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Parents' and Teachers' Perceptions of the Teaching of Sexuality Education in Asa Local Government Area, Kwara State

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Abstract. This study examined parents' and teachers' perceptions of the teaching of Sexuality Education in Asa Local Government Area. A descriptive survey method was adopted for the study. A sample of 300 respondents was involved in the study. A structured questionnaire ($r = 0.82$) was used to elicit data from the respondents. Three hypotheses were formulated and used for the study. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significant. Data collected were analyzed using t-test statistics. The result of the study showed that male and female respondents were significantly different in their perception of the teaching of Sexuality Education in secondary schools. The results also revealed that, the two religions (Christianity and. Islam) strongly supported the teaching of Sexuality Education at secondary school level. The study recommended that teaching Sexuality Education in secondary school will reduce the risk of potential negative outcome from sexual behaviour like unwanted or unplanned pregnancies and Sexually Transmitted Diseases.

Keywords: Sex education, Reproductive health, Adolescent psychology

Introduction

Sexuality Education is the process of acquiring information and forming attitudes and beliefs about sex, sexuality identity, relationships and intimacy. Sexuality Education is also about acting on these choices. Sexuality Education may be taught informally, such as when someone receives information from

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a conversation with parents, friend, religious leaders, or through the media. It may also be delivered through Sex Education Websites.

Sexuality Education is taught in schools, both at Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary Schools. In some cases, it could be taught in Home Economics class, or Physical Education class. Some schools do not offer Sexuality Education since it remains a controversial issue in several countries, particularly the United State (especially with regard to the age at which child should start receiving such education (Fawole, 1986).

In the light of the above, comprehensive Sexuality Education is a planned process of education that fosters acquisition of factual information, positive attitudes, belief and value as well as development of skills to cope with the biological, psychological, social-cultural and operational aspects of human sexuality. The main goal of Sexuality Education is the promotion of sexual values and health by providing opportunities to develop a positive and factual view of sexuality (Awodola, 1986).

Mencken (2005) in his own contribution opined that to acquire the information on sexual related issues and skills, the need to take care of teenagers sexual health, including preventing HIV/AIDS, to acquire the skills needed to make healthy decisions about their sexual health behaviours.

The students involved in the study are the youths who are within the age range of 11 - 19 years old and they are termed to be adolescent and their period give concerned to educators, psychologists, sociologists, counsellors, adults, parents in the community and the policy makers. Shertzer and Stone (1989), described this period as a transitional period between childhood and adulthood. At childhood, it is meant that the individual adolescent is totally dependent upon parents or other adults for food, shelter and emotional support necessary for growth and survival. Adulthood implies that individual is relatively self sufficient and indebt, able to provide for most of his own needs and ready to establish himself away from parental home.

Young people need Sexuality Education programmes that modifies and teach positive self-worth. Unfortunately, Parent and Teachers still believe that teaching about Sexuality Education would encourage sexual *promiscuity* and actually increase young people's involvement in sexual immoralities (Nwoye, 1991).

Kirby; Barth, Heland and Petrol (1991) claimed that the following reasons are given for the teaching of Sexuality Education in our secondary schools. A lot of social ills in the society can be traced to rapid industrialization, urbanization, education and contracts. For instance, many children and youths leave their parents and move to urban centres in search of white collar jobs and good life, where they may imbibe many social ills. Since parental influence is fading away and urban life is expanding, a lot of

unwholesome condition abounds in our contemporary society. These conditions include prostitution, promiscuity and unwanted pregnancies leading to unwanted babies. This is a common occurrence in the various communities from where many unmarried pregnant adolescents (school-age girl) exist. This condition presents a source of concern for the school and other agencies in the community such as religious bodies. Hence, the need for sexuality education in secondary schools.

Therefore, Sexuality Education helps youths and adolescents to adjust to psychological and social problems, which are characteristics of and associated with poor knowledge of Sexuality Education has it that helping children and youths to integrate sex into their lives in a responsible and constructive manner.

Rice (1990) asserted that Sexuality Education is an inevitable and unbeatable issue, since most adolescents are said to be victims of Sexually Transmitted Diseases such as gonorrhoea, syphilis and "Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome" (AIDS). In addition, adolescent mother have difficulties in coping with their lives and their infants.

Akingboye (1985) observed that Sexuality Education deserved a better place and approach in the secondary schools curriculum in Nigeria for the following reasons:

1. The Nigeria secondary school students deserve to understand its constituents of the male and female physiological make-up without any embarrassment. He needs a proper adjustment to his or her sex and family;
2. Physical and sexual aggression is a characteristic of the adolescent. The Nigerian teenager is no exception; therefore, he or she needs an education that would help him/her to channel his/her sex impulses along responsible and desirable ends;
3. The teenagers of today would be the adult of tomorrow. Within the Nigerian culture they would have to marry to be accorded adult status. He/ She would bear and raise children./He/she would play the marital role to be deemed grown up and responsible. These are very demanding and needs adequate preparation.

Another reason for the teaching of Sexuality Education in the secondary school is that great deals of youths feel guilty, very anxious and unduly excited about sex because they are misinformed. They are living with a lot of confusion or myths. Just providing them with correct information do not appear to be reliable.

Sexuality Education becomes inevitable in schools because the available knowledge and experiences gained by the youths in the society are grossly

inadequate and misleading. Rice observed that the moral laxity and the sexual promiscuity that adults complain about in youths is due to the fact that those youths were not given the facts that they should know about sex, and their ignorance has led to their moral degeneration.

Parents and Teacher were of the opinion that teaching of Sexuality Education in schools will clear most of the misconceptions they have about its teaching and the benefits need to be derived from its teaching will not be achieved. Also, spread of Sexually Transmitted disease and HIV/AIDS will be more rampant among the students and beyond because they lack adequate knowledge and information on the issues related to Sexuality Education.

Statement of the Problem

The teaching of Sexuality Education in schools in Nigeria has become controversial. However, one begins to wonder either unwanted pregnancies, drop out from school, lack of knowledge about the anatomy and physiology of human sex organs, infectious diseases such as gonorrhoea, syphilis, HIV/AIDS (to mention but a few) is as a result of lack of knowledge of Sexuality Education by secondary school students. Therefore, this study intends to air the perception of parents and teachers on the teaching of Sexuality Education in schools.

Stage Involved in Sexuality Education Programme in Schools

Meyrick and Swan (1998) stated that the following stages are involved in Sexuality Education Programme in schools:

What Information should be given to Young People?

Young people get information about sex and sexuality from a wide range of sources including each other, advertisement, television and magazines as well as leaflets, books and websites (such as www.aveit.org) which are intended to be sources of information about sexuality. Some of this will be accurate and some inaccurate providing information through sex Education is therefore about finding out what young people already know and adding to their existing knowledge and correcting any misinformation they may have. For example, young people might have heard that condoms is not effective against HIV/AIDS or that there is a cure for AIDS. It is important to provide information which cure its mistake as the basis on which young people can develop, well-informed attitudes and views about sex and sexuality. Young people need to have information about abortion, sexuality.

And confidential advice and support that is available in the community and the nation.

When should Sex Education Start?

Sex Education that works start earlier, before young people reach puberty, and before they develop established patterns of behaviour. The precise age at which information should be provided depends on the physical, emotional, and intellectual development of the young people as well as their level of understanding. What is covered and also how, depends on who is providing the Sex Education, when they are providing it, and in what context, as well as what the individual young person wants to know about, it is important not to delay in providing basic information to young people but to begin when they are young. Providing basic information provides the information on which more complex knowledge is built up over time. This also means that Sex Education has to be sustained. For example, when they are young, children can be informed about how people grow and change over time, and how babies become children then adults, this provides the basis on which they understand more detailed information about puberty provides the pre-teenage years. They can also be provided with information about infections that can be caught through sexual contacts.

Sometimes, it can be difficult for adults to know when to raise issues, but the important thing is to maintain an open relationship with children which provide them with opportunities to ask questions. Parental care and also proactive and engage young people in discussions about Sex, Sexuality and relationships. Naturally, many parents and their children feel embarrassed about talking some aspects of sex and sexuality. Viewing sex Education as an on-going conversation about values, attitudes and issues as well as providing facts can be helpful. The best basis to proceed in is a sound relationship which young person feels able to ask questions or raise an issue if they feel they need it.

The roles of parents as care givers, as sex educators' changes as young people get older and young people are provided with more opportunities to receive formal Sex Education through schools and community-settings. Sex Education in schools tends to take place in blocks of time, always address issue relevant to young people at particular time, and parents can fulfil a particular important role in providing information and opportunities to discuss things as they arise.

Who Should Provide Sex Education?

Bandura (1992) admitted that different settings provide contexts and opportunities for Sex Education. At home, young people can easily have one

to one discussions with parents on careers which focus on specific issues, questions or concerns. They can have a dialogue about their attitudes and views. Sex Education at home also tends to take place over a long time, and involve lots of short interactions between parents and children. There may be time, and when young people seems reluctant to talk, but it is important not to interpret and diffidence as meaning that there is nothing left to talk about. It is also important not to defer dealing with a question or issue for too long as it can suggest that young are unwilling to talk about it.

In schools, the interaction between the teacher and young people takes a different form and is often provided in organized blocks of lessons. The most effective Sex Education acknowledges the different contributors each setting can make. School programmes which involves parents, notifying that what is being taught and when can support the initiation of dialogue at home. Parents and school both need to engage with young people about the messages that young people get from the media, and given opportunities for discussion.

Research Questions

The following research questions were asked; to guide the study;

1. Will parents and teachers differ in their perception of the teaching of Sexuality Education in the secondary school curriculum?
2. Does religious belief influence the perception of parents and teacher in the teaching of Sexuality Education in secondary school curriculum?
3. Does gender influence the perception of Parents and Teachers in the teaching of Sexuality Education in the secondary school curriculum?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were postulated for the study;

1. There is no significant difference in the perception of parents and Teachers in the teaching of Sexuality Education in secondary school curriculum.
2. Religious belief will not significantly influence the perception of Parents and teachers in teaching of Sexuality Education in secondary schools curriculum.
3. There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female in the teaching of Sexuality Education in secondary school curriculum.

Methodology

Research Design

The study was carried out with the use of descriptive survey method. The sample of the study was made up of three hundred (300) respondents systematically drawn from the three (3) districts in Asa Local Government Area with the use of multistage sampling technique.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in gathering information for the study was standardized questionnaires tagged subject' personal (Demographic) Data Questionnaire (SPDQ). The questionnaire helped to determine subject' background as well as collect personal data. The questionnaire was thoroughly scrutinized by 3 experts in the field of Health Education. It also aided determination of their levels of their awareness on issues relating to teaching of sexuality Education in secondary school. This was done by grouping respondents into various classification using the following variables (Parents or teachers), gender, age, religion, occupation and educational qualification. Also, a reliability coefficient of 0.82r was obtained using test-retest method of reliability. Data collected were grouped, tabulated and analyzed using the t-test analysis. The main hypothesis was tested at the 0.05 level of significance. Percentage score were also used to further express the result.

Results

Hypotheses one: There is no significance difference in the perception of parents and teachers in the inclusion of Sexuality Education in secondary schools curriculum.

Table 1: Parents' and Teachers' Perception of Inclusion of Sexuality Education in Secondary Schools

Variables	X	Mean	Std Deviation	Calculated t-value	Df	Critical t-value	Decision
Perception parents	of 200	52.0300	14.2825	2.499	298	222	Reject hypothesis
Perception teachers	of 100	56.8400	18.2589				

The findings from the analysis in the table one above showed the Parents and Teachers' perception in the teaching of Sexuality Education in secondary Schools. The calculated t-value was 2.499, while the critical t-value was 1.96 with 298 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since, the calculated t-value is greater than the critical t-value, the main hypothesis is hereby rejected and the alternative hypothesis upheld, that is a significant difference existed between the perception of parents and teachers in the teaching of Sexuality Education in Secondary Schools. This difference in the perception favoured the teachers with the mean score of 56.8400 while that of parents is 52.0300.

Hypothesis Two: Religious belief will not have significant influence in the teaching of Sexuality Education in secondary schools.

Table 2. Religious belief of parents and teachers in the teaching of Sexuality Education in Secondary Schools

Religion	X	Mean	SD	Calculated t-test	Df.	Critical t-test	Decision
Islam	202	46.21	11.5191	15.827	296	1.96	Hypothesis Rejected
Christian	96	73.31	5.5644	15.83			

The above result shows Muslim and Christian's respondents on the basis of their perception of the teaching of Sexuality Education in Secondary School. The table shows the mean of Muslim respondents (46.21) and that of Christian (73, 31), with degree of freedom of 296, calculated t-value of 15.827 and is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96. Therefore, since the calculated t-value is greater than the critical t-value, the hypothesis which states that religious does not have significant influence the teaching of Sexuality Education in Secondary School is rejected.

Hypothesis three: There will be no significant difference in the perception of the male and female respondents in the teaching of Sexuality Education in secondary school curriculum.

Table 3: Perception of male and female respondents in the teaching of Sexuality Education in Secondary Schools

Gender	No	Mean	SD	Calculated t- value	Df	Critical t -value	Decision
Male	88	36.2225	7.4964				Hypothesis Upheld
Female	210	63.9712	33.8073	15.47	296	1.96	

The result of the analysis of the tested hypothesis three (3) above revealed the perception of the respondents; male and female in the teaching of Sexuality Education. The calculated t-value was 15.47 and critical t-vale for the

respondents was 1.96 with degree of freedom of 296 at alpha level 0.05 significance. Since the calculated t-value for the respondents was greater than the critical t-value of 1.96, therefore, the hypothesis was upheld; that is, significant difference existed between the perception of male and female respondents in the teaching of Sexuality Education in Secondary Schools.

Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings revealed the perception of parents and teachers in the teaching of Sexuality Education in Secondary Schools. Hypothesis one showed that there was difference in the perception of parents and teachers, this could be attributed to knowledge and experience teachers had on the topic Sexuality Education. Also, the level of teachers' education allows them to know the benefits that may be derived from the topic when incorporated into the Secondary Schools curriculum. This finding is in support of Kirby (2001), who stated that Sexuality Education seeks to reduce the risk of potentially negative outcomes from sexual behaviour like unwanted or unplanned pregnancies and infection with Sexually Transmitted Diseases, and enhance the quality of relationship between parents and teachers.

The result derived from the tested hypothesis on gender revealed the perception of respondents based on religions (Christianity and Islam). Their perception showed that the two religions were in support of the teaching of Sexuality Education at secondary schools level. The finding is in agreement with Meyrick, and Swan, (1998) who claimed that religion leaders as one of the stakeholders in the adolescent life not only telling them about the risks or negative consequences associated with sex superstitions and the taboos but also to provide those young people with more balanced message. Adolescents surely need to receive clear protective information about sexual decision making, as well as affirming information about sexual health and health relationship. Sexuality is more involving than "sex" for it touches on lives, in thoughts, beliefs, values, attitudes as well as sexual behaviours.

The result obtained from test of hypothesis three (3) revealed the perception of male and female parents and teachers on the teaching of Sexuality Education in Secondary Schools. It indicated that male and female parents and teachers have much time in listening to their wards and students especially on the matter relating to sexual issues.

The findings is in line with Grow (1989) who opined that adolescent is a stage of development when children experience is called "the growth spurt", that is change from a child to a young adult. He also went further that adolescents should be studied because we have them everywhere. Therefore,

parent's teachers, institutions of authority and the society at large have to cope with all sorts of frustration, threats and conflicts exhibited by the adolescents as they try to adjust psychologically.

Based on the findings from hypotheses tested above, the following conclusions were drawn;

1. Sexuality Education exposes the causes of sexual problems and how
2. these problems could be avoided through the acceptance of good Sexual behaviours.
3. It also injects sanity to sexual attitudes of not only the adolescents but
4. Also to the growing adults and individuals.
5. Sexuality Education programme requires collection and concerted efforts of not only the teachers and the schools administration but also that of parents, government and the society so as to achieve its
6. Desirable goods.

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

1. Young people should be able to recognize pressures from other people and to resist them, deal with and challenge prejudice and seek help from adults.
2. The teaching of Sexuality Education in secondary schools will reduce the risk of potential negative outcomes from sexual behaviour like unwanted or unplanned pregnancies and infection from Sexually Transmitted Disease.
3. Religion leaders should not tell adolescent about the risks or negative consequence associated with sex superstitions.
4. Sexuality Education should be introduced as course in the secondary school so as to equip students in secondary school with relevant and adequate knowledge that would enable them to understand the course.

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