

Parental Attitude towards Sexuality Education for Secondary School Students in Kwara State, Nigeria

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This study investigated the parental attitude towards sexuality education for secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria. The study also sought whether variables such as gender, religion and educational qualification would affect the respondents' views. Descriptive survey method was adopted for this study. Using a three-stage sampling technique, four hundred respondents in Kwara State were selected to participate in the study. The data was gathered with the use of a researcher-designed instrument titled "Attitude of Parents towards Sexuality Education Questionnaire (APSEQ). The t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical tools were employed to analyze the formulated null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Results showed that the attitude of parents towards sexuality education for in-school adolescents in Kwara State is negative. Also, there were significant differences in the attitude of parents towards sexuality education for in-school adolescents in Kwara State based on gender and educational qualification, but no significant difference was found on religion. Based on the findings of this study, recommendations were made among others that counsellors should educate parents on the need and importance of sexuality education so as to develop positive attitude towards it. Parents should be made to realize that sexuality education will reduce unwanted pregnancies, prevent sexually transmitted diseases among many other advantages. It should be made known to parents that sexuality education is meant to curb risky sexual behaviours and not escalate it.

Keywords: parents, attitude, sexuality education, secondary school students, Kwara state

INTRODUCTION

Sex education plays a significant role in the development of adolescents' attitude towards healthy sexual relationship and avoidance of negative sexual consequences. Despite this, the role of parent as an agent to promote child's development cannot be underrated in the society. This assertion agrees with the claim of Haffner (2001) that for sexuality education to be effectively taught in schools, parents support must be sought as the education of the child includes cooperation of parents. However, sexuality education involves more than sexual development and reproductive health, it includes interpersonal relationships, intimacy, body languages, values and gender influence (Sieswerda & Blekken, 2003). Moreover, home is the first contact a child has which provides opportunities for discussions on sexuality, making parents the primary sex educators of their children (SIECUS, 2001).

Adolescents are known for their pronounced sexual zeal and they need accurate information about healthy sexual activities (Olubayo, 2012). More importantly, adolescence stage is a wonderful period in one's life and time filled with new and exciting things and inventions. Mensch, Bruce and Green (2008) stated that what happens between ages 10-19, whether good or bad shapes how girls and boys live out their lives as women and men. Mensch et al believed that it is the task of all responsible

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parents to make sure that the transition from childhood to adulthood happens under favorable conditions and environments. Similarly, according to Lloyd (2005) in a study titled 'growing up global the changing transitions to adulthood in developing Countries' found that an estimated 4.3% of young women and 1.5% of young men 15-24 in sub-Saharan, were living with HIV while 9-13% young women had given birth by age 16. This implies that young people need access to productive information and skills before they become sexually active to reduce their risk of contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted infection (STIs) and having unwanted pregnancies at early age.

In Nigeria and other African countries alike, 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 (Mack, 2011). When the word "Sex" is mentioned, it seems to evoke itchy feelings among both the young and old. Adults in the Nigerian society especially parents have occasionally refrained from discussing sexually related information with their children and young ones. Traditionally, children are brought up under strict discipline as well as fear and are punished for questioning their parents, especially the girls when sexually related questions are asked (Brocato & Dwamena-Aboagye, 2007). Consequently, young people are afraid to ask questions relating to sexual issues as they would be "disrespectful" and "disobedient" hence, sexual issues are topics for adult discussion only.

Sexuality, rather than morality has become the custom and young people are not excluded from this exposure (Klemp, Moore & Moore, 2003). Adults today may rightfully describe the youth as morally wayward. The truth of the matter, however is that, this is due to the emergence of globalization and torrent of sex-related information available to children via media, foreign influence and technology (Lim & Kui, 2006). However, in the face of risky sexual behaviours of adolescents, culture of silence is impossible to sustain even though parents and teachers involved in sex education have divergent views and this poses a lot of problems. To some parents, sex education is a strong incest taboo (Macleod, 2008; Kunene, 2009) and should be discouraged. It is perceived by some other parents as one of those social forces that came with modernization to break down the moral fabric of the entire society (Marion & McCabe, 2009). Some also strongly believe that children are too young and not sexually active therefore, they do not need sexuality education (O'Regan, 2001).

These days, children constantly surprise their parents with their questions (Hyder & Delamater, 2002) and gestures. This should not be strange as sexual images can be found on internet, billboards, newspapers, and television. In addition, music videos are so sexually explicit with female dancers almost naked and with mobile phones pornography can be accessed with just a click. Sadly, day-in day-out, young people are having sexual intercourse at much younger ages i.e. between 8 and 17 years (Ansha-Addo, 2005); sometimes even younger (Naidoo, 2001). In a recent survey carried out by Lim and Kui (2006), boys as young as nine years stated that they have had sexual experiences.

Historically, the task of instructing about sex has been the responsibility of parents but recently, the term usually refers to classroom lessons about sex taught in schools. Unknown to some parents, sex education aims to reduce risks of potentially negative outcomes from sexual behaviour, equips learners with life skills, and reduces the high level of drop out and unwanted pregnancies. It provides knowledge on how to prevent transmission of diseases such as HIV/AIDS and other health problems (Steinberg, 2006). The primary goal of sex education is promotion of sexual and reproductive health. It can help to prevent physical, psychological, marital and social problems related to sexuality (Kamalpreet, 2012). Sex education is targeted at contributing to young people's positive experience of their sexuality by enhancing the quality of their relationships. It offers sexuality programmes aimed at providing accurate information about human sexuality for young people to develop and understand their values, attitudes and beliefs about sexuality. This according to Forrester (2009), is a means by which they are helped to protect themselves against abuse, exploitation, unintended pregnancies and

sexually transmitted diseases. Undeniably, the issues of sex education to schools have been very controversial with respect to the stage at which it should begin.

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 setup within which learners grow up (Gallagher & Gallagher, 2000). It also depends on the attitude of teachers who will be responsible for the formal aspects (Nokwe, 2001) and parents who are the child's first point of contact and play a vital part in the informal education of the learner. Therefore, parental attitude on the topic of sex education is very important. Culture hesitant attitude about sexuality is evident in the limitations placed on sex education in primary and secondary schools and often in its total absence from the curriculum (Baron & Biome, 2004).

Ersheng (2001) have stated that parents who ought to be the primary educators of their children and communicate to them specific values about sexuality play the least role in this area. Parents considered sexuality education as being immoral, contrary to religion and traditional values and likely to encourage premarital sexual activity (Richard, 2001). There is a wide spread fear even among the educated parents that discussing sexual issues might stimulate children's sexual interest. Moronkola and Indris (2000) believed parents are not forthcoming as expected to act as primary sexuality educators for their children. Educational institutions also provide little or no sexuality education for young people and as such young children are left to the equally uninformed peers as the primary source of information on the issues.

Sex education would help students to develop positive attitude towards sex when their queries are satisfied honestly and scientifically. Adolescents have so many myths about their organic development systems, bodily changes, hormonal effects on reproductive system, chronological maturity and its physiological impacts, when they become anxious, stressful and over-pressurized, nobody is there to help, guide and to explain different facts of boy-girl relationship and how to cope with their felt sexual urges. It is against this background that the researcher investigated parental attitude towards sexuality education for secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

This question was raised to guide the conduct of the study: What is the parental attitude towards sexuality education for secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were generated to guide the conduct of the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the parental attitude towards sexuality education for secondary school students in Kwara State based on gender.
2. There is no significant difference in the parental attitude towards sexuality education for secondary school students in Kwara State based on religion.

There is no significant difference in the parental attitude towards sexuality education for secondary school students in Kwara State based on educational qualification.

METHOD

The research design adopted for this study is the descriptive survey method. The population of the study comprised all parents in Kwara State. The target population comprised of literate parents from selected local government areas within Kwara State. The researchers used a three-stage sampling procedure in selecting respondents that participated in the study. Thus, at stage one, simple random sampling procedure was used to select five local government areas within Kwara State. These local government areas were Asa, Ekiti, Ilorin West, Kiama, and Oke-Ero Local Government. At stage two, purposive random sampling technique was used to select four establishments in each of the selected local governments. This made a total of twenty establishments that were chosen for the study. The

establishments were; schools, local governments headquarters and private establishments. At stage three, systematic sampling technique was used to select twenty respondents from each of the establishment; this made a total of 400 literate parents that participated in the study.

The instrument used for this study was a researcher-designed instrument titled “Attitude of Parents towards Sexuality Education Questionnaire (APSEQ). The APSEQ consisted of 20 items and has two sections; sections A and B. Section A consisted of demographic data of the respondents while section B consisted of items that elicited responses on parents’ attitude towards sexuality education for adolescents in schools. APSEQ was validated by five experts from the Departments of Counsellor Education and Adult and Primary Education, University Ilorin; these experts affirmed that the instrument was reliable for use. The reliability of APSEQ was established through test re-test reliability method; a coefficient of 0.74 was gotten. This reliability figure was considered high enough for the study of this nature. The instrument was scored using 4points Likert rating scale ranging from ‘Strongly Agreed to Strongly Disagree’. The mean score is 2.5 (1+2+3+4/4) therefore, in section B of APSEQ, the mean scores between 2.5 and above indicated a negative attitude of parents towards the teaching of sexuality education and vice-versa.

The questionnaire forms were administered by the researchers and two other research assistants who have been trained for the study. Frequency count and percentages were used to analyze the personal data of the respondents in section A. While, t-test and Analysis of variance statistical methods were used to test the formulated null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level.

FINDINGS

Demographic Data

This section presents the data obtained from the respondents in frequency counts and percentages.

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents by Age, Educational Status and Marital Status

Variables	Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender:	Male	168	42.0
	Female	232	58.0
	Total	400	100
Religion:	ATR	8	2.0
	Christianity	188	47.0
	Islam	204	51.0
	Total	400	100
Educational Status:	Pry/SSCE	50	12.5
	OND/NCE	140	35.0
	HND/1 st Degree	140	35.0
	Postgraduate	70	17.5
	Total	400	100

Table 1 indicates that 400 respondents participated in the study out of which 168 (42.0%) of the respondents were male, while 232 (58.0%) of the respondents were female. The table also indicates that 8 (2.0%) of the respondents were practicing African Traditional Religion (ATR), 188 (47.0%) of the respondents were practicing Christianity while, 204 (51.0%) of the respondents were practicing Islam. The table also reveals that 50 (12.5%) of the respondents have Primary/Secondary School Certificate, 140 (35.0%) of the respondents had NCE/OND qualification, similarly, 140 (35.0%) of the respondents have HND/1st Degree while, 70 (17.5%) of the respondents have Postgraduate degree.

Table 2

Mean and Rank Order on the Parental Attitude towards Sexuality Education for In-School Adolescents in Kwara State

Item No.	As far as I am concerned, Sexuality Education:	Mean	Rank
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12	should not be a core subject	3.80	1 st
3	is against the tradition of the society	3.79	2 nd
4	is not morally right for adolescents	3.76	3 rd
1	should not be encouraged	3.75	4 th
16	should be taught to female students only	3.70	5 th
14	should be handled by health personnel only	3.69	6 th
15	should be taught to male child only	3.66	7 th
18	have few benefits for adolescents	3.65	8 th
7	promotes teenage pregnancy	3.64	9 th
5	increases rate of premarital sex	3.63	10 th
8	informs adolescents about sexual behaviour	3.60	11 th
10	enhances adolescents' knowledge about family planning	3.58	12 th
17	can expose adolescents to promiscuity	3.54	13 th
6	erodes the uniqueness of sexual relationship	3.50	14 th
19	should not be taught by teachers at all	3.46	15 th
20	should not be taught by parents	3.36	16 th
2	corrupts adolescents	2.58	16 th
13	should be allowed to be learnt through experience	2.56	18 th
9	should be discouraged by all parents	2.55	19 th
11	should not be taught in secondary school level	2.53	20 th

Table 2 shows the mean and rank order of the attitude of parents towards sexuality education for in-school adolescents in Kwara State. It is shown on the table that the attitude of parents toward sexuality education is negative since all the items have mean scores above 2.5. parents believe that sexuality education should not be a core subject, is against the tradition of the society, is not morally right for adolescents, should not be taught by teacher, increases rate of premarital sex and should be discouraged by all parents among others.

Hypothesis One: *There is no significant difference in the parental attitude towards sexuality education of In-school adolescents in Ilorin Metropolis based on gender*

Table 3

T-test Showing the Difference in the Parental Attitude towards Sexuality Education of In-school Adolescents based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value
Male	168	4.117	0.449	398	5.68*	1.96
Female	232	3.753	0.348			

*p<0.05

Table 3 shows a calculated t-value of 5.68 and a critical t- value of 1.96. The calculated t-value is greater than the critical t- value. The hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the parental attitude towards sexuality education of in-school adolescents based on gender is rejected.

Hypothesis Two: *There is no significant difference in the parental attitude towards sexuality education of In-school adolescents in Ilorin Metropolis based on religion*

Table 4

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Showing the Parental Attitude towards Sexuality Education of In-school Adolescents based on Religion

Source	df	SS	Mean Square	Cal.F-ratio	Crit.F-ratio
Between Groups	2	9.520	4.760	0.54	3.00
Within Groups	397	3510.480	8.842		
Total	399	3520.000			

Table 4 shows a calculated F-ratio of 0.54 and a critical F- ratio of 3.00. The calculated F- value is less than the critical F- value. The hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the parental attitude towards sexuality education of in-school adolescents based on religion is not rejected.

Hypothesis Three:

There is no significant difference in the parental attitude towards sexuality education of In-school adolescents in Ilorin Metropolis based on educational qualification

Table 5

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Showing the Parental Attitude towards Sexuality Education of In-school Adolescents based on Educational Qualification

Source	df	SS	Mean Square	Cal.F-ratio	Crit.F-ratio
Between Groups	3	1312.500	437.500	78.54*	2.60
Within Groups	367	2207.500	5.570		
Total	399	3520.000			

*p<0.05

Table 5 shows a calculated F-ratio of 78.54 and a critical F-ratio of 3.00. The calculated F-ratio is greater than the critical F-ratio. The hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the parental attitude towards sexuality education of in-school adolescents based on educational qualification is rejected.

Table 6

Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) showing the difference in the Parental Attitude towards Sexuality Education of In-school Adolescents based on Religion

Duncan Groupings	N	Means	Group	Educational Qualification
A*	50	64.64	1	Primary/SSCE
B	140	63.00	2	OND/NCE
B	140	63.00	3	HND/1 st Degree
B	70	63.05	4	Postgraduate

Table 6 showed the Duncan Multiple Range Test indicating the significant difference noted in the ANOVA on Table 4. Group 4 with a mean score of 63.05 slightly differed from Group 3 and 2 with mean scores of 63.00 and 63.00 respectively. Groups 4, 3 and 2 significantly differed from Group 1 with a mean score of 64.64. All the groups differed from one another, but the significant difference noted was because of the mean of Group 1, hence the significant difference noted in the ANOVA on Table 5 was brought about by parents who have primary/secondary school leaving certificate therefore, the hypothesis is rejected.

DISCUSSION

The finding of this study showed that the parental attitude towards sexuality education for in-school adolescents in Kwara State is negative. Parents believe that sexual education should not be a core subject, it should be taught to male child only, and it has few benefits. In addition, parents believe that sexuality education should not be a core subject, it corrupts adolescents, it is against the tradition of the society, is not morally right for adolescents, promotes teenage pregnancy, it should be taught by teachers, it increases rate of premarital sex and should be discouraged. This finding tallies with that of Ersheng (2001) who found that parents have negative attitude towards sexuality education. Similarly, Baron and Biome (2004) found that parents have negative disposition towards sexuality education in schools. The finding of this study could be that parents are not well informed about the benefits of sexuality education for adolescents hence they are skeptical about its effect and impact on their children.

The testing of hypothesis one showed that that there was significant difference in the parental attitude towards sexuality education of in-school adolescents based on gender. This implies that the hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the parental attitude towards sexuality education of in-school adolescents based on gender was rejected. It also means that gender influenced the attitude of parents toward sexuality education of adolescents. This finding supports that of Brocato and Dwamena-Aboagye (2009) and Nwoke (2001) whose findings revealed differences in parents' attitude

towards sexuality education based on gender. This difference noted was due to men having higher means than women; which could be stated that men expressed more negative attitude towards sexuality education than women. This finding could be that men are expressing fear that their children could be sexually sensitive when exposed to sexuality education.

Hypothesis two which stated that there is no significant difference in the parental attitude towards sexuality education of in-school adolescents based on religion was not rejected. This implies that religion does not significantly affect or influence parental attitude toward sexuality of education for in-school adolescents. This finding did not tally with that of Richard (2001) whose finding showed that religion influenced the attitude of parents towards sexuality education. Although, one may think that one's faith could affect one's attitude, but surprisingly, religion did not affect attitude of parents in this study. This could be that parents irrespective of religion are being affected by cultural and environmental influence that prevent parents from talking about sexual issues with their children.

The testing of hypothesis three showed that that there was significant difference in the parental attitude towards sexuality education of in-school adolescents based on educational qualification. This implies that the hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the parental attitude towards sexuality education of in-school adolescents based on educational qualification was rejected. It also means that educational qualification influenced the attitude of parents toward sexuality education of adolescents. This finding tallies with that of Moronkola and Indris (2000) who found that parents differed in their attitude towards sexuality education on the basis of gender. The Duncan Multiple Range Test indicated that the significant difference noted in the hypothesis was brought about by parents who primary/secondary school leaving certificate. This could be that parents who are less educated, have more negative attitude towards sexuality education for secondary school students in Kwara State due to limited exposure and experience.

CONCLUSION

It was concluded that parents have negative attitude towards sexuality education of in-school adolescents is negative. Similarly, there were significant differences in the attitude of parents towards sexuality education of in-school adolescents on the bases of age and educational qualification but there was no significant difference based on religion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Counselors need to educate parents on the importance of sexuality education particularly for in-school adolescents. Counselors need to take into earnest consideration, the issue of well-planned lesson for sexual education. The teaching of sexuality education should be such that would prevent them from engaging in any form of premarital sex.
2. Counselors need to liaise with other stakeholders in Education to ensure that curriculum is well structured and the subject is well taught. This might decrease the chances of learning through experience, wrong use of family planning and the likes as expressed by parents. Professional Counselors should constitute sexual education committee across schools, which committee members would be in-school adolescents of different gender, parents, teachers and school administrators. This would better shed light on the importance of sexuality education.
3. The Ministry of Education should make strict laws concerning adequate teaching of sexuality education. This is necessary to drive home the reasons for the inclusion of sexuality education in school curriculum. Curriculum planners should continually update the content and method of teaching and learning sexuality education. Particularly considering the technological development in the society which many of the adolescents are exposed to.
4. School Administrators must ensure that sexuality education is adequately presented to meet the need of in-school adolescents. It must also be presented in such a way that will meet the aims and objectives of sexuality education.

5. Teachers should ensure that sexuality education is well taught to students, aims and objectives of the subjective should also be well spelt out. This will in no small measure correct any misconceived ideas on sexuality education.

6. Counselors should organize a never-ending seminar for parents to help them in cognitive restructuring. This is with the intention of changing the negative attitude to positive one. Counsellors should educate parents on the need and importance of sexuality education. They should be made to realize that sexuality education will reduce unwanted pregnancies, prevent sexually transmitted diseases among other benefits. It should be made known to parents that sexual education is meant for both boys and girls and not gender biased.

7. The need for sexuality education should be exclusively publicized. Parents, adolescents and the entire populace should be adequately informed so that they could develop positive attitude towards sexuality education.

Parents should be ready to support sexuality education as they are a major stakeholder in the lives of adolescents. Their negative attitude could mar the success of sexuality education in schools.

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