of preventive services, and healthier reproductive health behaviors among adolescents (Melesse et al., 2023; Bankole et al., 2022; Fatusi & Hindin, 2021). International organizations likewise emphasize that strengthening reproductive health

knowledge empowers adolescents to translate health information into positive health practices and long-term healthy behaviors (World Health Organization [WHO], 2023; United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2023). Collectively, these findings support the importance of H.E.A.R.T. advocacy in transforming reproductive health knowledge into responsible health practices among adolescents.

Attitude and Practice on H.E.A.R.T. Attitude is an important factor influencing adolescents' adoption of healthy reproductive health practices. Studies consistently demonstrate that adolescents with favorable attitudes toward reproductive health education, HIV prevention, and health promotion programs are more likely to participate in preventive health activities, seek reliable health information, and utilize available reproductive health services (Yakubu & Salisu, 2023; Ayehu et al., 2022). Likewise, H.E.A.R.T. advocacy has been shown to improve adolescents' attitudes toward reproductive health, leading to greater engagement in positive health practices, although sustained behavior change may also depend on other supportive factors (Bridging KAP Study, 2025; Ratnawati et al., 2024).

Recent literature further supports the positive relationship between attitude and practice, emphasizing that adolescents who perceive reproductive health education as beneficial are more likely to translate health knowledge into responsible behaviors. Favorable attitudes have been associated with increased participation in reproductive health programs, healthier decision-making, and stronger intentions to engage in preventive practices, consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen & Schmidt, 2021). Similar findings have been reported by Bolarinwa et al. (2022), the World Health Organization (2023), and the United Nations Population Fund (2024), which highlight that cultivating positive attitudes is essential for promoting healthy reproductive health practices and ensuring the success of adolescent health advocacy programs.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design. This study employed a descriptive–correlational research design. The descriptive design was used to determine the levels of knowledge, attitudes, and practices on H.E.A.R.T. advocacy among high school students, while the correlational design examined the relationships among knowledge, attitudes, and practices (McCombes, 2023; Bhandari, 2023).

Environment. The study was conducted in a public secondary school offering both junior and senior high school programs in a municipality in Cebu Province, Philippines.

Respondents. The respondents were 341 high school students enrolled in Grades 7 to 12 at public secondary school during the first half of School Year 2026, selected from a population of 3,000 students using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table.

Sampling Design. This study employed stratified proportionate sampling technique followed by quota sampling to ensure proportional representation of students from each grade level while facilitating practical respondent selection within the school setting.

Inclusion Criteria and Exclusion Criteria. Eligible respondents were high school students enrolled in Grades 7 to 12 at t public secondary school during the first half of School Year 2026, aged 12–19 years, present during the scheduled data collection, able to complete the self-administered questionnaire, and who provided student assent with written parental or guardian consent. Students with significant cognitive, developmental, or learning limitations, those involved in disciplinary or counseling cases related to sensitive behavioral concerns during data collection, and those who submitted incomplete or inconsistent questionnaires were excluded to ensure the quality and reliability of the data.

Instrument. This study utilized a four-part structured questionnaire developed by the researcher based on the Knowledge–Attitude–Practice (KAP) Model and the H.E.A.R.T. advocacy framework. The first part gathered the respondents demographic profile, while the succeeding sections assessed knowledge (15 items), attitudes (10 items), and practices (10 items) related to HIV/AIDS prevention, early sexual encounters, adolescent sexuality, reproductive health, and teenage pregnancy prevention. The instrument demonstrated acceptable to good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.732 for knowledge, 0.763 for attitudes, 0.815 for practices,

and an overall reliability coefficient of 0.809, supporting its reliability in assessing students' knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding H.E.A.R.T. advocacy.

Data Gathering Procedures. The study followed three phases: pre-data gathering, actual data gathering, and post-data gathering. During the pre-data gathering phase, institutional permissions, research panel approval, and ethical clearance were secured before the conduct of the study. Upon issuance of the notice to proceed, eligible students were recruited through coordination with school administrators and class advisers, and the questionnaires were administered face-to-face after obtaining student assent and written parental consent. Completed questionnaires were checked for completeness, encoded, and subjected to appropriate statistical analysis, while all data were handled with strict confidentiality in accordance with ethical research standards.

Statistical Treatment of Data. Frequency distribution and simple percentage were used to describe the respondents profile in terms of age, sex, grade level, and exposure to H.E.A.R.T. advocacy activities, while summation of scores determined the level of knowledge and mean score with standard deviation determined the levels of attitudes and practices. Pearson's product–moment correlation coefficient (Pearson's r) was employed to determine the significant relationships among knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding H.E.A.R.T. advocacy.

Ethical Considerations. This study was submitted to the ethics committee of both the university and the school. Ethical approval was sought prior to the start of data gathering to make sure that the welfare of the respondents was protected. Full discussion on the ethical considerations is attached in the appendices.

Presentation, Analysis, And Interpretation of Data

Table 1 Level of Knowledge on H.E.A.R.T advocacy among Highschool students

Knowledge	Average score	*F*	*%*
Low	4.71	14	4.11
Moderate	8.44	103	30.21
High	13.00	224	65.69
Overall Score	11.28	High Knowledge	

Note. *n=341.*

A score of 0–5 indicates Low Knowledge, 6–10 indicates Moderate Knowledge, and 11–15 indicates High Knowledge

The findings revealed that most high school students demonstrated a high level of knowledge regarding H.E.A.R.T. advocacy, indicating that they generally possessed adequate understanding of HIV/AIDS prevention, early sexual encounters, adolescent sexuality, reproductive health, and teenage pregnancy risks. This suggests that students have been exposed to reproductive health information through schools, public health programs, and other educational platforms, enabling them to recognize behaviors that may place adolescents at risk and make informed health decisions. Knowledge serves as the foundation for developing positive attitudes and healthy practices, highlighting the importance of sustained reproductive health education among adolescents. Similar findings have shown that comprehensive sexuality education significantly improves adolescents' reproductive health knowledge and reduces misconceptions related to HIV and sexually transmitted infections (Atuyambe et al., 2022; UNESCO, 2023).

Despite the generally favorable findings, a smaller proportion of students demonstrated moderate and low knowledge, particularly among those in the lower grade levels, suggesting the need to strengthen age-appropriate H.E.A.R.T. advocacy and reproductive health education early in secondary school. Limited knowledge may

increase adolescents' vulnerability to misinformation and risky behaviors, emphasizing the importance of continuous school-based health education, peer education, and collaboration with healthcare professionals. Overall, the findings underscore the need to sustain and enhance existing educational initiatives to further improve adolescent reproductive health literacy, promote responsible decision-making, and contribute to the prevention of HIV infection, sexually transmitted infections, and teenage pregnancy

Table 2 Level of Attitude on H.E.A.R.T advocacy among Highschool students

Attitude	Average score	*F*	*%*
Very Negative	12.00	9	2.64
Negative	21.90	10	2.93
Neutral	30.58	33	9.68
Positive	37.62	87	25.51
Very Positive	48.09	202	59.24
Overall Score	42.00	Very Positive Attitude	

Note. *n= n = 341*

Legend: A score ranging from 10–17 indicates a Very Negative Attitude, 18–25 indicates a Negative Attitude, 26–33 indicates a Neutral Attitude, 34–41 indicates a Positive Attitude, and 42–50 indicates a Very Positive Attitude.

The findings indicate that high school students demonstrated a very positive attitude toward H.E.A.R.T. advocacy, reflecting strong acceptance of adolescent reproductive health education, HIV/AIDS awareness, responsible sexuality, and teenage pregnancy prevention. This suggests that students recognize the importance of reproductive health education and view H.E.A.R.T. advocacy as beneficial in promoting informed decision-making and healthy behaviors during adolescence. The favorable attitudes observed may be attributed to increased exposure to reproductive health information through schools, healthcare institutions, digital platforms, and community-based programs. Similar findings have shown that adolescents exposed to reproductive health education develop more favorable attitudes toward sexual health promotion and preventive health practices (Bolarinwa et al., 2022; Yakubu & Salisu, 2023).

Although only a small proportion of students demonstrated neutral or unfavorable attitudes, these findings highlight the need for continuous, inclusive, and age-appropriate reproductive health education to address misconceptions and cultural barriers that may limit adolescents' participation in health promotion activities. Positive attitudes serve as an important foundation for adopting healthy behaviors, seeking credible health information, and supporting preventive measures against HIV infection, sexually transmitted infections, and teenage pregnancy. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of sustaining school- and community-based H.E.A.R.T. advocacy programs to reinforce positive attitudes, promote responsible decision-making, and improve adolescent health outcomes.

Table 3 Level of Practice on H.E.A.R.T advocacy among Highschool students

Practice	Average score	*F*	*%*
Very Low	12.20	10	2.93
Low	22.47	17	4.99

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Moderate	30.27	63	18.48
High	37.80	124	36.36
Very High	46.64	127	37.24
Overall Score	38.18	High Practice	

Note: n=341

Legend: A score ranging from 10–17 indicates Very Low Practice, 18–25 indicates Low Practice, 26–33 indicates Moderate Practice, 34–41 indicates High Practice, and 42–50 indicates Very High Practice.

The findings revealed that high school students demonstrated a high level of practice regarding H.E.A.R.T. advocacy, indicating that many respondents frequently engaged in reproductive health education activities, sought health information, participated in advocacy programs, and applied health-related knowledge in their daily lives. This suggests that students were able to translate their knowledge and favorable attitudes into positive health behaviors that support adolescent well-being. The high level of practice may be attributed to increased opportunities for participation in school-based health education, seminars, awareness campaigns, peer education, and access to reproductive health information through digital platforms and community-based initiatives. Consistent with previous studies, adolescents who regularly participate in reproductive health education are more likely to adopt responsible health behaviors and engage in practices that promote reproductive health (Bankole et al., 2022; Melesse et al., 2023).

Although the overall findings were favorable, a small proportion of students reported low and very low levels of practice, suggesting that barriers such as limited access to information, social stigma, cultural beliefs, and inadequate support may hinder the consistent application of healthy behaviors. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening school- and community-based H.E.A.R.T. advocacy programs through interactive health education, peer-led activities, and collaborative initiatives involving schools, families, healthcare providers, and community organizations. Sustaining these interventions is essential to reinforce positive reproductive health practices, reduce adolescent health risks, and promote healthier transitions into adulthood.

Table 4 Interrelationship among Knowledge, Attitude and Practices on H.E.A.R.T advocacy among Highschool students

Variables	r value	*p* value	Decision	Interpretation
Knowledge vs. Attitude	.356	.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Knowledge vs Practice	.358	.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Attitude vs. Practice	.356	.000	Reject Ho	Significant

Legend: A value of .90 to 1.00 (-.90 to -1.00) is very high positive (negative) correlation, .70 to .90 (-.70 to -.90) is high positive (negative) correlation, .50 to .70 (-.50 to -.70) is moderate positive (negative) correlation, .30 to .50 (-.30 to -.50) is low positive (negative) correlation, and .00 to .30 (.00 to -.30) is negligible correlation.

Table 4 The findings revealed significant positive relationships among knowledge, attitude, and practices related to H.E.A.R.T. advocacy among high school students. Although the correlation coefficients indicated low positive relationships, the results demonstrate that these variables are meaningfully interconnected. Students with greater knowledge of HIV/AIDS prevention, reproductive health, adolescent sexuality, and teenage pregnancy risks were more likely to develop favorable attitudes and engage in positive health-related practices. The significant relationship between knowledge and attitude supports the Health Belief Model, which explains that individuals who recognize health risks and understand the benefits of preventive actions are more likely to develop positive health perceptions. Similar findings have shown that greater reproductive health knowledge is associated with

more favorable attitudes toward sexuality education and reproductive health programs (Mbachu et al., 2023; Bolarinwa et al., 2022).

The study also demonstrated a significant relationship between knowledge and practice, indicating that adolescents with greater reproductive health knowledge were more likely to adopt health-promoting behaviors, seek reliable health information, and participate in educational activities. Likewise, the significant relationship between attitude and practice suggests that students who held more favorable attitudes toward H.E.A.R.T. advocacy were more willing to engage in positive reproductive health behaviors. These findings support the Theory of Planned Behavior, which proposes that favorable attitudes increase an individual's intention to perform healthy behaviors. Previous studies similarly reported that reproductive health knowledge and positive attitudes significantly contribute to responsible health practices among adolescents (Mmari et al., 2022; Melesse et al., 2023; Yakubu & Salisu, 2023).

Although the relationships were statistically significant, their low positive magnitude suggests that adolescent reproductive health behaviors are also influenced by other factors, including family, peers, culture, socioeconomic conditions, school environment, media exposure, and access to health services. These findings emphasize that effective H.E.A.R.T. advocacy should simultaneously strengthen knowledge, cultivate positive attitudes, and encourage the application of healthy practices through comprehensive educational programs, skills-building activities, and supportive school and community initiatives. Such an integrated approach can help reduce misconceptions, prevent HIV infection, sexually transmitted infections, and teenage pregnancy, and promote healthier decision-making and overall adolescent well-beings.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion. In conclusion, H.E.A.R.T. advocacy serves as an important mechanism in promoting adolescent reproductive health by fostering informed decision-making, positive perceptions, and responsible behaviors among high school students. The study demonstrates that knowledge, attitude, and practice function as interconnected components that collectively contribute to healthier choices and greater awareness of issues related to HIV/AIDS prevention, adolescent sexuality, reproductive health, early sexual encounters, and teenage pregnancy prevention. These findings underscore the importance of sustaining comprehensive reproductive health education and advocacy initiatives within the school setting.

Recommendations. Based on the findings, the proposed H.E.A.R.T. Advocacy Enhancement Plan is recommended for implementation by local government units, public health offices, schools, and community organizations to strengthen adolescent reproductive health promotion, HIV/AIDS prevention, adolescent sexuality education, reproductive health, and teenage pregnancy prevention. Public health educators, school personnel, and community health workers may utilize the findings to develop evidence-based educational programs that enhance adolescents' knowledge, reinforce positive attitudes, and promote healthy practices. Local governments and educational institutions are likewise encouraged to strengthen policies that institutionalize age-appropriate H.E.A.R.T. advocacy, adolescent-friendly health services, peer education, and collaborative school–community health initiatives. Future studies should investigate other factors influencing adolescent reproductive health behaviors using larger populations, diverse settings, and mixed-methods or qualitative approaches to further expand the evidence on effective adolescent reproductive health promotion strategies.

Heart Advocacy Enhancement Plan

Rationale

Perceived Adolescence is a critical stage for developing health-related knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that influence lifelong well-being. The findings revealed that high school students demonstrated high knowledge, very positive attitudes, and high levels of practice regarding H.E.A.R.T. advocacy, with significant relationships among these variables, indicating that greater knowledge contributes to more favorable attitudes and healthier practices. Although the findings were generally favorable, the presence of students with moderate and low levels of knowledge and practice highlights the need for continuous and targeted interventions. Hence, the H.E.A.R.T.

Advocacy Enhancement Plan is proposed to sustain existing strengths, strengthen healthy behaviors, and promote adolescent reproductive health through collaborative school- and community-based initiatives.

General Objective

To sustain high levels of knowledge, maintain very positive attitudes, strengthen healthy practices, and promote responsible adolescent reproductive health behaviors among high school students.

Area of Focus	Strategies/Activities	Persons Responsible	Success Indicator
Sustain Knowledge	Integrate H.E.A.R.T. topics into classroom instruction, conduct regular health education sessions, and provide age-appropriate IEC materials, with additional support for lower-grade students.	School Administrators, Teachers, School Nurse, Health Office	Sustained high knowledge and improved awareness among lower-grade students
Maintain Positive Attitudes	Conduct values formation, youth forums, peer discussions, and anti-stigma campaigns to reinforce positive perceptions toward adolescent reproductive health.	Guidance Counselors, Teachers, School Nurse	Sustained very positive attitudes toward H.E.A.R.T. advocacy
Strengthen Healthy Practices	Implement peer education, student-led advocacy activities, health campaigns, and community outreach to encourage responsible reproductive health behaviors.	Teachers, School Nurse, Student Leaders, Health Workers	Sustained high level of healthy practices and increased student participation
Strengthen School–Community Partnership	Collaborate with parents, local health offices, and community organizations in implementing H.E.A.R.T. advocacy and adolescent health promotion activities.	School Administrators, Municipal Health Office, PTA	Increased school–community participation and strengthened health promotion initiatives
Program Sustainability	Conduct regular monitoring and evaluation, institutionalize H.E.A.R.T. advocacy activities, and provide continuous training for peer educators.	School Health Committee, School Administrators	Continuous implementation and sustained positive outcomes

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