PARENTS AND TEACHERS PERCEPTION OF INCLUSION OF SEX EDUCATION IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN ONITSHA NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

The study investigated parents and teachers perception of inclusion of sex education in the secondary school curriculum in Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State. Eight Schools were selected from 16 secondary school in Onitsha North Local Government Area by simple random sampling technique. 1,200 parents and 710 teachers were used for the study. Three research questions were formulated for the study. Arithmetic mean was used to analyze the data collected through the use of questionnaire. Findings made includes: Parents accepted the inclusion of sex education in the secondary school curriculum. Teachers have a negative perception on the inclusion of sex education in secondary school curriculum. The people to teach sex education includes: parents teachers, guidance and counsellors and other non-governmental organization.

Introduction

To a layman's understanding, sex education is narrowly perceived as reproductive education. Sex education is a broad term used to describe education about sexual anatomy, sexual reproduction, sexual intercourse, reproductive health, emotional relations, reproductive rights and responsibilities, contraception, and other aspect of human sexual behaviour. (Wikipedia, 2006). Anamc7.e (2002) posited that sex education may also be described as sexuality education which means that it encompasses education about sexuality, including information about family planning, fertilization, conception and development of the embryo and fetus, through to childbirth plus information about all aspects of one's sexuality including: body image, sexual orientation, sexual pleasure, values, decision making, communication, dating, relationships, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and how to avoid them, as well as birth control methods.

Sex education programs includes; Abstinence Only programs (which teach abstinence as the only morally correct option of sexual expression for teenagers); Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage programs which teach abstinence as the only morally correct option of sexual expression for unmarried young people; Abstinence-Centered Education which is another term used to mean abstinence-only education; Comprehensive Sex Education which teaches about abstinence as the best method for avoiding STIs and unintended pregnancy but also teaches about condoms and contraception to reduce the risk of unintended pregnancy and infection with STIs including HIV; Abstinence-Based Education - a term normally used to mean comprehensive sexuality education; Abstinence - plus Education - another term normally used to mean comprehensive sexuality education (Kirby 2001).

Sex education may be taught informally, such as when someone receives information from conversation with parents, friends, religious leaders, or through the media. It may also be taught formally like when schools or health care providers offer sex education. Wikipedia (2006), asserted that in some countries sex education is taught as a full course as part of the curriculum in junior high classes or high classes. Other times it is only one unit within a broad biology class, health class, home economics class or physical education class.

For instance in Egypt students of ages 12-14 are taught about male and female reproductive system, sexual organs, contraceptions and STDs.

In Asia, sex education program is at various stages of development. Indonesia, Mongolia, South Korea and Sri Lanka have a systematic policy framework for teaching about sex within schools. In Japan, sex education is mandatory from age I or 11, mainly covering biological topics such as menstruation and ejaculation.

In China, Sex education traditionally consist in reading the reproduction section of biology text book, discussion about sex within human relationships as well as pregnancy and HIV prevention.

In countries like France and Germany, sex education has been part of school curriculum since 1973 and
1970 respectively, while in Sudan sex education has been mandatory part of school education since 1956. The subject is usually started between ages 7 and 10, and continues up through the grades incorporated into different subjects such as biology and history.

Although many countries have positive attitude toward teaching sex education in primary and secondary school, the fact remain that some countries show conservative attitude toward sex education.

For instance in India, the state government attempts to introduce sex education as a compulsory part of curriculum have often been met with harsh criticism by political parties who claim that sex education is against Indian culture” and would mislead children.

Wikipedia (2006) revealed that other countries with conservative attitude towards sex education include the U.K. and the U.S while countries like Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan have no coordinated sex education program.

In Nigeria, Okoli (1993) posits that traditional values, morals and ethics embed in the culture? of various ethnic groups never really occupied the need to educate adolescents on matters relating to their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The same author observed that over the years, open discussion of sex matters was regarded as taboo until an individual is ripe for marriage. Thus in the traditional context, it was not uncommon to find a bride and bridegroom ignorant of sexual relationship until formal consummation of marriage. Only very few percentage of some anxious mothers attempted mentioning one or two warnings to their girls about their first menstruation. The boys are left to gather incorrect and often distorted information outside home and school usually from peer groups.

In this present era, the fact remains that little effort is being made with regards to education of adolescent on sex matter.

In fact, Adenipekun (2005) stated that some people still uphold the view that sexuality education promote sexual activity and thus oppose programmes that provide access to having full information on it. This not withstanding United Nations Agency For International Development (UNAIDS) revealed that sex education does not lead to increase activity, rather, access to comprehensive age-appropriate sexuality education encourages high level of abstinence, delayed commencement of sexual activity as well as higher use of contraceptive and fewer sexual partners for those who have initiated sexual activity. Thus, the need to include sex education in secondary school curriculum become imperative.

Statement of the Problem

In recent times there has been reports about indecent sexual practices among youths.. This has lead to increase in unplanned pregnancies which in most cases lead to abortion and high rate of STIs. Many people are of the opinion that this problem could be reduced to barest minimum if youth are properly informed in sex related issues. Focusing on this, the Federal government has proposed the inclusion of sex education in the secondary school curriculum. The problem is, what is the parents’ and teachers' perception of inclusion of sex education in secondary school curriculum?

Purpose of the Study

This study sought to find out the following:
1. Parent's perception of the inclusion of sex education in secondary school curriculum.
2. Teacher's perception of the inclusion of sex education in secondary school curriculum.
3. The calibre of persons that should teach sex education in secondary schools.

Research Questions

1. What is the parent's perception of inclusion sex education in the secondary school curriculum?
Table I

Mean Response of Parents Perception of inclusion of Sex Education in Secondary School Curriculum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>5 SA</th>
<th>4 A</th>
<th>3 UD</th>
<th>2 D</th>
<th>1 SD</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Many parents believe that children will become wayward if exposed to sex education on time.</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>2.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Many children especially girls are not educated on how to take care of themselves at the onset of puberty and so should be exposed to sex education.</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>3.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To arrest ignorance and wrong information about sex, there is need to properly educate the children on sex issue.</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>3.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sex matters are topical and sensetional in the society and so should be included in the secondary school curriculum.</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>4.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Very often information about sex coming from mass media and peer groups are deceptive and unreliable, half truth which treat outside the context of its true meaning and appropriate use.</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Educating children on sex issue in secondary schools will give children satisfactory orientation on issues and save them from unnecessary embarrassment.</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Teaching of sex education in schools will reduce unwanted pregnancy among girls.</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data in the table 1 above shows that items 2,3,4,5 and 6 scored mean above 3.5 while items 2 and 9 scored mean below 3.5. The grand mean is 3.56 thus indicating parents acceptance that sex education be included in secondary school curriculum.

Research Question 2

What is the teachers perception of inclusion of sex education in secondary school curriculum'.

Table 2

Mean response of Teachers Perception of Inclusion of Sex Education in Secondary School Curriculum.
From the above table items 2 and 5 scored mean above 3.5 while items 1 and 3 scored mean below 3.5. The grand mean is 3.27 thus indicating that teachers are not in support of inclusion of sex education in the school curriculum.

**Research Question 3**

What calibre of persons are responsible for teaching sex education in Secondary School?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>5 SA</th>
<th>4 A</th>
<th>3 UD</th>
<th>2 D</th>
<th>1 SD</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Only parent are qualified to teach about sex in secondary schools.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>1440</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Only teachers are qualified to teach sex education in secondary school.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1650</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Parents in consultation with teachers should teach sex education in secondary school.</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1440</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Teachers of religious (i.e Imams, pastors and Reverend Fathers) should be involved in teaching sex education in secondary schools.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>1440</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>It is the duty of guidance counselors to teach sex education.</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1440</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The services of sociologists should be employed for sex education in secondary schools.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>1440</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Non-governmental organization should teach children sex Education in Secondary Schools.</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1440</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean response of calibre of persons that should teach sex education

The table above shows that items 2,3,5,6, and 7 scored mean that is above 3.5. While items number I and 4 scored mean below 3.5.

**Discussion of Results**

The result in table 1 indicate that parents are in support of inclusion of sex education in secondary school curriculum. This is in agreement with the findings of Siecus (2006) that 88% of United States parents of junior high school students and 80% of parents of high school students believed that sex education in school make it easier for them to talk to their adolescents about sex. Similarly, some international organizations such as planned Parenthood consider that broad sex education programs have global benefits, such as controlling the risk of overpopulation and the advancement of women's right.

Although greater number of parents advocate for inclusion of sex education in secondary school curriculum, it is interesting to note that reasonable number of parents opposed the move on the basis that sex
education promotes sexual activities.

Result from table 2 revealed that most teachers are not in support of inclusion of sex education in the secondary school curriculum on the ground that secondary school children are not yet matured for it. Also involving them in sex education will expose them to danger of sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy. Others who supported the move upheld a similar view with Anameze (2002) and Okoli (1991) that sex education in secondary school will help young people to understand the purpose and functioning of sex, distinguish between right and wrong about sexual matter and safe-guard themselves against dangers to health.

Result from table 111 shows that teaching of sex matters in secondary school should involve different calibre of people. Such as teachers (Action Health Incorporated in Vanguard (2005; Esiet 1992); parents (Wale 2005; Wikipedia 2006); School guidance and counsellors as well as non-governmental organisations. Furthermore Ogunleye and Calderon (1984) posited that sex education starts from birth and continues up lift the child is physically and psychologically mature to handle sex issues. Thus all hands should be on deck to ensure that children are properly equipped with necessary knowledge they require about sex.

**Implication of the Study**

The major implication of the findings of his study is that inclusion of sex education in the secondary schools curriculum is of paramount importance. Thus failure to do this will lead to increase in STI, unwanted pregnancy and drop out from school among secondary school children.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations, based on the findings of the study were made.

1. The Federal Ministry of Education should go ahead to include sex education in the secondary school curriculum.
2. Curriculum experts and educational technologists should join hands to develop adequate curriculum package for sex education.
3. Adequate arrangement should be made in the school timetable to accommodate other people (apart from the regular teachers) to participate in teaching children sex issues.

**Summary/Conclusion**

The study investigated the parents and teachers perception of the inclusion of sex education in the secondary school curriculum. Generally, parents were of the view that sex education be studied in our secondary school while most teachers opposed the idea. Therefore sex education should not be left for only teachers. Parents, counsellors and interested non-governmental organisation should be involved in sex education in our secondary schools.

**References**


Kirby D (2001). Emerging answers: Research findings on programs to reduce teen pregnancy; Washington D.C. National campaign to prevent teen pregnancy


