

ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS TOWARDS THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF SEX EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AWKA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

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Abstract

The study investigated the attitude of teachers and students towards the teaching and learning of sex education in secondary school in Awka South local government area of Anambra State of Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised (1,629) senior secondary school students and one hundred and seventy-one (171) teachers. A sample size of two hundred (200) senior secondary school students and fifty (50) teachers were drawn for the study using simple random sampling techniques. The research developed questionnaire titled “Attitude of Teachers and Students Towards the Teaching and Learning of Sex Education in Secondary Schools” (ATSTTLSESS). The instrument was validated by two experts one expert in measurement and evaluation unit of the Department of Educational Foundations and another expert from the Department of Science Education all from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State of Nigeria. The Pearson Product Moment correlation was coefficient used to determine the reliability of the instrument which yielded coefficient value of 0.77. The researcher together with two research assistants collected data for the study using the direct approach method and 97% return was recorded. Mean was used to answer the research questions. The findings of the study revealed among others that teachers do not put in satisfactory time when handling lessons on sex education while some of the students feel it is wrong to discuss human sexuality with the teacher in the class. The researcher made some recommendations which includes; sex education should be integrated with related disciplines like biology, health education, moral instruction, integrated science, home economic/management and civic education. Also, teachers should step up and put in more time to the teaching of sex education and related topics.

Keywords: Sex Education, Teachers, Learning, Teaching, Secondary Schools

Introduction

Sex education which is also called sexuality education or sex and relationship education is a process of acquiring information and forming attitude and belief about sex, sexual identity, relationship and intimacy. Offordile (2008) stated that sex education seeks both to reduce the risk of potentially negative outcome from sexual behaviour, like unwanted pregnancies and sexual transmitted diseases.

Teaching and Learning of Sex Education:

Sex education is not a new concept, it is as old as human being but the only thing is that teaching of sexuality is carried out by either the parents or peers who gave limited information about sexuality. The reason for the introduction of sexually education into formal education system where professional teachers would educate adolescent on all they need to know about sexuality education. The sexuality education forum (2009) remarked that sexuality education has been the struggle of history to reconcile the need for additional, professionals and prevention-oriented role with demands of being relevant, effective and acceptable to young people. The sexuality education therefore is at any age level of human sexuality. The sexuality education has a goal to impact factual information on students. The goal of sexuality education is the promotion of sexuality health by providing students with opportunities to develop a positive and factual view of sexuality, acquire the information and skills to take care of their sexuality health; including HIV/AIDS, respect and value themselves and others and acquire the skills needed to make healthy decisions about their sexuality health and behaviour.

Federal Republic of Nigeria (2022) noted that school-based sexuality education will address the socio-cultural, biological and spiritual dimension of sexuality by providing information, exploring feelings, value, attitude, developing, communication skills, decision making techniques and critical thinking skills.

Origin of Sex Education

Sex education came into being in different countries at various times. The sexual revolution of the 1800s contributed immensely to the debate of sexual pleasure as an ethical substance which continued to be governed by relations of force, struggle and establishment of dominion. During that period, women started agitating for more debates on issues concerning their sexuality. They question and resulted against rules and regulations. Prohibiting the use of contraceptive and the spread of information about them. The first six to seven decade of that century, saw both males and females beginning to question the concept of virginity and male dominance. WHO (2024) revealed that between 35 and 45 percent of females and 55 – 65 percent

of males engaged in sexual relationship before marriage at that time. As far back as 1897 a female Swedish doctor, Karoline wider storm, saw the need to educate the young especially the girls about sexual hygiene as a way of informing and protecting them from sexually transmitted diseases such as gonorrhoea and Syphilis which were found to be very common during that period. In Nigeria as well traditional form of sexuality education existed in kinship systems and coming of age ceremonies where in youths were tutored about manhood and womanhood. Its essence was purely biological and culturally specific. There were various methods of contraceptives which included virginity, herbs, breast feeding, the ring and abstinence, most of which were strictly meant for the married and kept as a secret. Issues on sexually transmitted diseases were also of great concern but were barely discussed while the contraction of them was a big shame and stigma. The socialization process of the child remained strictly the only way of acquainting the child with issues like family relationship and public manners with very little room for self expression. As school education expanded, people began to question moral view points about virginity and abstinence and wondered about the credibility of rigid moral standards and myths that surrounded sexual issues.

Attitude of Secondary Schools Students Towards Sexuality:

The students' attitude towards sexuality education. It is observed that students are sometimes unwilling to learn sexuality because they feel that they already know all about sex or sexuality. Akpama (2009) commenting on attitude of secondary school student interest is that the student are so interested in sex or their opposite sex and want sex mile to be relaxed and they advocate for sexual freedom. This is clear evidence that our adolescent experiment with sex. Therefore, they need to be guided and supervised to confirm within the realm of the societal norms and value. WHO (2024) reviewed nineteen (19) studies to find out the age of first sexual intercourse among students who have been exposed to sexuality education and stated that: there was no evidence that sexuality education leads to earlier or increased sexual activity in young people.

1. Six studies of out of 19 (nineteen) showed that sexuality education either delayed the onset of sexual activity or reduced its overall frequency.
2. Two studies showed that sexuality to education and contraceptive services di not encourage earlier or increase sexual activity.
3. Ten studies showed that sexuality education increased the adaption of safer practices by sexually active youth.
4. School programmes that promoted postponement of sexual activity the use of condoms when sex occurs were more effective in reducing risk than those

who or that promoted abstinence alone.

5. Sexuality education for youths is more effective when it is administered before young people become sexually active and when skills and social norms rather than knowledge are emphasized.

Attitude of Teachers Towards the Teaching of Sex Education:

A teacher is someone who gives instructions especially in a school or privately. At school, the teacher acts as surrogates to children, it is an agent of deliberate attempt to socialize youth, he imposes societal value upon the youth. The teacher is an interpreter in moral matters, judging from the society in which he teaches and considering the experience of his students, the teacher is to bring his students to understand the differences between right and wrong and what is socially acceptable (good) and what is socially unacceptable (wrong).

The validity of any educational system naturally is dependent upon the quality of the teaching, it is ultimately that the teacher is one who decides on what goes on in the classroom and transfers educational theories and principles into practice. Alaezi (2010) describes teaching as the business of all those involved in the act of changing human behaviour and transforming of society, render then perceptibly significant respectable and recognizable to the other because of the consequences and what they accomplish and the unique manner they do to them. Thus, teachers attitude towards the teaching of sex education in secondary schools is to tackle the problem related to promiscuity and unwanted pregnancies among young people. Although parents have the primary responsibility of educating their children teachers supported by government policies and funds have substantial responsibility in providing in providing information that addresses the physical, social and emotional needs of our youth (Finer & Henshaw, 2010). Attitude towards sex education differ from age to gender and also on many factors like dominants, perceptions, social belief systems, religious, factors, family socialization and cultural set up all within which affect learners as they mature (Monisola & Oludara, 2009).

The attitude of a teacher towards the teaching of sexual education will determine how far the student will go in learning, impact effectively on the student's life and contribute factual information that will enable the student to develop emotionally, morally, socially and religiously and have a positive look towards sexual life. A teacher is supposed to be nice, factual, approachable, show by examples, give factual information, be open-minded, give accurate answers to questions and allow for open-mindedness between the students. This will in turn foster healthy, clean environment for learning with the students, attend to their needs, provide direction and give guidance to developing a new outlook toward sexual life and in turn

develop sexually, emotionally and morally.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the attitudes of teachers towards the teaching of sex education in secondary school in Awka South local government area?
2. What are the attitude of students towards the teaching and learning of sex education in secondary schools in Awka South local government area?
3. What are the strategies for enhancing teaching of sex education in secondary schools?

Methods

Descriptive survey design was adopted for this study (Nworgu, 2015). This design is appropriate since the study sought to collect data from respondents in order to investigate the attitude of teachers and students towards the teaching and learning of sex education in secondary schools in Awka South Awka South local government area of Anambra State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised 1,629 S.S.1 students and 171 teachers from the selected secondary schools in Awka South local government area of Anambra State. The sample for the study comprised two hundred (200) students and fifty (50) teachers drawn using sample random sampling techniques.

The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire titled “Attitude of Teachers and Students Towards the Teaching and Learning of Sex Education in Secondary School” (ATSTTLSEXED), contained 19 items which measured the attitude of teachers and students towards the teaching and learning of sex education. The items of the instrument are structured on a 5-point likert scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) weighted 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively.

The instrument was subjected to face validation by two experts, one expert in measurement and evaluation unit of the Department of Educational Foundations and the other from the Department of Science Education all from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through single administration of copies of ATSTTLSEXED to 20 biology teachers and 30 students from Onitsha North local government area of Anambra State, Nigeria which were outside the study area. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation co-efficient was used to determine the reliability of the instrument which yielded co-efficient value of 0.82. This is in line with Doval, Viladrich and Ango Lo-Brunet (2023) who recommended that a co-efficient (r) of 0.70 and above should be considered high

enough to judge an instrument as reliable. The researcher with the help of two research assistants who are secondary school teachers in Awka South local government area of Anambra State administered 250 copies of the questionnaire to the respondents through a direct approach. The copies of the questionnaires distributed duly filled and successful retrieved were used for data analysis. Data collected were analysed using mean score to answer the research questions. The decision on the research questions was based on range of values obtained from mean scores. Thus, mean scores ranging 4.50 – 5.00 indicates (SA), 3.50 – 4.49 indicates (A), 2.50 – 3.49 indicates (U), 1.50 – 2.49 indicates (D) and 0.00 – 1.49 indicates (SD) respectively.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the attitude of teachers towards sex education in secondary school in Awka South local government area?

Table 1: Mean Rating Scores on the Attitude of Teachers Towards Sex Education

S/N	ITEMS	$\bar{X}$	DECISION
1.	Sex education is not taught regularly in my school.	2.16	Disagreed
2.	I do not like to provide satisfactory answers to question bothering on sex education.	1.28	Strongly Disagreed
3.	I skip issues of sex education whenever I teach.	1.14	Strongly Disagreed
4.	I spend enough time when teaching sex education.	2.16	Disagreed
5.	Sex education is not taught in my school.	1.92	Disagreed
6.	I am not well informed on matters of sexuality education	1.92	Disagreed
7.	Teaching sex education corrupts the mind of students	2.04	Disagreed
Average Mean		1.80	Disagreed

From the weighted mean of table 1, result showed that the respondents disagreed of sex education not been taught or not regularly taught in our secondary schools. The respondents disagreed on all the items above. The average mean of all the items above shows that teachers have negative attitudes towards sex education.

Research Question 2: What are the attitudes of students toward sex education in secondary school in Awka South local government Area?

Table 2: Mean Rating Scores on the Attitudes of Students Towards Sex Education

S/N	ITEMS	$\bar{X}$	DECISION
1.	I do not miss classes on sex education related topics.	3.71	Agreed
2.	I get interested when issues of sexuality are being taught in class	4.42	Agreed

From Table 2, the respondents disagreed on items 4 and 5 and majority of the students actually feel that the right place to discuss about human sexuality is the classroom and it does not corrupt their minds. The average mean of 3.61 (Agreed) which implies that students have positive perception towards sex education.

Research Question 3: What are the strategies for enhancing teaching of sex education in secondary school in Awka South local government area?

Table 3: Mean Rating Scores on the Strategies for Enhancing Teaching of Sex Education in Secondary School.

S/N	ITEMS		DECISION
1.	Sex education should be integrated into the following disciplines: biology, health education, moral instructions, civic education and home economics/ management.	3.79	Agreed
2.	The use of illustrations on charts, diagrams, pictures, films and tapes, showing negative effects of pre-marital sex.	4.50	Agreed
3.	Guidance counsellors should help in the teaching of sex education in secondary schools.	4.13	Agreed
4.	Teachers should not be reluctant in supplying students with answer to their questions on sexuality.	4.88	Agreed
5.	The voluntary organization like boy's scout and girls guide should be fully involved in sex education through organising seminars and other extra curriculum activities to educate the youth on sex education.	3.36	Agreed
6.	Service, training of sex education should be organised for teachers to update their knowledge and skills on sex education	3.64	Agreed
Average Mean		4.21	Agreed

Table 3 revealed that the respondents agreed that the above mentioned are strategies enhancing the teaching of sex education in secondary schools in Awka South local government area of Anambra State.

Discussion

The findings of the study indicated that teachers have negative attitude towards the teaching of sex education in secondary schools in Awka South local government area of Anambra State of Nigeria. In other words, a teacher is supposed to be nice, factual, approachable, show by examples, give factual information, give accurate answers to questions and allow for open-mindedness between the students.

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Discussion

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Further findings of the study indicated that majority of the students actually feel that the right place to discuss about human sexuality is the class room and it does not corrupt their minds. Therefore, they need to be guided and supervised to confirm within the realm of the societal norms and value. WHO (2024) reviewed that there was no evidence that sexuality education leads to earlier or increased sexual activity in young people.

The findings of the study also agreed with the opinion of UNESCO (2023) that the implementation of sex education in secondary schools is to tackle the problem related to promiscuity and unwanted pregnancies among young people.

Further result indicates among others, that sex education should be integrated in the following disciplines: Biology, Health education, Moral instructions, Civic education and Home economics as strategies for enhancing teaching of sex education in secondary schools in Awka South local government area of Anambra State. This was inline with Vashistha and Rajshree (2012) that teachers should devote much of their time, energy and resources to the mental and emotional education of this young youth at their secondary schools.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that most secondary school teachers have negative attitudes towards sex education in Awka South local government area of Anambra State. The majority of the students actually feel that the right place to discuss about human sexuality is the classroom and it does not corrupt their minds.

This shows that students have positive perception towards sex education in Awka South local government area of Anambra State. The secondary school teachers in Awka South local government area of Anambra State were aware of the strategies that enhances the teaching of sex education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were:

1. Training programmes such as seminars, workshops and conferences be regularly organized by post primary school service commission for the teachers to upgrade their skills and knowledge to keep them abreast of adequate information about sex education.
2. Parents needs to rise up to their responsibilities by always informing their children on the changes that place in their body and how to take good care of themselves in all spheres of maturity so they could avoid destroying their future thinking they are doing the right thing.
3. Curriculum planners should integrate sexuality education under the following disciplines – Biology, health education, moral instructions, civic education and home education/management. Doing this will enhance sex education curriculum coverage and spread of the right information.

Government should encourage the establishment of more schools in the rural communities to help tackle the problem of illiteracy among the local populace. The use of mass media will also serve as a viable tool of sensitizing the public.

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