



ATTITUDE OF ADOLESCENT STUDENTS TOWARDS SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN ETHIOPE EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF DELTA STATE

OZURI, Rachael¹

¹Department of Guidance & Counselling, Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria.

AKARAH, Emmanuel Oghenebrorien²

²Human Kinetics & Health Education Department, Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT

The ugly increase of delinquent sexual activities of adolescents in the country is a major challenge of every stakeholder and this has a negative effect in their general well being. This study is an investigation of the attitude of senior secondary school students towards sexuality education in Ethiope East Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey research design was adopted. Two (2) research hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. A sample of 100 students drawn from all the public senior secondary schools through stratified random sampling technique was used for the study. A validated questionnaire scrutinized by 3 experts in the department of Guidance and Counselling was used as the instrument for data collection while the Cronbach alpha was used to establish the reliability which yielded an r value of 0.80. The data was analysed using mean, standard deviation and Independent t -test statistics. The study revealed that the attitude of students towards sexuality education in Ethiope East L.G.A of Delta State is significantly positive and that there is no significant difference in the attitudes of male and female students towards sexuality education. It was recommended that teachers should be trained and equipped with the appropriate skills in teaching sexuality education.

KEY WORDS: Adolescence, Sexuality Education, Attitude

INTRODUCTION

The adolescence period can be of storm and stress for many adolescent students due to the numerous changes that take place during that period. It is marked with a number of developmental problems to an extent the adolescents become upset, delinquent and turbulent. At this stage they are ignorant of who to meet for guidance and counselling and as such, they sort for information from the wrong sources such as the internet, television, pornographic films and materials which lead them astray and later cause future problems for them. UNICEF (2011) defines the adolescent stage as a period of transition from

childhood to adulthood normally between the ages of 10-19. Sexuality education refers to the process of acquiring information and forming attitudes and beliefs about sex, sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. Kearney (2008), defined sexuality education as "involving a comprehensive course of action by the school, calculated to bring about the socially desirable attitudes, practices and personal conduct on the part of children and adults, that will best protect the individual as a human and the family as a social institution.

Sexuality education deals with the totality of the individual in terms of who you are, what you believe, what you feel and how you respond to such issues (Stella, 2014). Sexuality education is also about developing young people's skills so that they can make informed choices about their behaviour, feel confident and competent about acting on these choices. Action Health Incorporated (2003) viewed sexuality education as an all embracing term which include all the feelings, sexual thoughts, attitudes, experiences, learning ideas, values, imaging and behaviours of a person whether male or female.

In Nigeria, most cultures do not permit people talking about issues on sexual matters and as such do not give any information on sexual matters as they see it as taboo. Parents restrain themselves from talking to their child on sex related matters as they shy away from discussing important issues that border on sex and thus leaving the children confused. The children come to know about sex possibly at an early age through relatives, friends, the elderly, movies and drawing. The adolescents desire freedom in living but research has shown that they lack the wherewithal to do without the guidance of parents and older people at home and in the church. Adolescents create a separate world for themselves using slangs, coded languages, facial expressions, body language and other means that can only be understood by their peer group. There is no doubt that issues bordering on sex related matters have become problems to the general society. Nwafor (2006) opined that issues on sexual matters have become problems to adolescents, the youths, their parents and the general society at large. Problems such as teenage pregnancy, sexual permissiveness, abuse, exploitation, unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS and other immoral behaviours among adolescents clearly unveil the needs for sexuality education. Huliyappa (2011) affirmed that there was a rapid increase and spread of STDs and HIV in the past decade. He further stressed that there is the tendency for children who engage in sexual activities to have learning difficulties which may lead to poor academic performance. The fact that adolescents engage in all these as a result of lack of information on the implications of their reproductive behaviour and antisocial activities possibly prompted the Federal Government of Nigeria through the National Council on Education (NCE) to incorporate sexuality education into the national school curriculum in 1999 (Onuwueze and Ekanem, 2009). The introduction of sexuality education into the secondary school curriculum no doubt paves the way for adolescents to be well informed about their roles in the society and to equip

them with the skills to have greater control of their sexual health behaviour and to be well balanced in all ramifications. Sexuality education can be taught at home as well as the church by religious organisations and professional bodies. Through sex knowledge, adolescents would be able to meet the problems of life that surround human instinct, personal social life and family regulation. Ogedengbe (1997) stated that in Nigeria, maternal deaths accounted for 758,000 of all annual deaths and that 20,000 of maternal deaths are abortion related incidents in which 80% of the cases involved adolescents between the ages of 10 and 19. Research in several countries has shown that high percentage of young girls were coerced or forced during their first sexual contact. Married young women are especially unable to negotiate sex or condom use with their husbands who may have extramarital partners, such that the young women are several times more disposed than young men to contracting the HIV/AIDS disease through heterosexual contact. A study conducted by Mensch, Clark, Lloyd and Erulkar (2001) revealed that premarital sex, childbearing and decline in adolescent fertility have increased especially for girls. More than 95 percent of males and females aged 15-19 are out of school as a result of the problems associated with social relationships and premarital sex. Girls subsequently become pregnant which leads to drop-out from school. According to Adepoju (2005), the young who constitute ages 10-24 and 36.7 percent of the Nigerian population are found highly vulnerable to antisocial behaviours such as violent crimes, unsafe sexual activities and drug abuse among others.

Gender characteristics whether biologically or socially influenced by which people define male or female has been found to influence students' attitudes towards sexuality education (Myers, 2002). He stated further that gender schema theory is the organized network of knowledge about what it means to be males or females. According to this theory, children and adolescents use gender as an organizing theme to classify and understand their perceptions about the world. Global Health Council (2006) noted that the high prevalence of AIDS in Africa is having a dreadful social and economical impact on the countries in the continent as, a woman's vulnerability to the virus is attributable not only to biological differences, but also to the deeply entrenched socio-economic inequalities that further compound her risk. About 37% of the sexually active secondary school teenagers had adequate basic knowledge of STIs/AIDS but a much better knowledge was found among those especially 18 years who recently received AIDS education.

More males were disposed to the use of condoms in preventing STD/HIV transmission.

Sexuality education aims to reduce the risks of potentially negative outcomes from sexual behaviour, such as unwanted or unplanned pregnancies and infection with sexually transmitted diseases including HIV. It also aims to contribute to young people's positive experience of their sexuality, by enhancing the quality of their relationships and their ability to make informed decisions over their lifetime. Sexuality education should be more than just puberty and reproductive biology; it should help young people to be safe and enjoy their sexuality.

Action Health Incorporated (2003) viewed sexuality education as a lifelong process of acquiring attitude, beliefs and values about identity, the relationship that encompasses sexual development, reproductive health, interpersonal relationship, affection, intimacy, body image and general roles. Attitude can be seen as the way an individual views, behaves, feels and thinks towards particular objects. Poppy (1980) defined attitude as a hypothetical construct that represents an individual's likes and dislikes for an item. Attitude could no doubt be a positive, negative or neutral view of an individual behaviour. However several studies have been carried out on the issues of sexuality education in the curriculum. This study therefore seeks to assess the attitude of adolescent students toward sexuality education in relation to gender.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Over the years there have been serious problems facing secondary school adolescents concerning sexuality education. Students' interest on sexuality can influence their attitude towards sexuality education just as the lack of information on sex related matters has increased the gravity of unwanted pregnancies among girls, HIV/AIDS, promiscuity and other deviant sexual behaviours in as much as they become vulnerable to various reproductive health problems such as early initiation to sexual activity, teenage unplanned pregnancy, abortion, sexual violence and abuse, sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS. Most parents are shy to answer questions on sexuality while the school where adolescent students ought to get information about sexuality poses a great problem to the adolescent students by not providing the desired and relevant information. It is in these regards that the study seeks to answer the question; what is the attitude of adolescent students towards sexuality education in Ethiopie East Local Government Area of Delta State?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significance difference between students with negative and positive attitude towards sexuality education
2. There is no significance difference between male and female students in their attitude towards sexuality education.

METHODOLOGY

The research design for this study is the descriptive survey design. The target population for this study consisted of the SS3 students in public senior secondary schools in Ethiopie East Local Government Area of Delta State from which the stratified sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 100 students used in the study. A questionnaire titled "Attitude of Adolescent Students towards Sexuality Education (AASTSE) was used as the instrument for data collection. The instrument was assessed by 3 experts in the Department of Guidance and Counselling, Delta State University, Abraka to ensure face and content validity while the Cronbach alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the items which yielded a coefficient value of 0.80. The instrument has two sections A and B. Section A contained students demographic information while section B contained 15 items related to students attitude towards sexuality education and was scored on a four point Likert type scale of Strongly Agree (SA) 4 points, Agree (A) 3 points, Disagree (D) 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1 point for all positive items and negative statements Strongly Agree 1 point, Agree 2 points, Disagree 3 points and Strongly Disagree 4 points with a bench mark of 2.5. Any student who scored above 2.5 has a positive attitude and a score of 2.5 below is regarded as negative attitude towards sexuality education. The researchers administered the instrument on the students same day and collected it with the help of two research assistants trained for the purpose. Data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics and t-test statistics of independent sample in SPSS version. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1: There is no significance difference between students with negative and positive attitude towards sexuality education

Table 1: Summary of independent t-test analysis on the attitude of students towards sexuality education.

Attitude	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	Sig. (2-tailed)	Result
Negative	38	47.8684	1.11915	98	-33.226	.000	S
Positive	62	73.3548	4.63804				

S = Significant, $p < .05$; SD = Standard Deviation

Table 1 shows that the attitude of students towards sexuality education in Ethiopie East Local Government Area is significantly positive ($t = -33.226$, $p < .05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis one was rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significance difference between male and female students in the attitude towards sexuality education.

Table 2: Summary of independent t-test analysis on the attitude of male and female students' attitude towards sexuality education.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	Sig. (2-tailed)	Result
Female	64	69.5938	5.40934	98	.290	.772	NS
Male	36	69.1944	8.32147				

NS = Not Significant, $p > .05$; SD = Standard Deviation

Table 2 shows that there is no significant difference ($t = .290$, $p > .05$) between male ($M = 69.1944$, $SD = 8.32147$) and female student's ($M = 69.5938$, $SD = 5.40934$) attitude towards sexuality education. Therefore, the null hypothesis two was retained.

opportunity is given to both male and female students in learning sexuality education. This finding however disagrees with the work of Ihaji and Ben (2015), who found a significant difference in the attitude of male and female students towards sexuality education and that male students tend to have a favourable attitude towards sexuality education.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings indicated that attitude of students in Ethiopie East Local Government Area of Delta State towards sexuality education is significantly positive. This finding agrees with the findings of Nwafor (2011) who stated that all students think positively towards any program that aims at curtailing the menace of HIV/AIDS scourge. The finding is also in support of Adaobi (2014) who carried out a study on student's perception towards sexuality education in Jos North L.G.A and concluded that students perceived provision of sexuality education programme positive. The reason why the attitude of students in Ethiopie East L.G.A is positive could be due to the university situated in the local government, well established government hospitals and good schools in the locale. These have possibly created awareness for the students to be well informed about sexuality related matters. The findings of the study further revealed that there is no significant difference in the attitudes of male and female students towards sexuality education. Both male and female students had positive views toward sexuality education. This finding supports the finding of Donatus and Mary (2013), who found no significant difference in the attitudes of male and female students towards sexuality education. It further revealed that equal

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the study have prompted the researchers to draw the following conclusions:

1. The attitude of students towards sexuality education in Ethiopie East Local Government Area of Delta State is significantly positive.
2. There is no significant difference between male and female students attitude towards sexuality education in Ethiopie East Local Government Area of Delta State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Awareness should be created in the other communities on sexuality education through the use of mass media and seminars for youths and social organisations like women's groups, market men and women.
2. Efforts should be made to further enrich the pre-service training of teachers with sufficient contents in sexuality education. This will enable them live up to the expectations in their job after leaving the college.

3. Policy makers, programme managers and teachers should be aware that safer sexual practice among young people may be achieved through education. This should be encouraged in the primary, secondary and tertiary institutions of learning.

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