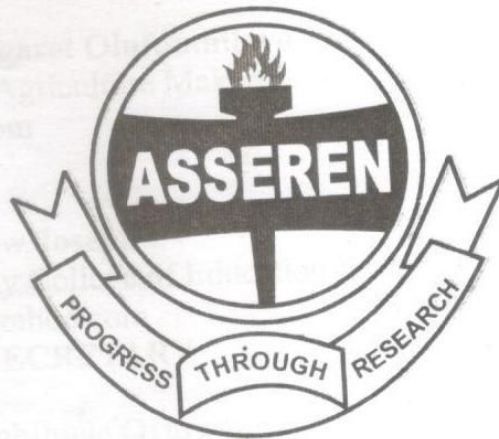


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ASSESSMENT OF UPPER BASIC STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS LEARNING OF SEX EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study assessed the upper basic students' attitude towards learning of sex education in Schools in Osun State, Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to examine students' attitude towards learning of sex education, influence of gender and age on students' attitude towards learning of sex education. The study adopted descriptive design. The sample for the study was one hundred and fifty (150) students in selected schools using simple random sampling technique. A questionnaire titled "Upper Basic Students' Attitude towards Learning of Sex Education Questionnaire (UBSALSEQ)" was used for data collection. Construct validity of the questionnaire were conducted by two experts in measurement and test construction. The reliability coefficient was 0.81 obtained through the use of test re-test statistical technique. The data collected were analyzed using percentage and range to answer the research question while null hypotheses were tested using Chi-square statistical technique. The finding of the study showed that majority of upper basic students had positive attitude towards learning of sex education. Gender and age of the students were not significant variables on their attitude towards learning of sex education. Based on the findings, recommendations were made among others that Students should be given equal opportunities in the teaching and learning processes irrespective of their gender and age as these characteristics do not influence students' attitude. Students should internalize the knowledge gained through sex education class to improve their well-being.

Key word: Sex education, Upper basic schools, Students' attitude, Gender and Age

Introduction

Education is process of cultivating in citizens right values that make nation stronger and peaceful. The nation values represent its customs, traditional practices, norms and cultures which are inculcated in citizens for them to develop right attitudes that make disciplined and enable them contribute positively to development of their society. Education is not merely the random distribution of insert ideas, the regurgitation of pre-packaged facts, or the formal exchange of ideas between the teacher and students but how learners can clearly think, manipulate skills and transfer the learning experiences gained to solve problems by themselves and make right decision to solve social problems such as sexual harassment, child abuse, trafficking, rapping among others that enable them achieve their own conclusions rather than merely be influenced by others (Jimoh, 2007).

Education in Nigeria is classified into basic, senior secondary and tertiary institutions. The Basic education is a first level of education in the country. It is a reform

measure aimed at addressing the distortion in the primary education and inequality in educational opportunity. It is a nine-year educational programme designed for children within the age range of 0-15 years. It is compulsory for children within this age bracket. The vision of the programme is to acquire appropriate and relevant skills and values that will enable every child to contribute his/her quota to national development. The goals of Basic Education thus include the provision of opportunities for the child to develop manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within the limit of the child's capacity and the acquisition of the ethical, moral and civic values needed for the laying of a solid foundation for lifelong learning (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). At this level, students are expected acquire moral, right attitudes, values and skills assertive and communication skills that will help in decision making and enable them function effectively in the society in the society.

Sex education is a process of imparting young ones knowledge of physiological, mental, emotional and social development of human in relation to human reproductive system and changes that occur from adolescent stage to adulthood. It is the acquisition knowledge that deals with human sexuality and reproductive system. Sex education was introduced in upper basic education to provide adequate information about human sexuality and reproductive system. It was introduced to four subjects' curriculum at the basic education. The subjects are Social studies, Home Economics, Basic Science and, Physical and Health Education according to Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2007). This type of education at this level of education was aimed to reduce peer influence about sexual intercourse, high risks sexual behavior s, abortion, unwanted pregnancies, and provide young ones with accurate information on human sexuality for them to develop and understand their nature, values, attitudes and beliefs about sexuality (Monday, Elizabeth, Bukola, Mary, Momoh, David, & Saminu, 2018). This would enable the learners to gain positive experiences about sexuality and enhance the quality of their relationships with opposite sex.

Sex education is needful and necessary for young ones especially upper basic students who are adolescents and facing different challenges as a result of changes experience in their bodies in which some of their parents are not available to offer explanation and share their experiences with their children. Studies such as Ogunjimi, (2006), Netsanet, Tsion, Fessahaye and Fentie, (2012) and Kingsley, Kobina, Maxwell and Linda, (2014) have shown that many parents do not have time for their children believe that school could offer the children total experiences that can make them survived without being mindful of the exposure and individual differences that exist among the students, influence of mass media, as well as group peers. Sex education teaches young ones about sexual intimacy that enlightens them on their reproductive system, birth control as well as sexually transmitted diseases. It also exposes them to their gender identity, gender role, family role, body images, sexual expression (what entails and how to time it), intimacy and the marriage relationship (Netsanet, et al., 2012). In sex education relevant and accurate information about sexuality for both boys and girls are provided in the upper basic curricula depending on attitudes of learners towards learning of the concepts. It will be unfair to ignore the fact that some parents are not aware of children level of maturity. Therefore, sex education should be internalized in children lives as they

grow up in a very mature way. This will in long way reduce rate of rape that be devil the society. Some parents feel reluctant to answer their children's question properly thinking that their level of exposure and maturity are not significant. It is not appropriate to pretend as if sex never exists. Some parents are fooling themselves and exposing children to untimely dangerous curiosity (Kingsley, et al, 2014).

The children need to be taught how to cope and handle their own sexual feeling, guide against peer influence, social media, use of drugs and display positive attitudes towards values system. It has been noticed that well informed children about puberty and human sexuality behave better than the uninformed ones (Ogunjimi, 2006). Sex education provides children with better understanding of others' attitudes, relationships, pattern of behavior and nature. A sexuality-oriented child learns to believe in the quality life style, set up a happy marriage as well as becoming responsible family (Laun, 2000).

Many problems confront teachers who are taking sex education topic in the classes. Among these problems is the prominent one of the attitudes of learners towards the topic (Ogunjimi, 2006). Sex education covers areas such as teaching what the menstrual cycle means, so that when students get to the stage, they would not see it as a problem but an issue or stage that leads to maturity. The teenage girls and boys need to understand the basic physiological changes and sexual issues that will enable them to cope and exercise certain level of tolerance and attitudes among their peers so as to avoid the risk involved in sex outside marriage, live a responsible life style and a desirable standard of living that is acceptable in the society.

This type of education should be given to children throughout the school years as it is important in the present society. Raping, sexual harassment, prostitution among others are social problems that could be tackled through education. This type of education is supposed to start at early childhood in the schools, and at home. This would facilitate and enhance learners' understanding of sex education. Researchers such as Monday, et al (2018) discovered that adolescent students held generally positive attitudes towards sexuality education, with female holding more positive attitudes than male counterpart. It is also emphasized that the education provides learners with valuable information that prevent them from the social problem. Sex education is not merely a matter of genital response but emotional motive relationship which carries joy and comfort for those experience it. It is essential for everyone as it important in all aspects of human life. At whatever stage of life; childhood, adolescent, adulthood, or old age, all these require a firm sexual identity and knowledge of the role and responsibilities attached to the social status. It is affirmed that through the learning of Sex education, the individual will be well informed about the functions of sex organs and consequence of irresponsible sexual relationship as this is the period most of the unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases occur. It is also pointed out that parents in particular and the society in general should not create communication gaps between them and the young people. This assists them not to fall victims of unscrupulous characters. Also, through the knowledge of sex education, learners would be equipped with the skills of detecting differences between love and infatuation as well as pedophiles among the elders in the society (Ogunjimi, 2006).

In schools, sex education should begin at least when children are 12 years old in middle basic or at first year in upper basic level. At this level, students begin to ask questions about sex education as they increase in age. Many children begin to questions their parents about sex at ten years when they are about to graduate from middle basic to upper basic classes. It was found that many questions are asked at around age 12. Boys tend to ask a lot of questions at around age 9 and girls at age 9 and 13. The boys and girls are sexually active quite early by 12 years (Hyder & Delamater, 2007).

Small and Luster (1994) stated that age is highly related to the livelihood of an adolescent being sexually active. Studies found out that adolescent endorsed more strongly to the qualities of having a lot of money, being fun, being sexy and being good looking in their descriptions of the opposite sex ideal person. Low self-esteem is associated with early intercourse in girls but not boys while high self-esteem is associated with early sexual activity in males. Hence, attitudes of learners towards learning of sex education is crucial. It is a vita factor that determined the acquisition and internalization of knowledge gain through sex education. Therefore, this assessed attitudes of upper basic students towards learning of sex education in schools.

Many young children such as upper basic students are prone to irresponsible sexual relationship that resulted to transmitted diseases including the deadly disease HIV/AIDs and challenges of teenage pregnancy. Consequentially, the rate of drop-out among secondary school students is not only persistently increasing but social vices such as drugs abuse, prostitution and abortion are also rampant in the society. Studies such as Monday, et al. (2018) and Ogunjimi, (2006) have shown that this happens because of inadequate information about sexual behavior among the students which resulted to peer influence. Many younger people lack adequate information about human sexuality from their parents and elder people who are responsible for their orientation and training. However, some of the elders in the society are paedophiles. Hence, they are prone to such social challenges. Students sometimes get information about sex through their friends or through different sort of social media that mislead and create problems for them. Therefore, upper basic students are incoming adolescent that need adequate information about sexuality. Government has intensified efforts by introducing Sex education into basic education curriculum to enrich students with adequate information about sexuality and other information that enable them to make right decision and be responsible in society. Hence, this study assessed upper basic students' attitudes towards learning of sex education in schools.

The main purpose of this study is to assess the upper basic students' attitude towards learning of sex education in schools in Osun State. Specifically, the study examined: attitude of upper basic school students towards the learning of Sex education, influence of peer group, gender and age on the students' attitude towards the learning of sex education.

Research question

The following research question was answered in the study:

What is the attitude of upper basic students towards learning of Sex education?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female upper basic students towards learning of sex education.
2. There is no significant difference in the attitude of 10 – 13 years old and 14 years and above upper basic students towards learning of sex education

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive type of research design. This is considered appropriate because the study is describing characteristics of the students. The population of this study comprised all the upper basic public-school students that is, 351, 880 in Osun State. The total upper basic public schools in the state is 443. Multistage sampling procedure was employed for study. From each of the senatorial districts in Osun State, simple random sampling was employed in selecting two Local Government Areas. From each of the Local Government Areas, one public upper basic school was selected using simple random sampling technique. To do this, the researcher wrote the names of the upper basic schools in state in on small pieces of papers; they were folded, put in a hat/box and mixed up properly. Then selection was done by using dip-hat method to randomly select six schools from public schools. Simple random sampling technique was used to select twenty-five upper basic students in each of the selected schools in the Local Government Areas making a total of one hundred and fifty (150) upper basic III students on the basis that the students had been taught the topic, Sex education in various subjects at that level while other students in below classes (upper basic I and II) have not be thought the topic.

The instrument that used for this study is self-developed questionnaire titled "Upper Basic Students' Attitude towards Learning of Sex education Questionnaire (UBSALSEQ)". The questionnaire consisted two sections (A and B). Section A was designed to collect information on the demographic data of the respondents; such as gender and age while section B sought information on students' attitude and peer group influence with a modified 4 Likert scaling of Very True of Me (VTM) - 4, True of Me (TM) - 3, Fairly True of Me (FTM) - 2 and Not True of Me (NTM) - 1.

To ensure validity of the instrument the questionnaire was given to two experts in Social Sciences Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin for construct validity. The corrections and suggestions made by the experts were incorporated into final copies of the questionnaire for data collection. To ensure reliability of the instrument, test-retest method was adopted. Students who were not part of the sample of the study were involved. This took place within three weeks interval of the first and second administrations of the instrument. The data collected in the two administrations were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation co-efficient formula at 0.05 level of significance. The value of r got was 0.81. The descriptive statistic of percentage was used to answer the research question while inferential statistics of Chi-square was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the attitude of upper basic students towards learning of Sex education?

To answer research question one, students' responses were summed and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The instrument was on a four-point scale of 1 to 4 with 10 items. The minimum obtainable score is 10 and maximum score of 40. With a cut score of 15 ($40-10/2$), a mean response of 10 to 25 indicated a negative attitude while a mean response of 26 to 40 indicates a positive attitude as shown on Table 1.

Table 1: Percentage on Attitude of Upper Basic Students towards Learning of Sex Education

Attitude to Sex Education	Range	Frequency	Percentage
Negative	10 – 25	16	10.7
Positive	26 - 40	134	88.3
Total		150	100.0

As shown on the Table 1, with a percentage response of 10.7 within the range of 10 to 25, the attitude of upper basic students towards learning of Sex education was negative while a percentage response of 88.3% (134) within the range of 26 to 40, shows that the attitude of upper basic students towards learning of Sex education was positive. This implies that the attitude of upper basic students towards learning of Sex education was positive.

Hypotheses Testing

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female upper basic students towards learning of Sex education.

Table 2: Chi-Square on Attitude of Male and Female Upper Basic Students towards Learning of Sex Education

Gender		Attitude towards Sex edu.		df	Cal.X ²	Sig.	Remark
Male	Count	7	51	58			
	Expected Count	6.2	51.8	58.0			
Female	Count	9	83	92	1	0.195	NS
	Expected Count	9.8	82.2	92.0			
Total	Count	16	134	150			
	Expected Count	16.0	134.0	150.0			

Table 2 showed a chi-square values of 0.195 and a p-value of 0.659, testing at an alpha level of 0.05. Since the p-value of 0.659 is greater than the alpha level of 0.05, therefore, the null hypothesis 1 is retained and this implies that there is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female upper basic students towards the learning of Sex education.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the attitude of 10 – 13 years old and 14 years and above upper basic students towards learning of sex education.

Table 3: Chi-Square on Attitude of Upper Basic Students towards Learning of Sex Education based on Age

Age		Attitude towards Sex edu.			df	Cal.X ²	Sig.	Remark
10-13 years old	Count	13	95	108	1	0.760	0.383	NS
	Expected Count	11.5	96.5	108.0				
14 years & above	Count	3	39	42				
	Expected Count	4.5	37.5	42.0				
Total	Count	16	134	150				
	Expected Count	16.0	134.0	150.0				

Table 3 showed a chi-square value of 0.760 and a p-value of 0.383, testing at an alpha level of 0.05. Since the p-value of 0.760 is greater than the alpha level of 0.05, therefore, the null hypothesis 2 is retained and this implies that there is no significant difference in the attitude of 10 – 13 years old and 14 years and above upper basic students towards the learning of Sex education.

Discussion

Finding of this study revealed that upper basic students have positive attitudes towards learning of sex education. This implied that students pay attention to leaning of sex education so that they could internalise the knowledge gained on the concept. The positive attitude of the students may be as a result of societal values on sexuality and parental social role in checking and regulating their children behavior towards opposite sex. This finding is consistent with that of Netsanet, et al. (2012) who reported that sex education is needful and necessary for our young ones. Being mindful of the exposure given to our young ones in school, in the media among their peers, sex education teaches our young ones about sexual intimacy but also enlightens them on their reproductive system, birth control and sexually transmitted diseases.

Finding of the study showed that there is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female upper basic students towards learning of sex education. Thus, gender has no significant difference in the attitude of students towards learning of sex education that is, both male and female pay attention equally towards learning of sex education. This finding is consistent with finding of Monday et al. (2018) who discovered that adolescent students held generally positive attitudes towards sexuality education, with female holding more positive attitudes than male counterpart.

In this study, finding revealed that there is no significance difference in the attitude of 10 – 13 years old and 14 years and above upper basic students towards the learning of Sex education. This implied that students of different age groups display positive attitude towards learning of sex education. This finding is consistent with finding of Hyder and Delamater (1997) who reported that many children begin to questions their parents about sex at ten years when they are about to graduate from middle basic to upper basic classes. It was found that many questions are asked at around age 12. Boys tend to ask a lot of question at around age 9 and girls at age 9 and 13. This finding is inconsistent with finding of Small and Luster (1994) who discovered age is highly related to the livelihood of an adolescent being sexually active.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that majority of students have positive attitude towards learning of Sex education. There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female upper basic students towards learning of sex education. There is also no significant difference in the attitude of 10 – 13 years old and 14 years and above upper basic students towards the learning of Sex education. Gender and age of the students do not significantly influence upper basic students' attitude towards the learning of sex education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Students should internalize the knowledge gained through sex education class to improve their well-being.
2. Social Studies and other related disciplined teachers should take the sex education as important and very sensitive concept in the classroom.
3. Students should be given equal opportunities in the teaching and learning processes irrespective of their gender and age as these characteristics do not influence students' attitude.

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