

Secondary School Teachers' and Students' Attitude Towards Teaching and Learning of Sex Education in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated secondary school teachers' and students' attitude towards teaching and learning of sex education in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State. It adopted a descriptive survey design. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire which was developed by the researchers and validated by experts in the field of measurement and evaluation. The data collected were trial tested and analysed using the Cronbach Alpha. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was found to be 0.89 which indicated that the instrument was reliable for the study. A sample size of 120 (48males and 72 females) SSS students was randomly sampled from four schools out of ten schools that was used for the study. The research questions were answered using mean score and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested with t-test statistic at P-value of 0.05% level of significance. The findings among others revealed that there is significant difference in the attitude of male and female teachers towards the teaching of sex education. The findings equally revealed that there is significant difference between male and female students' attitude towards learning of sex education. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that a curriculum of sex education should be developed for all secondary schools in Nigeria and the subject family life replaced with sex education.

Keywords: Sex education, attitude, teaching and learning

Introduction

Sexuality is an important component of personality and cannot be disconnected from other aspects of life. The term sex goes beyond the realm of sex organs as individuals are made to believe to make a breakthrough in the life of human relation among and between sex partners. Sex education is the instruction about sex and human sexuality. Sex education is regarded as a formal instruction on topics linking human sexuality such as anatomy, reproduction, intercourse, abstinence, contraception and numerous human sexual behaviours. World health organization (2010) defines sexuality as a central aspect of human being that accompanies all life and which involves sex, identity, gender roles,

sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Yepoyan (2014) buttressed that sex education is learning about the cognitive, emotional, social, interactive and physical aspects of sexuality. According to Effiong (2013), sexuality education starts only in childhood and progresses through adolescence and adulthood. It aims at supporting and

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protecting sexual development. It gradually equips and empowers children and young people with information, skills and positive values to understand and enjoy their sexuality, have safe and fulfilling relationships and take responsibilities for their own and other sexual health and well-being. Effiong (2013) stated that sexuality Education seeks both to reduce the risks of potentially negative outcomes from sexual behaviour like unwanted or unplanned pregnancies and infection with sexually transmitted diseases and to enhance the quality of relationships. It is also about developing young people's ability to make decisions over their entire lifetime.

According to UNESCO (2013) sex education is an age-appropriate, culturally, relevant approach to teaching about sex education and relationships by providing scientifically accurate, realistic, non-judgmental information. UNESCO pointed out that sex education provides opportunities to explore one's own values and attitude and to build decision-making, communication and risk reduction skills about many aspects of sexuality. Dehghani and Khadijah (2015) expressed that sex education is not merely the topics of reproduction and teaching how babies are conceived and born. Instead, it has a far richer scope and goal of helping children incorporate sex more meaningfully into their present and future life and to provide them with some basic understanding of virtually every aspect of sex by the time they reach full maturity. Sex is an important aspect of human life and almost everyone in the society including children wants to know about it. Traditionally, children are not supposed to receive information about sex at all. Many times, they learn about sex through their friends, books, television, pornographic films either from the magazines or internets and sex movies.

Correct and factual information should be given to teenagers about the anatomic development in their bodies. The teenager's stage or periods are very crucial in the life of the individual. Many frustrations may occur during this stage such as school dropout, sexual immorality/ juvenile delinquency to mention but a few which are problems evolving from physical, social, cognitive and mental development. Children should be given adequate information about sex. Gone are the days when sexual matters were hidden

from children. Questions posed by the teenagers should be answered by teachers to open a wide range of the communication between silence or lie telling which may cause injury as they assume that the answers should be contrary to those books and peers. Therefore, sex education should be given at the early developmental stage of the child because the foundation laid in the early life of the teenagers determines the stability and propensity of marriage life of an individual in the society. Attitude towards sex by teenagers should be monitored and immediate attention given.

Attitude is positive or negative feelings that an individual holds about objects, persons or ideas. It is a central part of human identity. Everyday people love, hate, like, dislike, favour, oppose, agree, disagree, argue, persuade, laugh, frown etc. all these are evaluative responses to an object. Hence attitudes can be defined as "a summary evaluation of an object of thought" (Bohner & Wanke, 2012). They are inclinations and predispositions that guide an individual's behavior (Mohammed & Waheed, 2011). Attitude like all psychological constructs, are latent, we cannot observe them directly. So, all attitude measurement depends on those attitudes being revealed in overt responses. Attitude towards sex education differs from one group to another depending on many factors like dominant perceptions, social belief systems, religious factors, family socialization and cultural set up within which learners grow up (Dehghani & Khadijah 2015). It was also found that parents were generally uncomfortable in talking to their children about human sex and mothers were reluctant to talk about sex education to their daughters as they found it embarrassing to discuss the issues (Effiong 2013).

Studies have shown that adults in the Nigeria society have usually refrained from discussing sexual matters with the young. Traditionally, children are brought up with strict discipline and fear and they are punished for questioning their parents especially the girls (Egeruoh, 2011). Consequently, young people are afraid to ask questions relating to sexual issues, as they would be seen as disrespectful and disobedient. No wonder Sunita (2014) reiterates that sexual issues are seen as topics to be discussed only by adults.

Many young people were therefore left with inadequate preparation regarding their sexual lives. This leaves them potentially vulnerable to coercion, abuse and exploitation, unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) including HIV. Many young people approach adulthood faced with conflicting and confusing messages about sex and gender (Toor, 2012). This is often made worst by embarrassment, silence and disapproval of open discussion of sexual matters by adults, including parents and teacher, at the very time when it is most needed. Young people have numerous problems relating to their sex.

However, despite the clear and pressing need for effective school-based sex education, in most countries throughout the world, this is still not made available. In Nigeria the situation is the same. There are many reasons for this, including perceived or anticipated resistance resulting from misunderstandings about the nature, purpose and effects of sex education. Evidence suggests that many people, including education Ministry staff, school Principals and teachers, may not be convinced of the need to provide sex education, or are reluctant to provide it because they lack the confidence and skilled personal to do so (UNESCO, 2014). In many countries, sex education remained unsuccessful because of the social taboo and cultural sensitivity that makes sexual issues uncomfortable to talk about. In Nigeria, a confluence of cultural, religious and geographical factors creates a sensitive environment where issues of sexual and reproductive health have remained highly a taboo for decades (Mehra & Singh 2013). Similarly, Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State is not left behind. It is also bound to the culture of shame and respect where issues on sex remain silent among adults and children, including parent and teachers.

Despite the advocacy programs on the teenage pregnancy and contraceptive use, Enugu East L.G.A of Enugu State continues to face challenges related to early sexual debut, teenage pregnancy etc. In view of the foregoing, the question thus arises on how the society meaningfully and constructively addresses the social ills in the interest of the parent and future generations. Many scholars were of the opinion that

the teaching of sex education should be institutionalized at the secondary school level (Mahajan 2015). However, Kinley (2015) added that if a successful sex education programme is to be introduced in Secondary Schools, there should be a general acceptance from the parents, teachers and the students. There is need to advocate sex education systems in the schools for the beneficial of all people and it is even important to find out the willingness of the people for the initiation of such system. In a situation where misinformation can be life threatening there is urgent need for enriching the young mind with adequate information about sex.

Many researchers have different views on the influence of gender on sex (gender). This study equally investigated the influence of gender on the attitude of students and teachers towards teaching and learning of sex education in schools. Gender is a set of characteristics distinguishing between males and females, particularly in the case of man and woman which depending on the context, may vary from sex to social role to gender identity (Eze, 2013). According to Enebechi and Nzewi (2017), gender roles are roles which society assigns to a man or woman in accordance with the culture and tradition of that society. It is not like sex, which is biologically determined and universal too. The issue of closing gender gap in sciences has remained elusive Enebechi (2021). In recent times, gender related issues in science education have continued to receive serious attention judging from the number of studies done to that effect. This inconclusive results on gender calls for further investigation to find out if gender influences the attitude of students and teachers towards teaching and learning of sex education in schools.

The provision of sex education is important because the norms guiding sexual act has been broken down by the increasing urbanization and the modernization of social ills, but it will provide information for improving behaviour, establishing personality in our society. This should be made known to teenagers of both sexes. Hence, this study considered it important to determine the students' and teachers' attitude towards teaching and learning of sex

education in secondary schools in Enugu East Local Government area of Enugu State.

Statement of the Problem

Adolescence is a stage when youths begin to learn so much about them and try to adjust to emerging changes in their anatomy. During this period, the adolescent is expected to perform some developmental tasks such as attaining matured relationship with peers, of the same and opposite sex. Incidentally, parents who are expected to provide the necessary emotional support are unable to because of their beliefs that discussing sexual issues with children may negate cultural practices in Nigeria specifically and Africa in general.

Therefore, these youths resort to their peers and social media for such information which may sometimes be misleading and have grave consequences. Thus, the need to teach sex education in schools cannot be over emphasized. The problem of this study therefore, is to determine the attitude of students' and teachers to the teaching and learning of sex education in Enugu East L. G. A. Enugu State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to ascertain secondary school teachers' and students' attitude towards teaching and learning of sex education in schools in Enugu East L.G. A. Enugu State, specifically, the study sought to:

1. Ascertain the attitude of teachers towards the teaching of sex education in secondary schools in Enugu East Local Government area of Enugu State.
2. Determine the attitude of students towards learning of sex education in secondary schools in Enugu East Local Government area of Enugu State.

Research Questions

The researchers formulated the following research questions for the study:

1. What are the attitude of teachers' towards the teaching of sex education in secondary schools in Enugu East Local Government area of Enugu State.
2. What are the attitudes of students towards learning of sex education secondary in secondary schools in Enugu East Local Government area of Enugu State

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between male and female teachers' attitude towards the teaching of sex education.
2. There is no significant difference between male and female students' attitude towards the learning of sex education.

Method

The study was a quantitative study which adopted a descriptive survey research design. According to Engwa and Ozofor (2015), descriptive survey research design involves samples of different sub-groups of a population to look at similarities or differences between them at any particular time. Based on this, a descriptive survey research design was considered appropriate for this study. Since attitude cannot be directly observed, its measurement can be simply carried out by questioning or indirect methods of inferring cues to measure implicit attitudes. The population of the study was 4,564 Government coeducational senior secondary school students (SSS) which comprised 1,843 males and 2721 female students in Enugu East L. G. A. Enugu state.

A purposive sampling technique was used to sample four coeducational schools out of 11 Government coeducational senior secondary schools in the area. In each of the four coeducational schools sampled, a simple random sampling technique was used to sample 4 males and 6 females' teachers and students from SS 1, SS 2, and SS 3 balloting this gave a sample size of 120 respondents made up of 48 males and 72 females. This sample size was considered appropriate since it is in line with Nworgu, Ugwuanyi and Nworgu (2013) which asserted that if the population of a study is in several thousands, a 30% or less sample size is adequate.

The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire which was developed by the researchers. It consists of 15 items made up of four point modified Likert type response scales. Students were expected to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement on the items. The responses of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree were respectively assigned value points of (4,3,2,1) and the reverse (1, 2, 3, 4) for negatively structured items. A mean score of 2.50 and above was considered

significant while a mean score below 2.50 was considered not significant. The reliability of the instrument was estimated by administering the instrument to 30 SSS students in Agbani Education zone who were not part of the study area but have the characteristics of the study population. Data collected in the trial testing was analysed using the Cronbach Alpha formular. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was found to be 0.89. This reliability index is a positively high reliability index indicating that the instrument is reliable for the study.

The researcher visited the various sampled schools to give the questionnaire to SSS students and teachers through the help of the various form teachers in order to avoid Hawthorne's effects. This was done with the consent of the principal. Copies of the instruments were distributed before the break period. The researchers stayed till the last respondent completed his response. This gave the researchers the

opportunity to attend to other issues that required their attention, through the teachers. The researchers equally had an opportunity of ensuring 100% completion and submission of the instrument.

The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested with t-test statistic at 0.05 probability level of significance. The t-test was used to show the statistical significance difference between male and female students' and teachers' attitude towards sex education.

Result

The data collected were analysed, summarized and then presented as follows:

Research question 1: what are the attitudes of teachers towards teaching of sex education in secondary schools in Enugu East Local Government Area.

Table 1

Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers' Attitude towards Teaching of Sex Education

SN	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	N	\bar{X}	S	Dec
1	Majority of teachers have negative attitudes towards teaching sex education in secondary schools.	60	20	20	20	120	3.25	1.04	A
2	Very few teachers have positive attitudes towards teaching sex education in secondary schools.	60	40	20	0	120	3.33	1.05	A
3	Female teachers feel shy to teach sex education in the mixed secondary schools	80	20	10	10	120	3.42	1.07	A
4	Male teachers feel bold and interested towards teaching sex education	10	20	20	70	120	2.95	1.76	A
5	Some teachers do not like reproduction system of sex education	5	10	35	70	120	1.58	0.73	D
6	Traditional cultural norms and values of people Influence the attitude of teachers towards teaching Sex education	60	20	20	20	120	3.25	1.04	A
7	Poor implementation of sex education in schools influence teachers attitude negatively.	10	20	20	70	120	1.75	0.76	D
8	Social media influence people attitudes of teachers towards teaching sex education.	80	20	10	10	120	3.42	1.07	A
9	Age and family commitment influence teachers Attitude towards sex education	10	20	20	70	120	1.75	0.76	D
10	Religious belief influences teachers negative attitude towards sex education	60	40	20	0	120	3.33	1.05	A
Grand Mean							2.86	0.93	A

Key: SA-strongly agree, A- Agree, D- Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree N-sample size, X-mean, S- Standard Deviation, Dec- Decision

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Table 1 shows that the computed mean for items 1,2,3 & 4 were above the cut-off mark of 2.50 while item 5 was below the cut-off. The grand mean score for items in this cluster is 2.86 with associated standard deviation score of 0.93. This indicated that teachers have positive attitude towards the teaching sex education in secondary schools.

From the computer mean in table 1, it was found that mean of questionnaire items of 11,13 and 15 with standard deviation of 0.93 implies that traditional, cultural norm, value, social media, religious belief influences teachers' attitude towards

Table 2

Mean and Standard Deviation of Students' Attitude towards Learning of Sex Education

SN	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	N	\bar{X}	S	Dec
1	Majority of secondary school students show positive attitudes towards learning of sex education	80	20	10	10	120	3.42	1.07	A
2	Male and female students show interest when human reproductive system of sex education is taught	60	40	20	0	120	3.33	1.05	A
3	Majority of female students do not like sex education taught by male teachers	10	20	20	70	120	1.75	0.76	D
4	Students do not like to attend sex education lessons	10	20	20	70	120	1.75	0.76	D
5	Very few students hate learning sex education	80	20	10	10	120	3.30	2.07	A
Grand Mean							2.62	1.13	A

Key: SA-strongly agree, A- Agree, D- Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree, N-sample size, X-mean, S-standard Deviation, Dec- Decision

Table 2 shows that the computed mean for items 1,2 and 5 were above the cut off mark of 2.50 while items 3 and 4 were below the cut-off. The grand mean score for items in this cluster is 2.62 with associated standard deviation score of 1.13 showing that students show negative attitude towards learning of sex education in secondary schools.

Hypothesis

HO₁: There is no significant difference between male and female teachers' attitude towards the teaching of sex education.

the teaching of sex education in secondary schools. Items 12 and 14 have no bases in the influence. Equally the mean and standard deviations for items 12 and 14 is below 2.5 which is a strong indication that Poor implementation of sex education in schools is among the factors influencing the attitude of teachers towards the teaching of sex education in schools.

Research question 2: what are the attitudes of students towards learning of sex education in secondary schools in Enugu East Local Government Area?

Table 3

t-test result of male and female teacher's attitude towards the teaching of sex education

Source	Mean Square	Df	F	Sig	Dec
Corrected Model	142.31	3			
Overall Teachers Attitude	2.944	2	1.604	1.96	S
Male	2.35	1			
Female	4.06	1			
Error	1752.23	119			

Table 3 shows that the F value of 1.604 is less than critical value of 1.96. That means the hypothesis of no significant difference is rejected at $P < .05$. Therefore, there is significant difference between male and female teachers' attitude towards the teaching of sex education in secondary schools

HO₂: There is no significant difference between male female students' attitude toward the learning of sex education.

Table 4

t-test result of male and female students' attitude towards the learning of sex education

Source	Mean Square	Df	F	Sig	Dec
Corrected Model	563.24	3			
Overall Students Attitude	2.98	2	1.421	1.96	S
Male	1.78	1			
Female	4.18	1			
Error	2730.09	119			

Table 4 shows that the F value of 1.421 is less than critical. Value of 1.96. That means that the null hypothesis therefore is rejected at $P < .05$. Therefore, there is significant difference in the attitude of male and female students towards the learning of sex education.

Discussion

The study established that there is significant difference between male and female teachers' attitude towards the teaching of sex education in secondary school. The reason one may adduce from this is that all of them work in the same environment, have observed that students experience a lot of changes during adolescence and thus manifest behaviours that are anti-social and inimical to their general well-being. This finding contradicts that of Ugoji (2014) who found out that there was no significant difference in the attitude of male and female parents towards teaching of sexuality education in Deltas State. This present finding equally supports that of Abubaka and Sa'idu (2014) who revealed that there was significant difference between male and female teachers' attitude towards teaching sexuality education in secondary schools in Kano State.

Furthermore, the study discovered that there is significant difference between male and female students' attitude towards the learning of sex education. This finding still contradicts that of Ugoji (2014). This study is in line with Kamal (2012) who found out that there was significant difference in the

attitude of teachers', parents and adolescents towards sex education in Zion.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the analysis made above the following conclusions were made:

There is significant difference between male and female teachers' attitude towards teaching of sex education in secondary school. In addition, there is significant difference between male and female students' attitude towards the learning of sex education.

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers made the following recommendations:

1. A curriculum of sex education should be drawn up for all secondary schools in Nigeria and the subject family life replaced with sex education
2. The government should train teachers to handle sex education in schools
3. Public awareness campaigns should be organized by the government (at all levels) to sensitize members of the public (teachers inclusive) on the need for sexually education so that they can be receptive to it
4. Religious leaders through their various programmes in churches and mosques should enlighten their members especially the adults (including teachers) about the importance of sex education for adolescent in schools

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