

IMPACT OF RELIGION ON SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE OF SEX EDUCATION IN EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of religion on secondary school students' knowledge of sex education in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study made up of all Senior Secondary School Students. Three hundred secondary school students were randomly selected from Ekiti State secondary schools which constituted the sample for this study. The questionnaire designed by the researcher tagged 'Questionnaire on the Impact of Religion on Students' Knowledge of Sex Education' validated by experts in Social Studies. The instrument was subjected to reliability test. Data obtained from the test re-test was subjected to Cronbach Alpha yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.77. The findings of this study revealed that, secondary school students in Ekiti State had good perception and high knowledge of sex education. It was also found that religion had significant impact on students' knowledge of sex education. It was therefore recommended that religious leaders should approve the inculcation of sex education into the school age children during their services at worship centres.

Keywords: Impact, Religion, Knowledge, Secondary School Students, Sex Education

Introduction

Sexuality, which includes sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy, and reproduction, is a fundamental component of being human, according to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2016). Thoughts, imaginations, desires, attitudes, values, behaviour, practices, and relationships are all ways that sexuality is experienced and expressed. All these aspects can be a part of sexuality, but not all of them are constantly felt or shown. Factors including biology, psychology, society, politics, economy, ethics, law, history, religion, and

spirituality all interact to shape sexuality (WHO, 2010). According to Akanle (2007), sexuality education includes teaching about sexual orientation, values, family planning, reproduction, body image, sexual pleasure, decision-making, communication, dating, relationships, STDs and how to prevent them, and control techniques. Bucher and Lewis (2002) opined that an individual with a sound education on sexuality is more likely to impact positively of live as he/she is alive to his responsibilities of reducing the occurrence and spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDS).

The number of teenage pregnancies appears to be at alarming rate, perhaps due to a number of factors that are thought to be the causes, such as the adolescent's curiosity about what sex is like, peer pressure, and media exposure. The effects, on the other hand, include but not limited to dropping out of school, poor child care, and health issues among others (Effiom & Stella, 2019).

Action Health Inc. (AHI), (2003) asserted that the interactive nature of the subject of sexuality is content ranges from human growth and development, relationships, life skills, sexual attitude and behaviour, sexual health, society and culture. Also, Giddens (2001) said that the development of right attitudes about sexuality is necessary for effective control of emotions.

Out of curiosity, many teenagers have turned to confiding in their friends and schoolmates, who frequently deceive them knowingly or unknowingly, because the family, which is the primary agent of socialisation and where sex education ought to be taught, does not seem to help the adolescents in this regard. This is because sexuality-related issues are frequently not discussed with them due to the belief that keeping them in the dark about their sexuality will prevent them from engaging in immoral behaviour (Abdu, 2006). Also, Effiom and Stella (2019) list a number of contributing variables, such as the lack of parental supervision and advice, teenagers' misunderstanding of sex-related issues, financial difficulty, cultural and religious views, sexual assault, and many more.

There have been several debates and misunderstandings around the idea of sex education and its implementation in junior secondary schools among educators, parents, religious bodies, the general public,

and students. Every child and teenager was supposed to receive sex education from their immediate family in the past, but due to modernization, western civilization, and the breakdown of family life, this practice appears to have been undermined. As a result, the youth are now at the mercy of the larger society and other socialising agents, who might not provide them with accurate information that can help them make the transition from childhood to adulthood. Oganwu (2003) in his study shows that fears should be reduced through confidence, and confidence is gained through knowledge and relevant impressions. According to Bucher and Lewis (2002) a proper sexuality education ensures that the brain is turned in such a way that it can exert self-control when they have urge for sex, they need proper education to forestall any hasty action that may lead to regret

The influence of religion on teenage sexuality is one aspect that seems not to have received enough consideration. In Nigeria, there seems to be little attempt to confirm the underlying mechanism via which religion influences sexual activity, despite the fact that numerous researches have demonstrated a correlation between teenage sexual behaviour and religious devotion (Lehrer, 2004). The degree of devotion to religious institutions may be a more significant factor in determining sex education. Religion tends to provide people with a feeling of purpose in life, which encourages thoughtful decision-making. By sharing their beliefs and practices, religious organisations aid in the moral and spiritual growth of youth. Through sex and abstinence education and parent-child communication, the majority of faith-based organisations specifically address the problem of teenage

sexuality within the framework of faith (Odimegwu, 2005). Since many people derive their moral guidelines from religious ideals, group teachings are likely to influence how people create their attitudes, values, and decisions.

Greenberg and Brussels (2000) stated that religion and spiritual beliefs influence feelings about morality, sexual behaviour, pre-marital sexual behaviour, adultery, divorce, contraception and abortion. Some of the positive impact of religion on sexuality have been said to include assertiveness, postponement of age of first sexual experience, diminished pre and post-marital sexual permissiveness, responsible relationship in marriage and parenthood. According to Babalola (2016) pointed out that parents should train up their children in Godly way so that when they grow up they will not depart from it. Religion was believed to have the capability to guide students against various kinds of immorality because of the fear of God would have been inculcated in them. The rule governing the knowledge of right and wrong that a child must acquire exist not just for the family but for the society. Babalola (2016) stated further that the spiritual and moral deprivation in the society be changed and improved by fearing God. She also encourages moral instructions and earnest appeal in churches, mosques and in community gatherings to assist in the moral development of the youths.

Statement of the Problem

Countless adolescent girls from Nigeria undoubtedly wander the streets of urban areas, willing to pose as attractive women for different males in exchange for money. These premarital affairs sometimes lead to deadly abortions, sexually transmitted infections, and undesired pregnancies.

Primarily, victims are teenagers from secondary schools located all around the nation. There seems to be insufficient sex education to blame for this unpleasant circumstance. Many parents tend to oppose teaching their children sex education in schools, perhaps because of the disparities in exposures and religious beliefs. Some even hold the opinion that the immoral actions in the society today are a direct result of the things that students expose to, creating a false impression of what is either acceptable or not acceptable.

Sex issues are becoming alarming and this necessitates immediate action because moral principles and ethical orientation of the people are declining. While the government of Nigeria has formed a number of bodies to further ethical orientation, sex education has been explored in many ways by various bodies and scholars in Nigeria. All these initiatives, nevertheless, do not appear to be enough to address deplorable sexual problems, the society is still engulfed in filthy, immoral developments, and schools are quickly turning into breeding grounds for immoral and shameful sexual activity. It is on the foregoing premise that the researcher examined the impact of religion on secondary school students' knowledge of sex education in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the impact of religion on secondary school students' knowledge of sex education. It also examined the secondary school students' level of knowledge of sex education.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the level of secondary school students' knowledge of sex education in Ekiti State?
2. What is secondary school students' perception of sex education in Ekiti State?
3. What is the perceived impact of religion on secondary school students' knowledge of sex education in Ekiti State?

Methodology

A descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted for the study. The researcher used the descriptive survey design to obtain the data on the impact of religion on secondary school students' knowledge of sex education. The population of the study comprised all Senior Secondary School students across the 16 LGAs in Ekiti State. The sample for the study consisted of 300 students who were selected through multistage sampling procedure. The first stage involved the use of simple random sampling technique to select one LGA in each of the three senatorial districts in Ekiti State. At the second stage, simple random sampling technique was used to select five schools from each LGA, while the third stage involved the selection of 20 Senior Secondary School students using simple random sampling technique.

The questionnaire designed by the researcher tagged 'Questionnaire on the Impact of Religion on Students' Knowledge of Sex Education' was used to collect relevant data for this study. The questionnaire consisted of three

sections; A, B and section C. Section A elicited personal data of the respondents while section B consisted of items that measured respondents' knowledge of sex education as well as the impact of religion on respondents' knowledge. Section C was made up of five items that elicited information on respondents' perception of sex education. The items in sections B and C were worded on 2-point rating scale of Agree (A) and Disagree (D). The face and content validity of the instrument used in this research were ascertained by Social Studies experts through proper scrutiny and necessary amendments. The reliability of the instrument was established through a trial test. The instrument was administered on 20 respondents not used in this study. The data obtained from this trial test were thereafter subjected to Cronbach reliability testing where a reliability coefficient of 0.77 was obtained. The coefficient was adjudged to be high enough for the study. The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to the respondents with the help of one trained research assistant in each of the senatorial districts. Items which needed clarification were explained to the respondents. The data collected were analysed using frequency table and simple percentage scores.

Results

Research Question 1: What is secondary school students' perceptions of sex education in Ekiti State?

Table 1: Frequency Count and Percentage of the Secondary School Students Perception of Sex Education

<i>Items</i>	<i>A</i>		<i>D</i>		<i>Remarks</i>
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	
Sex education is an important aspect of one's life	235	78.3	65	21.7	<i>Positive</i>
Sex education is not a waste of time	268	89.3	32	10.7	<i>Positive</i>
Sex education helps students to make informed decision about sexual behaviour	282	94.0	18	6.0	<i>Positive</i>

Discussing sexualities with my parents is what I cherish 268 89.3 32 10.7 *Positive*

I heard about sex education through the media 217 72.3 83 27.7 *Positive*

Table 1 shows that 94% of the respondents agreed that sex education helps students to make informed decision about sexual behaviour. Also, 89.3% of the respondents agreed that sex education is not a waste of time. In addition, 89.3% of the respondents agreed to cherish discussing sexualities with their parents. 78.3% of the respondents agreed that sex education is an important aspect of one's life.

Finally, 72.3% of the respondents agreed to have heard sex related issues through the social media. By implication, secondary school students' perceptions of sex education in Ekiti State is positive.

Research Question 2: What is the level of secondary school students' knowledge of sex education in Ekiti State?

Table 2: Frequency Count and Percentage of the Secondary School Students Knowledge of Sex Education

<i>Items</i>	<i>SA</i>		<i>D</i>		<i>Remark</i>
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	
Only girls are sexually abused	285	95.0	15	5.0	<i>High</i>
Virginity is only matter for girls	273	91.0	27	9.0	<i>High</i>
There is a risk of pregnancy if the family planning method is not adopted	246	82.0	54	18.0	<i>High</i>
Unplanned pregnancies cause abortion	276	92.0	24	8.0	<i>High</i>
Sexual Infection is transmissible from one partner to another	270	90.0	30	10.0	<i>High</i>

Table 2 reveals that 95% of the respondents agree that only girls are sexually abused while 5% disagree, 92% of the respondents agree that unplanned pregnancies cause abortion while 8% disagree. 91% of the respondents agree that virginity is only matter for girls while 9% disagree, 90% of the respondents agree that sexual infection is transmissible from one partner to another while 10% disagree. Finally, 82% of the

respondents agree that there is a risk of pregnancy if the family planning method is not adopted while 18% disagree. Therefore, the respondents agreed that the students' knowledge of sex education is high.

Research Question 3: What is the impact of religion on secondary school students' knowledge of sex education in Ekiti State?

Table 3: Frequency Count and Percentage of the perceived impact of religion on secondary school students' knowledge of sex education in Ekiti State

Items	SA		A		D		SD		Decision
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Religion affects the sexual lifestyles of students	120	40	99	33	63	21	18	6	High
Religious values are the source of moral proscriptions for many individuals	78	26	63	21	108	36	51	17	Low
The teachings of the churches are likely to play a role in the formation of individual attitudes, values and decision	153	51	75	25	45	15	27	9	High
The Christian religious groups have strong opposition against premarital sex	87	29	72	24	99	33	42	14	High
Students with no religious affiliation would be most likely to accept and engage in premarital intercourse	168	56	102	34	18	6	16	4	High

Table 3 shows that 90% of the respondents agree that Students with no religious affiliation would be most likely to accept and engage in premarital intercourse while 10% disagree. 76% of the respondents agree that the teachings of the churches are likely to play a role in the formation of individual attitudes, values and decision while 24% disagree, 53% of the respondents agree that the Christian religious groups have strong opposition against premarital sex while 47% disagree. 73% of the respondents agree that religion affects the sexual lifestyles of students while 27% disagree. Finally, 47% of the respondents agree that Religious values are the source of moral proscriptions for many individuals while 53% disagree, This implies that the respondents agreed that religion had impact on students' knowledge and sex education.

Discussion

The result in table 1 revealed that 93% of the respondents agreed that the students had high knowledge of sex education. The findings is in line

with Action Health Inc (AHI), (2003) the interactive nature of the subject of sexuality is content ranges from human growth and development, relationships, life skills, sexual attitude and behavior, sexual health, society and culture. Also, supported by Giddens (2001) the development of right attitudes about sexuality is necessary for effective control of emotions.

The result in table 2 showed that 90% of the respondents agreed that the students had knowledge of sex education. The findings is in agreement with Oganwu (2003) the result shows that fears should be reduced through confidence, and confidence is gained through knowledge and relevant impressions. According to Bucher and Lewis (2002) a proper sexuality education ensures that the brain is turned in such a way that it can exert self-control when they have urge for sex, they need proper education to forestall any hasty action that may lead to regret.

The result in table 3 revealed that 67.8% of the respondents agreed that religion has great impact on the

student's knowledge and attitude towards sex education. The finding is in accordance with Bucher and Lewis (2002) An individual with a sound education on sexuality is more likely to impact positively of live as he/she is alive to his responsibilities of reducing the occurrence and spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDS).

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study it could be concluded that secondary school students had good perception and high knowledge of sex education. It could also be concluded that religion had significant impact on students' knowledge of sex education.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study:

1. It is recommended that religious leaders should encourage the inculcation of sex education into the younger ones.
2. Parents, teachers as well as administrators should be give adequate information on sex education to both public and private secondary school students to assist them to develop right attitude towards sex education
3. Students should be well informed through media so that incidences of unhealthy sexual exploration and teenage pregnancy would be reduced.

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