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EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SEX EDUCATION ON SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR OF STUDENTS OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This research evaluated the effectiveness of sex education on sexual behaviour of students of tertiary institutions in Osun State, Nigeria. Four tertiary institutions schools were selected randomly per senatorial district. The schools were first divided into three strata. Four schools from each stratum were then selected using simple random technique. Each school was assigned a number. The numbers were written down on small pieces of paper, which were then folded and placed in three containers representing each stratum. The researcher then picked at random four schools from each category. The students were assured that any information given would be used for the purpose of this research only and nothing else. Data collected were analysed by descriptive and 4-point Likert scale. Research results showed the sexual behaviours of selected students in Osun State. The mean score for sexual behaviours is 2.47 indicating disagreement that the students engage in sexual behaviours because the mean score is below 2.50 (midpoint on a 4-point Likert scale). This implies that the respondents disagreed that they engaged in sexual behaviours. Research results therefore showed that there is no confirmed sexual behaviour among selected students in Osun State. Research conducted on sex education and sexual socialization affirmed that both parents and educators have essential roles in fostering sexual education and sexual behaviours. Specifically, parents should play the primary role in imparting to their children social, cultural and religious values regarding intimate and sexual relationships, while education professionals should provide information about sexuality and developing related social skills. The influence of sexual education was found to be the same for all selected students in the study area. The students accepted or rejected sex education as students not on the bases of gender. It is recommended more specialists in sex education should be employed with a view to making sex education in tertiary more effectively impactful in Osun State. Also, sex education should be learnt while in school as its learning does not cause students to become more sexually active.

Keywords: Evaluating, Effectiveness, Sex Education, Sexual Behaviour, Students and Tertiary Institutions

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INTRODUCTION

Maturity involves the whole process of physical development, emotional feelings and social conditioning. It may well be for the adolescent a period of turmoil and awkward adjustment, of mystery and exchange of wrong information with other adolescents. Adolescents, therefore, need the best possible preparation to enable them to cope well with their sexual development and avoid the most obvious pitfalls. Sex education is instruction in the various physiological, psychological and sociological aspects of sexual responses and reproduction. According to Lerner and Spanier (2016), it is the process of teaching an individual to understand and accept himself or herself as a person with sexual feelings and reproductive capacities.

Sex education includes learning to interact with individuals in a healthy constructive and meaningful manner. It also involves learning to fit sexuality into a pattern of behaviour which allows the person to function as a responsible member of the society. Sex education, according to Husen and Neville (2018), is the continuous influence exerted through a guided learning process on the development of human sexuality, whereby sexual attitudes and manners stand at the centre of education interests. Unlike most subjects, sex education is concerned with an especially sensitive and highly personal part of human life. Sex education courses vary widely but most involve two basic types of instruction; the teaching of human biology (the "facts of life") and discussions of such controversial sexual topics as contraception, promiscuity, masturbation, prostitution, abortion, homosexuality, rape and responsible decision making about sex. Melgosa (2018) suggests that sex education must be started from early childhood. Proper sex education can correct misconceptions and help achieve the desired sexual behaviour among the adolescents. Most studies in Nigeria have generally concentrated on identifying the major sources of sex education for adolescents. It is less clear, however, which sexuality outcomes are influenced by different sources, and which sources have greater general influences on adolescents in Nigeria. Sex education programmes can correct the misconceptions. Previous research suggests that most adolescents obtain sexual information from home (Fox, 2013) and peers (Garbarino, 2015). But since many children are not given thorough and reliable sexual information in the home (Simanski, 2018), and peers are shown to be unreliable sources (Garbarino, 2015), it is clear that there is a wide range of sources of sex education for Nigerian adolescents, and these varied sources are likely to have varied influence on the adolescent sex behaviour. On the basis of this therefore, the researchers are interested in finding out where adolescents in secondary schools in Southwest, Nigeria get information about sex from and its effects on their sexual behaviour.

Adolescents get information about sex and sexuality from a wide range of sources including each other (peer), through the media including advertising, television and magazines as well as leaflets, books, websites, through parents and the community, through the church and school. Some of these are discussed below. Sex education at home also tends to take place over a long time and involve lots of short interactions between parents and children. Simanski, 2018) have reported that adolescents receive relatively little sex instruction from their parents. In fact, some surveys tell us that young people are dissatisfied with sex information available at home, but would really prefer their parents to be the primary source (Simanski, 2018).

Some parents are too embarrassed to discuss the subject, or deal with it in negative ways (Rice, 2016.). Many parents have been brought up to feel that all sex is wrong and dirty and become intensely uncomfortable any time the subject is mentioned. If

they do discuss sex the messages they give their children are negative ones which interfere with sexual satisfaction (Darling & Hicks, 2013). Not only are parents reluctant to communicate verbally with adolescents about sex, but they may also send nonverbal messages that discourage open communication. According to Kelly (2017), Nigerian parents are likely to model negative sexual attitudes and behaviour. For example, parents may discourage expressions of sexuality and, with respect to modesty taboos, communicate negative affect to children. By inhibiting discussion of sexuality or hiding sexual expression between marital partners, parents may lead adolescents to interpret sexuality as something bad (Kelly, 2017). Studies have indicated that few parents adequately educate their children about sex. Despite their reticence, most parents express the desire to openly communicate about sex with their children. Moreover, parents feel they should be the primary providers of sexual information cite their parents as a major source of sexual information. Parents often feel inhibited and embarrassed when talking about sex and have also indicated that they lack accurate information (Collins, 2016). In fact, the average person is still poorly informed and unable to communicate fully about sexuality. Parents feel especially inadequate discussing the issue of sex and AIDS (Darling Hicks 2020). In light of the foregoing, the study will establish whether parents are a source of sex education to adolescents in Osun State and how this source influences on the sexual behaviour of the adolescents.

Adolescence is a stage of self discovery characterized by physical, sexual and emotional development (Lerner & Spanier, 2014). For many adolescents it is a period of turmoil and awkward adjustment, of mystery and exchange of ignorance with other adolescents. Many adolescents feel pressured into sexual encounters that they would otherwise avoid or postpone if they felt comfortable stating how they felt. Sex education can correct misconceptions and help achieve the desired sexual behaviour among the adolescent. Most studies in Nigeria have generally concentrated on identifying the major sources of sex education for adolescents. It is less clear, however, which sexuality outcomes are influenced by different sources, and which sources have greater general influences on adolescents in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The study was undertaken specifically to:

1. assess the level of sexual knowledge among students in the selected public and private tertiary institutions in Osun State
2. evaluate the effectiveness of the received sex education on the sexual behaviour of students in the selected public and private tertiary institutions in Osun State

Research Question

The study answered the following research question:

Did sex education have any effect on the students' sexual behaviour?

Research Hypothesis

H_1: There is a significant relationship between sex education and students' sexual behaviour.

Literature review

Sexual Behaviour

Sexual behaviour is the outward expressions of sexual feelings and attitudes. Sexual behaviour is associated with a multitude of worries and anxieties. It is a matter of preoccupation to most teenagers since it is certainly an extremely emotive topic, and most

important, for many it represents a standard of evaluation against which to judge success or failure (Garbarino 2020). In adolescent, sexual feelings and behaviours are a product of not only biological factors, but also a result of cultural teaching that specify appropriate sexual behaviour, appropriate targets of sexual feelings and appropriate settings for expressing sexual impulses (Newman & Newman, 2016).

Adolescents, like adults, may be prone to engaging in risky sexual behaviour due to perceptions of personal invulnerability and their tendency to focus on the immediate, rather than long-term, consequences of their behaviour. Not only do young people have to cope with their own maturational changes, but they also have to come to terms with a confusing inconsistency among adult views and a lack of any clear standard or moral code of conduct (Garbarino, 2020). Teenagers need the best possible preparation to enable them to cope well with their sexual development and to avoid the most obvious pitfalls. It is in view of this that the researchers had set out to investigate the effects of sex education on adolescent sexual behaviour in tertiary institutions in Osun State because sex education is viewed as a means of promoting more responsible sexual behaviour and as an important step in preventing the dangers of making wrong decisions.

Sex Education

Sex education, which is sometimes called sexuality education or sex and relationships education, is the process of acquiring information and forming attitudes and beliefs about sex, sexual identity, relationships and intimacy (Forrest, 2015). It should include learning how to interact with others in a competent, responsible, healthy, and meaningful way. Its goal should be to achieve a balance between social responsibility on the one hand, and personal freedom and growth on the other. Sex 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. According to Kirby, Short, Collins, (2016), effective sex education develops young people's skills in negotiation, decision-making, assertion and listening. Other important skills include being able to recognize pressure from other people and to resist them, deal with and challenge prejudice, seek help from adults, community and health and welfare services.

Sex education that works also helps equip young people with skills to be able to differentiate between accurate and inaccurate information, discuss a range of moral and social issues and perspective on sex and sexuality. It is in view of the above that the researchers will seek to explore the effects that sex education has on adolescents' sexual behaviour in secondary schools in Osun State. It is believed that effective sex education provides young people with an opportunity to explore the reasons why people have sex and to think about how it involves emotions, respect for oneself and other people and their feelings, decisions and bodies.

School-based sex education can be an important and effective way of enhancing young people's knowledge, attitudes and behaviour. There is widespread agreement that formal education should include sex education (Forrest, 2018). Effective school programmes should include the following elements: A focus on reducing specific risky behaviours with these elements can increase young people's levels of knowledge about sex and sexuality, put back the average age at which they first have sexual intercourse and decrease risk when they do have sex (Forrest, 2018). In view of the controversies surrounding formal sex education in schools, the current study will attempt to establish whether school is a major source of sex education to adolescents in Osun State and how this source influences their sexual behaviour.

Adolescents' sexual perception and behaviour are influenced by different sources of sex education, which include the school, mass media, religion, parents/family and peers. These various sources are assumed to have different effects on the desired sexual behaviour on adolescents. Critical to this is the objectivity and guidance that accompany such sources, unguided exposure to sources of sexual education such as peer, mass media, among others leads to irresponsible sexual behaviour such as pre-marital sex and multiple sex partners, which consequently lead to Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and unwanted pregnancies. Well-guided and directed education, on the other hand, is expected to lead to desired sexual perception and behaviour such as responsible friendship, avoiding premarital sex, abstinence among others. It is therefore critical that adolescents get guided exposure to sources of sexual education if the desired behaviour is to be achieved

The study was conducted in some selected tertiary institutions schools in Osun State, Nigeria.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study was carried out within the ex-post facto design. Ex-post facto research is systematic and empirical inquiry in which the independent variables have already occurred and are not manipulated by the researcher. Borg and Gall (2015) define ex post facto research as a systematic empirical inquiry in which the scientist does not have any control of independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred or because they are inherently non-manipulable. Inferences about relations are made without direct intervention from concomitant variation of independent and dependent variables. The investigator does not have direct control of independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred and inferences about relations among variables are made without direct intervention.

Research Variables

The dependent variables in the study are knowledge and sexual behaviour, while the independent variables are the sources of sex education information (home, peers, school, religion and the media). The study therefore was undertaken to establish how these independent variables (sources of sex information) that influence the dependent variables (knowledge and sexual behaviour).

Sample and Sampling Procedure

Four tertiary institutions schools were selected randomly per senatorial district. The schools were first divided into three strata.. Four schools from each stratum were then selected using simple random technique. Each school was assigned a number. The numbers were written down on small pieces of paper, which were then folded and placed in three containers representing each stratum. The researcher then picked at random four schools from each category.

Research Instruments

The following instruments were used to collect data.

Questionnaire for Students

The questionnaires were administered to the students, they contain five sections, A, B, C, D and E. Section A collected demographic data of the respondents. Section B contains questions seeking to establish the major sources of sex education for the students, while section C, D and E sought information on the sexual knowledge and sexual behaviour respectively. The students were assured that any information given would be used for the purpose of this research only and nothing else.

Interview Schedule for the Teachers

An interview schedule were used to gather information from the teachers on the kind of sexual education they provide to the students, the influence of such education and their suggestion on the best way forward on influencing the desired sexual behaviour change among the adolescents.

Pilot Study

Pilot study was carried out to determine the reliability and validity of the instruments. Pilot study helped in modifying and removing any ambiguous items in the instrument.

Validity and Reliability of the instruments

According to Nachimias and Nachimias (2012), validity is concerned with the question, "Am I, measuring what I intend to measure?" It is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2009). Modifications of the themes were made where necessary. Any item found to be ambiguous in eliciting relevant information was corrected. Reliability enhances the dependability, accuracy and adequacy of the instruments through piloting. Mugenda and Mugenda, (2009), argued that reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. Nachmias and Nachmias (2012) state that an instrument is reliable when it can measure a variable accurately and consistently and obtain the same results under the same conditions over a time. To ensure reliability of the research instruments, the test-retest method will be applied. This involves administering the same questionnaire at an interval of one week to the same group and then compare the two scores. This is aimed at finding out if the results would be consistent.

Data Collection Procedures

A preliminary visit was made to the schools to inform the heads of the intended research. A date to administer the instruments was arranged. The researchers and research assistants administered the instruments personally to respondents, a fact that helped to achieve a good return ratio.

Data Analysis and Presentation

This study generated both qualitative and quantitative data; hence both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used to analyse the data collected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

I have had sex with your boyfriend/ girlfriend	2.22	0.72	Disagree
Sex takes place willingly	2.19	0.79	Agree
I was persuaded to have intercourse	2.42	0.89	Agree
I had sexual intercourse without contraception	2.09	0.66	Agree
He or she made me to have intercourse forcefully	2.31	0.95	Agree
I had several boyfriends/girlfriends	2.37	0.85	Agree
I had sex under the influence of drug	2.10	0.92	Agree
I had sex to get material things	2.22	1.01	Disagree
I only engage in romance and kisses	2.47	0.78	Agree
Sectional Mean/Standard Deviation	2.37	0.91	

Table 1 shows the sexual behaviours of students selected in Osun State.

The mean score for sexual behaviours of the students is 2.37 indicating significant disagreement that the students engage in sexual behaviours because the mean score is below 2.50 (midpoint on a 4-point Likert scale). This implies that the respondents disagreed that they engaged in sexual behaviours.

Research Question Two: What is the influence of sex education on students' sexual behaviours?

TABLE 2: Influence of sex education on students' sexual behaviours in Osun State

STATEMENTS	MEAN	STD.DEV	DECI
Sex education had helped me to know how to use various contraceptive methods	2.56	0.70	Agree
I have reduced drastically multiple sex partners	2.61	1.12	Agree
I have now one partner	2.69	0.87	Agree
No more persuasion for sex	2.48	0.98	Disagree
I used contraceptives during sexual intercourse	2.57	0.98	Agree
Sex education has helped me to discuss my relationship issues with my parents	2.57	0.74	Agree
Avoiding unwanted pregnancy due to sex education	2.86	0.90	Agree
Having a better relationship after sex education	2.95	0.73	Agree
Having emotional health through sex education,	3.47	0.81	Agree
Sex education had taught me how to avoid sexually transmitted infections	3.79	0.82	Agree
Sectional Mean/Standard Deviation	2.89	0.76	

Some religious practices do not accommodate sex education	2.43	.73	Agree
Culture is one of the bottlenecks to sex education	2.47	.86	Agree
Problem of low self-esteem and self-worthlessness due to a poor background	2.41	.92	Agree
Reaction of parents	2.57	.83	Agree
Perceptions of teachers	2.67	.87	Agree
Measuring learning outcomes	2.82	.84	Agree
Students shy to discuss sex education	3.57	.78	Agree
Problem of age of students	2.12	0.92	Disagree
Lack of sex education specialists	2.52	.92	Agree
Sectional Mean/Standard Deviation	2.47	0.77	

Research results showed that there is no confirmed sexual behaviour among selected students in Osun State. Parents and educators have essential roles in fostering sexual education and sexual behaviours. Consequently, parents should play the primary role in imparting to their children social, cultural and religious values regarding intimate and sexual relationships, while, education professionals should play the primary role in providing information about sexuality.. The influence of sexual education was found to be same for all selected students in the study area. The students accepted or rejected sex education as students not on the bases of gender. Tulloch and Kaufman (2013) found an immediate reduction in sexual activity of adolescents who learned sex education while in school and mirrored highly published results that sex education matters and does not cause adolescents to become more sexually active.

Conclusion and recommendations

Research results concludes that there is no confirmed sexual behaviour among selected students in Osun State . Also, both parents and educators have essential roles in fostering sexual education and sexual behaviours. It is recommended more specialists in sex education should be employed with a view to making sex education in tertiary more effectively impactful in Osun State.

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