

Influence of family background on attitude of adolescents towards sex education

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Abstract. The purpose of this research is to ascertain the influence of family background on the attitude of adolescent towards sex education. To achieve the purpose of this study, twenty (20) item structured questionnaires of Agree, Disagree and Undecided was administered to one hundred and eighty (180) respondents randomly sampled from public and private schools in Ogba, Egbema and Ndoni Local government areas of Rivers State, Nigeria. The data gathered were analysed with a simple statistical mean. From the analysis, it was found that: (a) Adolescents show a fair attitude towards sex education, (b) Adolescents lack good knowledge of sex education, (c) Sex education has a great effect on adolescents, and (d) There are various risks associated with sexual activities among adolescents. Recommendations were also made.

Keywords: Attitude, sex, education, family background, adolescents.

INTRODUCTION

Many societies and cultures around the world are yet to consent to the introduction of sex education in schools mostly because of their socio-cultural background, belief system, political system and religion. Some see it as a gateway to deal with issues related to reproductive health and sexual performance among teenagers.

According to World Health Organization (WHO, 2004), sexuality is a central aspect of being human throughout life and encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices and relationship.

Sexuality is also influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, ethical, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors (JUN program/WHO, 2006). Collins (2008) opined that sexuality education encompasses education about all aspects of sexuality including information about family planning, reproduction, body image, sexual orientation, sexual pleasure, values, decision making, communication,

dating, relationships, sexually transmitted infections and birth controls.

In most African countries including Nigeria, sex education is seen as a taboo to be talked about. Adolescents are not allowed to have access to sexual health information because the society have the perception that such exposure will corrupt them and make them likely to be victim of early sexual relationship.

Since talking about sex is a taboo in Nigerian society, the adolescents cannot freely approach their parents for guidance, when provided in some circumstance the adolescents are not satisfied with the skeletal information provided. Some of them sort information through books, films, or from friends. By so doing some receive wrong information and those myths and misconceptions are carried out throughout their lifetime.

Studies have revealed that adolescent girls generally lack adequate knowledge about sexual matters and contraception's resulting to early pregnancy, increased pre-marital sexual activity, and increased risk of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS, maternal morbidity

and mortality and unsafe abortions (Owolabi et al., 2005). They are growing up in the world in which they experiment more, make more choices and take risks thereby learning by their own experiences than by those of others.

There is therefore the need to provide adolescents with information to enable them cope with the societal changes. This will enable the adolescents develop positive feelings about sex, needs to love and to nourish love.

Statement of the problem

According to Busari (2003), physical, psychological and social attribute of adolescents make them vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Families and the societies at large often compound the risks by making it difficult for them to learn about sex and reproductive health.

Moreover, many adolescents are socially inexperienced and depended on others. Peer pressure often influence them and also influence their risks when adolescents are not provided with the necessary information about sex, it places them at the risk of getting premature pregnancy, abortion and contraction of sexually transmitted diseases.

Hence, this study examines the influence of family background on the attitude of students towards sex education.

Objective of the study

The primary objective of this study is to find out the influence of family background on the attitude of students towards sex education. Specifically the study examines:

1. The influence of family background on the attitude of students towards sex education.
2. The adolescents' knowledge about sex education.
3. The effects of sex education on adolescents.
4. The risk associated with sexual activities among adolescents.

Research questions

The following research questions were posed to guide this study:

1. What is the level of the influence of family background on the attitude of adolescents towards sex education?
2. What is the knowledge level of the adolescents about sex education?
3. What are the effects of sex education on adolescents?
4. What are the risks associated with sexual activities among adolescents?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Scope of the study

This study covers all adolescents in public and private schools in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Areas of Rivers State, Nigeria.

Area of the study

The areas of this study are Ogba, Egbema and Ndoni Local Government Areas of Rivers State, Nigeria. This area was chosen for this study because there is good number of government and private schools with a good population of adolescents needed for this study.

Design of the study

The design for this study is a simple survey design used to explore the influence of family background on the attitude of adolescents towards sex education.

Study population

The population of this study consists of all students in public and private secondary schools in Ogba, Egbema and Ndoni Local Government Areas of Rivers State, Nigeria.

Sample and sampling techniques

The study sample consists of a total of one hundred and eighty (180) respondents randomly sampled from various private and government schools in the area.

Instrumentation

A twenty-item structured questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection.

RESULTS

Data analysis techniques

A simple statistical mean was used for data analysis. The cut-off point of 2.00 was used as the minimum acceptable value, meaning that any value below 2.00 was rejected.

Research question 1: What are adolescents' attitudes towards sex education?

Items 1 to 5 of the questionnaire were analysed to

Table 1. Mean score of respondents on adolescents' attitudes towards sex education.

S/N	Items	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Total	\bar{X}	Remark
1.	Sex education has helped to deal with my sexual urges.	116 (348)	26 (52)	38 (38)	438	2.43	Accepted
2.	Sex education is the best way to educate adolescents about sex and its consequences.	107 (321)	33 (66)	40 (40)	427	2.37	Accepted
3.	Sex education classes are boring.	66 (198)	25 (50)	89 (89)	337	1.87	Rejected
4.	Adolescents do not practice sex education.	76 (228)	29 (58)	75 (75)	361	2.01	Accepted
5.	Adolescents feel shy in sex education classes.	57 (171)	31 (62)	92 (92)	325	1.81	Rejected

Table 2. Mean score of respondents on the level of knowledge about sex education.

S/N	Items	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Total	\bar{X}	Remark
6.	Sexual intercourse should be done by a man and woman only.	90 (270)	17 (34)	73 (73)	377	2.09	Accepted
7.	Anal sex is a dangerous sexual act that damages the anus.	76 (228)	33 (66)	71 (71)	365	2.03	Accepted
8.	Body changes as a result of puberty influence sexual activity among adolescents.	96 (288)	26 (52)	58 (58)	398	2.21	Accepted
9.	Abortion is the best solution of getting rid of unwanted pregnancy.	122 (366)	12 (24)	46 (46)	436	2.46	Accepted
10.	Caressing, hugging and pecking should be encouraged in adolescents to satisfy their sexual urges.	114 (342)	26 (52)	40 (40)	434	2.41	Accepted

answer the research question as shown in Table 1.

From Table 1, the respondents agreed that sex education helped them deal with sexual urges, $\bar{X} = 2.43$, it is the best way to educate adolescents about sex and its implication, $\bar{X} = 2.37$.

Adolescents that do not practice sex education $\bar{X} = 2.01$. But disagreed that sex education classes are boring $\bar{X} = 1.87$ and that they feel shy to discuss about sex in sex education classes $\bar{X} = 1.81$.

This shows that adolescent show fair attitude towards sex

education.

Research question two: What is the level of knowledge of adolescents about sex education?

Items 6 to 10 of the questionnaire were analysed to answer this research question as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 shows that adolescents lack good knowledge of sex education, $\bar{X} = 2.09$, $\bar{X} = 2.03$, $\bar{X} = 2.21$, $\bar{X} = 2.42$ and $\bar{X} = 2.41$.

Table 3. Mean score response on the effect of sex education on adolescents.

S/N	Items	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Total	\bar{X}	Remark
11.	Sex education has reduced the rate of teenage pregnancy.	129 (387)	16 (32)	35 (35)	454	2.52	Accepted
12.	Sex education has helped to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted disease.	122 (366)	14 (28)	44 (44)	438	2.43	Accepted
13.	Adolescents abstain from sex because of the knowledge about sex education.	107 (321)	12 (24)	61 (61)	406	2.26	Accepted
14.	Sex education encourages adolescents practice sex.	51 (153)	12 (24)	117 (117)	294	1.63	Rejected
15.	Sex education encourages adolescents on dangerous sexual acts.	59 (177)	30 (60)	91 (91)	324	1.82	Rejected

Table 4. Mean score response on the risk associated with adolescents' sexual activities.

S/N	Items	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Total	\bar{X}	Remark
16.	Abortion may damage the womb and lead to other dangerous effects.	140 (420)	8 (16)	32 (32)	468	2.60	Accepted
17.	Adolescents' sexual activities lead to teenage pregnancy.	124 (372)	14 (28)	42 (42)	442	2.50	Accepted
18.	Adolescents' casual sex result to sexually transmitted disease.	117 (351)	26 (52)	37 (37)	440	2.44	Accepted
19.	Adolescents' regular sexual activity leads to promiscuity and obsessed with sex.	114 (342)	31 (62)	35 (35)	439	2.44	Accepted
20.	Sexual activity is responsible for most adolescence's death	101 (303)	22 (44)	57 (57)	404	2.24	Accepted

Research question three: What are the effects of sex education on adolescents?

Items 11 to15 were analysed to provide answer to above research question as shown in Table 3.

In Table 3 sex education has a great effect on adolescents, $\bar{X} = 2.52$, $\bar{X} = 2.43$, $\bar{X} = 2.25$, $\bar{X} = 1.63$, $\bar{X} = 1.82$.

Research question four: What are the risks associated with sexual activities among adolescents?

Items 16 to 20 of the questionnaire were analysed to answer the research question as shown Table 4.

Table 4 shows various risks associated with sexual activities among adolescents. $\bar{X} = 2.60$, $\bar{X} = 2.50$, $\bar{X} = 2.44$, $\bar{X} = 2.44$ and $\bar{X} = 2.24$.

DISCUSSION

In table 1, the data analysed shows that most adolescents have fair attitude towards sex education. This is in line with the finding of Sprecher (2008) who reported that since sex education is rarely received from parents, and that adolescents look to other sources for such knowledge. The other sources are peers, especially dating partners and some sex friends.

Table 2 shows that many adolescents lack good knowledge about sex education. This finding is also in line with that of SIECUS (2001) which states that sex education involves more than sexual developments and reproductive health, that it encompasses interpersonal relationship, affection, intimacy, body images, values and gender roles.

Table 3 reveals that sex education has great effect on adolescents. This is in agreement with the findings of Crosby et al. (2005) who revealed that sex education is a process whereby information is imparted to a group of young ones which takes into account the development, growth, the anatomy and physiology of the human reproductive system and changes that occur from youth all through stages of adulthood.

Result in Table 4 shows the various risks associated with adolescents sexual activities. It also agrees with National Population Policy (2005) which states that adolescents constitute more than 12% of the population of Nigeria who are often prone to unplanned, unwanted sex, unsafe abortion, sexual coercion, sexual violence, sexually transmitted infections and HIV because they are uninformed or poorly informed about the implication of their reproductive behaviour and health risk especially from underage sexual practices and other anti-social practices.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the analysis of data collected, it can be concluded that adolescents show fair attitude and lacks good knowledge towards sex education. Sex education has a great effect on adolescents and there is a lot of risk associated with sexual activities among adolescents.

It is recommended that:

1. Parents should develop good communication with their children, be their friends and have positive attitude toward sex education.
2. Stemming the flood of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases require joint effort of parents, counselors, teachers, curriculum planner and government.
3. Abstinence should form part of the sex education to adolescents in order to prevent them from pre-marital sex before marriage.
4. Sex education should be part of school curriculum of adolescence students.
5. Proper information should be given to adolescents to enable them form good attitude and belief in sex education.

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