

SEXUALITY EDUCATION AS CORRELATE OF SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN NIGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS



C. C. Asiwé,

*Department of Educational Psychology,
College of Education,
Agbor.*

And

P. Kwaja,

*Department of Educational Psychology,
College of Education,
Agbor.*

Abstract

The paper sought to examine sexuality education as a correlate of sexual behavior of secondary school adolescents. Three hypotheses tested at $p < 0.05$ level of significance guided the study. The study involved two groups the experimental group and the control group. The sample was forty adolescents drawn from SS I and II students from two schools, one in the urban area and the other from a rural area. A researcher made questionnaire titled sexual attitude manifestations questionnaire made up of 28 items was the instrument used in the study to elicit sexual behavior manifestations. Data collected were analysed using the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). The findings revealed that treatment was effective on the experimental group and adolescents from the urban area outperformed their counterparts in the rural area, but gender was not sensitive to treatment. Based on the findings the following recommendations were made: Parents should be encouraged to offer sexuality education and discuss sex-related issues that are appropriate for the child and sexuality education that respects confidentiality and acknowledges the individual adolescent's and family's issues and values should be provided among others.

Sexual development is an integral and important part of human development. Sexual health is an important component of health throughout one's life-span. Sexual feelings and reactions although natural, expressing them correctly especially when one is young (young age) without adequate knowledge received from a well planned

Journal of Assertiveness

programme of sexuality such as sexuality education is not easy. The young persons in secondary schools are called adolescents because they are in adolescence period. Kaplan (2004), asserted that the term adolescence is commonly used to describe the transition stage between childhood and adulthood. Adolescence has also been described as a phase of life beginning in biology and ending in society. It is an "in-between" developmental stage in which young people are no longer considered children, but are yet to be accepted as adults (Noh and Wilson, 2010).

Many adolescents find it difficult to cope with all these changes and so they need help and support. They need to be assured that all of these are normal phases in growing up. Unfortunately, relatively little information is made available to them on the specific nature of their sexuality (Ifelunni and Okorie, 2003). Therefore it is important to provide adolescents with appropriate sexuality education especially as it affects their sexual life and health. Eisenbery, Bernat, Bearinger and Resnick (2008), opined that sexuality education is a major component of comprehensive health education, the goal of which is to help children and adolescents become healthy adults with responsible health behaviors. Jemmott, Jemmott and Fong (2010) asserted that "family life education" often is considered to be a euphemism for "sexuality education", however sexuality education is only one part, albeit a vital part of family life education. Family life education encompasses a broad range of topics that prepare young people for marriage, parenthood, and family responsibilities. Sexuality education often is approached with great anxiety and addressed in little detail in schools, in community programs, and even in the home.

Sexuality education according to the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (2002), is a process of acquiring information and forming attitudes and beliefs about sex, sexual identify, relationship and intimacy. Luker (2006), observed that it is now widely accepted that young people have a right to sexuality education. This, according to Roleff (2011) and Roffman (2012) also partly accounts for the recent interest in the health of the adolescents that has grown in many countries, for instance USA, Germany, Britain, Sweden, France and even Ghana integrated sexuality education into their secondary school curricular in the recent times. In Nigeria, the National Council on Education (NCE) after its 2004 meeting, mandated all the states in the federation to teach sexuality education to secondary school students.

The importance of sexuality education among adolescents cannot be undermined. Collins, Alagiri and Summers (2008) asserted that these young ones are the future leaders of any nation. Living a healthy sexual life is therefore according to them very crucial. It is against this background that Jemmott, Jemmott and Fong (2010) conducted a study among high school students and found out that sexuality education was one of the major mechanisms for coping with sexual drives as it increases

Sexuality Education As Correlate Of Sexual Behaviour Among Adolescents In Nigerian Secondary Schools- C. C. Asiwe and P. Kwaja,

knowledge of the students on reproductive issues. The researchers also asserted that high school students exposed to sexuality education had a positive disposition towards sexual attitudes as compared with their counterparts who were in the control group. Jemmott, Jemmott and Fong (2010) also conducted a study on abstinence only vs comprehensive sexuality education among in-school adolescents. The researchers found that there was a significant difference between boys and girls in the experimental group became more restricted in their sexual behaviours than boys after treatment.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to specifically ascertain the effect of sexuality education on adolescents' sexual behaviour, determine the effect of gender on adolescents sexual behaviour as a result of sexuality education and to ascertain the effect of sexuality education on adolescents in the urban area and those in the rural areas.

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were stated to guide the study:

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the post test mean scores of adolescents exposed to sexuality education and those in the control group?

HO₂: There is no significant difference between male and female post test mean scores of adolescent exposed to sexuality education and those in the control group?

HO₃: There is no significant difference between the post test mean scores of adolescents exposed to sexuality education in the urban area and those in the rural area.

Methodology

Population

The population comprised of all senior secondary I and II students in Ika South Local Government Area of Delta State.

Sampling and Sampling Techniques

The five secondary schools in Agbor, the headquarters of Ika South Local Government Area of Delta are made up of three mixed secondary schools, one girls' secondary school, and one boys' secondary school. One of the mixed secondary school in Agbor and Alisimie a rural community in the local government area were used for the study, the schools have three arms of SS I and SS II A - C. The class registers were used to code the instrument which was used to screen and select twenty students made up of ten males and ten females from each of the three schools. A total of forty adolescents were used for the study made up of twenty from Ogbemudein secondary

Journal of Assertiveness

school in Agbor town (ten males and ten females) and twenty (ten males and ten females) from a mixed secondary school in Alisimie (a rural area) in the Local Government Area. This agrees with Ali (2006) assertion that for experimental studies, the number of schools as sample size should not exceed four as experiments impose more rigorous demands on the researcher and so in order not to make the study unwieldy or intractable, smaller samples are usually preferred in experiments.

Instrument

The instrument consisted of a questionnaire schedule constructed by the researcher titled Sexual Attitude Manifestation Questionnaire (SAMQ). The questionnaire was developed on a four point, scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The questionnaire items were used for both pretest and posttest to both experimental and control groups.

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument for data collection was validated by three experts one each in Guidance and Counseling, Educational Psychology and Measurement and Evaluation in the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument (SAMQ) was trial tested on twenty students (ten males and ten females) from a secondary school others than the ones used for the study. The internal reliability was established using Cronbach alpha which gave a coefficient of 0.71 while the Pearson r yielded correlation coefficient of 0.64. There were considered high enough and suitable for use in this study.

Method of Data Analysis

Analysis of covariance was used to test the hypothesis at $< .05$ level of significance. ANCOVA was also used to determine if there were significant differences in the mean scores of the groups.

Results Hypothesis One

HO₁: There is no significant difference between the post test mean scores of adolescents exposed to sexuality education and those in the control group.

Sexuality Education As Correlate Of Sexual Behaviour Among Adolescents In Nigerian Secondary Schools- C. C. Asiwe and P. Kwaja,

Table 1: Analysis of Covariance Summary Table for Adolescents Exposed to Sexuality Education and Control Groups

Tests of Between-Subjects Effect
 Dependent Variable: Post

Source	Type III sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	3250.39a	3	1083.46	110.28	.00
Intercept	2454.53	1	2454.53	249.822	.00
Pre	.69	1	.692	.70	.79
Group	3249.29	2	1624.65	165.36*	.00
Error	550.21	56	9.83		
Total	312254.00	40			
Corrected Total	3800.60	39			

a. R Squared = .855 (Adjusted R Squared = .847) *p < .05

Data in table I revealed the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) summary table for the experimental and control groups. The calculated F ratio was 165.36. The level of significance of .00 is less than 0.05. The null hypothesis (1) was rejected. There was a significant difference in the post test mean score of adolescents exposed to sexuality education and those in the control group.

Hypothesis Two

HO₂: There is no significant difference between male and female post test mean scores of adolescents exposed to sexuality education.

Table 2: Analysis of Covariance Summary table for Male and Female Adolescents exposed to Sexuality Education

Tests of Between-Subjects Effect
Dependent Variable: Post

Source	Type III sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	9177.48a	6	1529.58	86.13	.00
Intercept	111.91	1	111.91	6.30	.02
Pre	.57	1	.57	.31	.86
Group	9158.13	2	4579.56	257.87	.00
Sex	.19	1	.19	.01	.92
Group* Sex	09.00	2	9.00	.51	.61
Error	941.25	53	17.76		
Total	122266.00	20			
Corrected Total	101118.73	19			

a. R Squared = .907 (Adjusted R Squared = -.896) *p < .05

Data in Table 2 revealed the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) summary table for the experimental (sexuality education) and control groups. The calculated F ratio was .51. The level of significance of .61 is higher than 0.05. The null hypothesis (2) was accepted. There was no significant difference in the post test mean score of adolescents exposed to the sexuality education and those in the control group.

Hypothesis Three

HO₃: There is no significant difference between the post test mean scores of adolescents exposed to sexuality education in the urban area and those in the rural area.

Table 3: Analysis of Covariance Summary table Adolescents Exposed to Sexuality Education in Urban and Rural Areas

Tests of Between-Subjects Effect
Dependent Variable: Post

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected model	2246.28a	3	1262.33	210.23	.00
Intercept	2534.33	1	2376.26	268.743	.00
Pre	.57	1	.732	.60	.79
Location	.19	2	.19	.01	.92
Group* location	2834.29	2	1843.65	154.62*	.00
Error	489.21	56	8.21		
Total	28544.00	40			
Corrected Total	2950.44	39			

a. R Squared = .705 (Adjusted R Squared = -.652) *p < .05

Data in Table 3 reveals the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) summary table for the experimental (sexuality education) and control groups. The calculated F ratio was 154.62. The level of significance of .00 is less than 0.5. The null hypothesis (1) was rejected. There was a significant difference in the post test mean score of adolescents exposed to sexuality education and those in the control groups in the urban and rural areas.

Discussion

Sexuality Education and Adolescents' Sexual Behavior

The overall result indicated that students exposed to sexuality education (experimental group) had significant positive effect on their sexual behaviours than those who were in the control group. Table 1 revealed the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) summary table for the experimental and control groups. The level of significance of .00 was less than 0.5. The null hypothesis (1) was rejected. There was a significant difference in the post test mean score of adolescents exposed to sexuality education and those in the control group. This result agreed with Blekinsop, Wade,

Benton, Gnaldi and Schagen (2004) findings, when they asserted that there was an increase in knowledge and discussion on reproductive issues in high school students exposed to sexuality education.

Gender and Adolescents' Sexual Behaviour

Data in Table 2 revealed the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) summary table for the experimental (sexuality education) and control groups. The level of significance of .61 was higher than 0.05. The null hypothesis (2) was accepted. There was no significant difference in the post test mean score of adolescents exposed to sexuality education and those in the control group. This meant that gender was not a significant factor influencing sexual behavior of adolescents. This result contradicted Ifelunni and Okorie (2003) who found that more boys than girls have sexual intercourse at young age. The result equally disagreed with that of Jemmott, Jemmott and Fond (2010) which found that girls were more restricted in their sexual behaviours than boys.

Adolescents' Sexual Behaviour in Urban and Rural Areas

Data in Table 3 revealed the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) summary table for the experimental (sexuality education) and control group. The level of significance of .00 is less than 0.05. The null hypothesis (3) was rejected. There was a significant difference in the post test mean score of adolescents exposed to sexuality education and those in the control groups in the urban and rural areas. This meant that location was a significant factor in sexuality education. The finding is in agreement with the study conducted by Ifelunni and Okorie (2003) which show that residential area (urban or rural) is significantly associated with the frequency of sexual intercourse and that greater percentage of rural males and females kept more sexual partners than their equals in the urban areas.

Implication of the Study

From the findings of this study, one could presume some far reaching educational implications for teachers, guidance counselors, policy makers, curriculum designers, parents and students. The study provided an empirical substantiation of the efficacy of sexuality education on sexual behaviour of our adolescents in secondary schools. That the adolescents exposed to sexuality education improved their sexual behaviour significantly implied that there was remarkable reduction of the risky sexual behaviours such as engagement in sexual intercourse, number of sex partners, wearing of clothes that expose the breasts and genitals, genital fondling, caressing and other sexual overtures. The manifestation was evidenced by the post test mean scores. The finding also implied that sexuality education should be taken more seriously in secondary schools in both urban and rural areas.

Conclusion

Adolescents especially those in secondary schools are among the most sexually active segment of the population. They engage in frequent unhealthy and risky sexual behaviours that pose threats to their reproductive health such as infection with STIs including the deadly AIDs, yet relatively minimal or no information is available to them on the specific nature of their sexuality and its health implications. Considering the above facts, recommendations had been made by United Nations Organizations, Federal and State Governments and NGOs. Sexuality education is therefore a prerequisite for social reconstruction and transformation of any nation.

Recommendation

The following recommendations have been made based on the findings and implication of the study.

1. Sexuality education should as a matter of urgency be enshrined into the secondary school curricular and adequately monitored.
2. Guidance counsellors should be employed and posted to secondary schools on a good counselor-students ratio.
3. To encourage parents to offer sexuality education and discuss sex-related issues that are appropriate for the child's age.
4. Provide sexuality education that respects confidentiality and acknowledges the individual patient's and family's issues and values.
5. Provide specific, confidential, culturally sensitive, and nonjudgmental counseling about key issues of sexuality.
6. Provide appropriate counseling or referrals for children and adolescents with special issues and concerns.

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Sexuality Education As Correlate Of Sexual Behaviour Among Adolescents In Nigerian Secondary Schools- C. C. Asiwe and P. Kwaja,

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