

Influence of Sex Education on Students' Sexual Behaviour in Government Secondary Schools in The Federal Capital Territory Abuja, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *This study examined the Influence of Sex Education on Students' Sexual Behaviour of Senior Secondary School Students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria. The aim of the study is to find out the sexual behaviours of secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria, to find out the influence of sex education on students' sexual behaviours of secondary school adolescent in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria and to find out difference in the influence of sex education on students' sexual behaviour on the basis of gender in secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, Nigeria. The design adopted in this study was the descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised of all senior secondary school students in 2020/2021 academic session in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria. The sample size for this study was 381 students. The instrument for data collection is Students' Sex Education Questionnaire (SSEQ). The SSEQ is a 33-item instrument designed along a modified 4-point Likert-type scale. The questionnaire was validated by a team of experts in the Faculty of Education, University of Abuja. In order to establish the reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was conducted using the test-retest method of reliability, which yielded the reliability (r) value of 0.78 implying a high reliability of the instrument. The data collected were analysed using mean and t -test. Findings showed that some factors such as religious practices, culture, shy to discuss sex are challenges to challenges of sex education in senior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. It was recommended that more awareness should be created to tackle the challenges of sex education in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. This can be done through internet and increasing the reading habits of parents.*

KEY WORDS: sex education, sexual behaviour

INTRODUCTION

Sex education is instruction on issues relating to human sexuality, including emotional relations and responsibilities, human sexual anatomy, sexual activity, sexual reproduction, age of consent, reproductive health, reproductive rights, safe sex, birth control and sexual abstinence (Adepoju, 2015). The European Expert Group, explains sex education 'as an education that aims to develop and strengthen the ability of children and young people to make conscious, satisfying, healthy and respectful choices regarding relationships, sexuality and emotional and physical health'. Sex education, therefore could mean any instruction in the processes and

consequences of sexual activity, ordinarily given to children and adolescents. The term usually refers to classroom lessons about sex taught in primary and secondary schools, usually as part of the Biology class.

Psychologically, Sexual behaviours refers to a broad spectrum of behaviours in which humans display their sexuality. These behavioural expressions contain both biological elements and cultural influences and involves sexual arousal (with its psychological changes, both pronounced and subtle, in the aroused person). It can also involve behaviour that is aimed at arousing desire in potentials partners (courtship display) or behaviour aimed at enhancing sexual experiences. Sex education and sexual behaviours poses different challenges on religion, culture, parent's attitude/orientation, school curriculum, school counselors as well as the students themselves.

There are disputes on whether or not sex education should be taught in schools in Nigeria. Some have argued that educating students on the topics relating to sex safety and the use of condoms may make them to be rebellious and act out. While others believe that children should be taught sex education in schools, based on their level of understanding.

Existing literature suggest that schools and parents must not shy away from discussing sexual education or else children will learn from people and medium who do not really care for their physiological, psychological and spiritual well-being. He stated that sexuality education does not harm children and adolescence and therefore should be a part of the curriculum. Historically, the task of educating adolescents about sex has been seen as the responsibility of parents. However, parent-child communication in sexual matters may be hindered by parental inhibitions or by various inter-generation tensions. Some studies have shown that children rarely receive adequate information on sexual matters from their parents.

In-fact up till the present time, the issue of sex education has been a controversy as parents do not seem to agree as to how, when and what to teach children regarding sex education. The attitude of parents towards the teaching of sex education in school has been a matter of serious concern and it is affecting the dissemination of vital information which has led to the spread of sexually transmitted infections especially HIV and AIDS as well as unwanted pregnancy (Robin, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

Sex education is vital to any civilized society no matter the class and people of that society. The benefit of sex education is unquantifiable because the knowledge gained will contribute towards reducing significantly or eradicating completely the spread of the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and similar deadly sexually transmitted infections. Though advances have been made in medical sciences including technological breakthroughs in some instances, the deadly disease has confined to ravage the whole world now more than before. The essence of this research is due to the fact that students have limited access to sex education from their families, homes, sexual educational institutions and academic source. This poses challenges to parents, teachers and also cultural. Most importantly, sex education is not captured in the secondary school curriculum and even when some schools try to talk about it,

they are not covering the scope of sex education as they concentrate more on the reproductive topics which are majorly taught in Biology.

In spite of this concerted effort by individuals, international and national organizations in health-related areas to arrest this ugly situation, vices related to sexual behaviours are still common among secondary school students. As this is not expected to be so, people begin to wonder what type of sex education these children are having. Whether or not parents are alive to their responsibility which may be why the problem associated with children sexual behaviour continued unabated becomes the problem of the present study to the extent that the present study is predicated on the influences of sex education on students' sexual behaviours in secondary schools in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria.

The following questions were raised to guide the research:

1. What are the sexual behaviours of secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, Nigeria?
2. What is the influence of sex education on students' sexual behaviours of secondary school adolescent in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, Nigeria?
3. What are the challenges of sex education in secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja?

The third research question was translated to null hypothesis thus: there is no significant difference between male and female students in the influence of sex education on students' sexual behaviour in secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The design adopted for this study is a descriptive survey research design. According to Ankomah, Mamman-Daura, Omoregie, and Anyanti (2011), the concern of descriptive research is not the observed distribution that exists but what the distribution is. The descriptive survey typically allows the researcher to explain and measure the characteristic in time or comparatively over time (Gray 2019). The population for this study comprised all 70,162 students in Government Senior secondary schools in the six (6) Area Councils in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. A sample of 381 respondents were selected for the study. This sample was considered appropriate for an approximate population of 70,162 using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for determining sample size from a given population. Proportionate sampling procedure was used in selecting the students from the different Area Councils so as to cut across relatively all the population. The instrument for data collection was titled: Students' Sex Education Questionnaire (SSEQ). The SSEQ is a 33-item instrument designed along a modified 4-point Likert-type scale. The questionnaire was validated by a team of experts in the Faculty of Education, University of Abuja. In order to establish the reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was conducted using the test-retest method of reliability, which yielded the reliability (r) value of 0.78 implying a high reliability of the instrument. The questionnaire was administered directly on the respondents by the researchers. The statistical tools that were used in analysing the collected data include mean and t-test. To answer the research questions, any item mean that was greater or equal to 2.50 was considered as 'agree', while item mean below 2.50 was considered as 'disagree'. This is because, 2.50 is the midpoint of the 4-point Likert scale.

RESULTS

Research Question One: What are the sexual behaviours of secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja?

**Table 1: Sexual behaviours of students in Senior Secondary Schools in FCT, Abuja
 N = 381**

S/N	Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
4	I have a boyfriend/girlfriend.	2.57	0.93	Agree
5	I have had sex with your boyfriend/girlfriend.	2.39	0.99	Disagree
6	Sex take place willingly without being pressurized	3.16	0.88	Agree
7	I persuaded her/him to have intercourse	3.12	0.89	Agree
8	I had sexual intercourse without contraception	3.09	0.86	Agree
9	She/he forced me to have intercourse	3.06	0.95	Agree
10	I had numerous boyfriend/girlfriends.	3.02	0.87	Agree
11	Had sex under the influence of drug	3.00	0.92	Agree
12	I had sex to get material things	2.22	1.04	Disagree
13	I only engage in romance and kisses	3.07	0.82	Agree
Sectional Mean/Standard Deviation		2.87	0.91	

Table 1 shows the sexual behaviours of students in senior secondary schools in FCT, Abuja.

The mean score for sexual behaviours of senior secondary school students in FCT, Abuja is 2.87 indicating agreement that secondary school students engage in sexual behaviours in FCT, Abuja since the mean score is above 2.50 (midpoint on a 4-point Likert scale). This implies that the respondents agreed that they engaged in sexual behaviours.

Research Question Two: What is the influence of sex education on students' sexual behaviours of secondary school adolescent in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, Nigeria?

**Table 2: Influence of sex education on students' sexual behaviours in Senior Secondary Schools in FCT, Abuja
 N = 381**

S/N	Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
14	Sex education helped me to know how to use various contraceptive methods	3.00	0.80	Agree
15	I have reduced multiple sex partners	2.69	1.11	Agree
16	Am now faithful to one partner	3.05	0.81	Agree
17	I no longer persuade anyone to have sex with me	2.45	0.85	Disagree
18	I use contraception during sexual intercourse	3.02	0.88	Agree
19	Sex education helped me to discuss relationship issues freely with my parents	3.07	0.83	Agree
20	I know how to avoid unwanted pregnancy due to sex education	3.16	0.81	Agree
21	I enjoy a better relationship after sex education	3.22	0.80	Agree
22	Through sex education, I understand emotional health	2.90	0.87	Agree
23	Sex education taught me how to avoid sexually transmitted infections	3.14	0.91	Agree
Sectional Mean/Standard Deviation		2.97	0.87	

Table 2 showed influence of sex education on students’ sexual behaviours in senior secondary schools in FCT, Abuja. The result showed that the students agreed that sex education affects sexual behaviours of students in senior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The sectional mean score of 2.97 depicts students’ agreement that sex education affected their sexual behaviours in senior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Research Question Three: What are the challenges of sex education in secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja?

Table 3: Challenges of sex education in secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

N = 348

S/N	Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
24	Some religious practices do not accommodate sex education.	3.10	.83	Agree
25	Culture is one of the barriers of sex education	3.25	.80	Agree
26	Problem of low self-esteem and self-worthlessness due to a poor background	3.22	.71	Agree
27	Reaction of parents and other stakeholders.	3.07	.83	Agree
28	Perceptions of teachers (Some teachers do not mention sex organs)	3.16	.81	Agree
29	Measurement of learning outcomes.	3.22	.80	Agree
30	Students are shy to discuss sex education.	2.90	.87	Agree
31	Problem of age of students.	2.38	1.00	Disagree
32	Lack of specialist in sex education.	3.16	.88	Agree
Sectional Mean/Standard Deviation		3.05	0.84	

Table 3 showed challenges of sex education in senior secondary schools in FCT, Abuja. The result showed that the students agreed that some factors such as religious practices, culture, shy to discuss sex are challenges to challenges of sex education in senior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The sectional mean of 3.05 depicts students’ agreement to challenges of sex education in senior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings revealed that there are sexual behaviours amongst senior secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja within average. Mbugua (2017) while conducting a study on sex education and sexual socialization, believe that both parents and educators have essential roles in fostering sexual education and sexual behaviours. According to them, parents should play the primary role in imparting to their children social, cultural and religious values regarding intimate and sexual relationships, whereas education professionals should play the primary role in providing information about sexuality and developing related social skills.

The influence of sexual education was found to be same for all secondary school 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 the 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.

The study found there are challenges (such as religion, culture, societal norms, fear of unknown etc.) in sex education of senior secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Sule, Akor, Suleiman, Akpihi, and Ali (2015) while studying Socio-cultural challenges to sexual health education for female adolescents, concluded that religion and cultural issues are the major challenges of sex education, however, the emerging challenges are manageable in some extent. Considering the sensitivity of sex education in religious and cultural context, sex education could be promoted tactfully and through overcoming the cultural taboos and barriers as major obstacles.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher concluded that there are challenges facing sex education in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja and these challenges are caused by religion, culture and societal norms. Sex education impacts on sexual behaviours of senior secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja although, factors such as civilization, internet and parental upbringing influences sex education.

From the of the findings, the following recommendation are made:

1. The positive sexual behaviours should be sustained and work towards improving the existing sexual behaviours in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. This can be achieved through effective sex education and researches on various healthy sexual behaviours.
2. Since it was found that sex education improves sexual behaviours, should form major topics in the related subjects or make it a subject on its own.
3. More awareness should be created to tackle the challenges of sex education in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. This can be done through internet and increasing the reading habits of parents.

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