



Knowledge Towards Sex Education Among Secondary School Biology Students in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the knowledge towards sex education among secondary school Biology students in Ekiti State. Two research questions guided the study. The population of the study comprised all the 24,285 biology students in public secondary schools. The researchers used simple random sampling to select one hundred and twenty (120) students made up of (50) males and (70) females biology students who participated as sample which were selected from six (6) senior secondary schools. A total of one hundred and twenty (120) copies of questionnaires were distributed but only one hundred and nineteen (119) were fully completed and returned. The instrument was validated by experts. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient of 0.85 was obtained, thus showing that the instrument was reliable. A validated questionnaire was used for data collection. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Findings revealed that sex education helps students make informed decision about sex behavior and that unwanted pregnancy is a result of premarital sex. The study also found that any students who talked about sex are not a corrupt child and that sex education is not given enough time and emphasis in school. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that curriculum planners should include sex education as a subject in secondary education for adolescents.

Keywords: Science, Knowledge, Sex, Sex Education

Introduction

Many educational institutions and most parents choose to keep mute on the topic of sex education (Wright 2016). Educating young people about sexuality in a rational and scientific way is a relatively new and potentially sexual field. It is not only people's actual sexual thoughts that are impacted by religious and cultural taboos, but also the language we use to talk about sexuality. Schools, parents, government and non-government organisations, volunteers, educators, counsellors, health professionals, game masters, home economics instructors, and competent peer groups all have a role to play in providing sexuality education to students (Sunday & Umeh, 2014).

Sexual emotions are not new to the adolescent but because of the taboo on sexual matters, the adolescent is not allowed to express his or her sexual desires as he or she would love to do, this is very important because adolescent are keenly aware of the changes in their bodies which are at once a source of pride to them (Alimi, 2022).

Biology as a subject has sufficient capacity and plays pivotal role on humanity and the world in general. Biology is one of the core science subject taught in Nigerian senior secondary schools and all over the world which is of choice among the students (Musa, Olayinka & Ejimonu, 2022). Biology is also concerned with the structures, functions, development, origin, evolution, distribution, interrelationships, and adaptations of living creatures, among other aspects of their existence (Falebita & Olayinka, 2022). It is a practical science with several real-world applications. Biology has a special place in the secondary school science curriculum because of the breadth and depth of topics it covers, including evolution, structure, function, growth, distribution, and taxonomy of living things (Olayinka and Ayanda, 2019)

Sex is any sexual physical contact between a man and a woman that may lead to sexual behaviour i.e., mating (Achilla, 2012). Salami (2015) defines sex education as the process of gaining accurate knowledge

and adopting positive perspectives about sexuality, sex, couples and intimate relationships. Sex education is a well crafted curriculum that teaches young people and adolescents about sexuality so that they may become contributing members of society (Sule et al., 2015). Sex education is a vital component of the existence of all humans, and practically all individuals, including children and most crucially the secondary school students, ought to know about sex education (Kayang, Jatau, and Kolawole, 2015). Though every sex has sexual feelings, attitudes, and beliefs, the experiences of adolescents with sexuality are distinct because they are processed through an intensely personal perspective that draws from private, personal experience, public, and social sources in most Africa education, especially in Nigeria.

Historically, every child and teenager would get a sex education from their adolescents or guardians. However, modernity, western culture, and the breakdown of the family have all contributed to a decline in this practise. This leaves young people vulnerable to the manipulations of adults and other socialising agents throughout the difficult period of transition from childhood to adulthood (Ameh, 2015).

Sex education is education on all matters pertaining to sexuality, including but not limited to: family planning, reproduction, body image, sexual orientation, sexual pleasure, values, decision making, communication, dating, relationships, STD/HIV prevention, and contraceptive option. Both formal and informal settings are appropriate for imparting sexuality education. Conversations with parents, friends, or religious leaders, as well as exposure to the media, all fall under the category of "informal methods." This information might also be disseminated through sex columnists, sex education websites, and self-help writers. When institutions like schools and hospitals give such instruction, we call it "formal sex education." It has the potential to make up a whole year of study in the secondary school biology curriculum. As the AIDS pandemic has spread, there has been a renewed emphasis on providing sex education for Africans. Through collaboration with the World Health Organization and other international NGOs, most governments in this area have launched AIDS education programmes.

Sexuality education is a strategy for guiding young people into adulthood free of sex-related problems, and it involves instructing them on all aspects of human sexuality and the sex and purpose of being sexual. Thoughts, imaginations, wants, beliefs,

attitudes, values, actions, and relationships are all places where sex is experienced and expressed. Sex encompasses all of these elements, although not all of them are experienced or expressed simultaneously. When several elements, including biology, psychology, society, economics, politics, ethics, law, history, sex, and spirituality, intersect, they may have a profound impact on sexual behaviour (World Health Organization, 2016). Sexuality education within a church is still an uncomfortable topic that is only mention in passing (Alimi, 2022).

According to the theory put up by Nakpodia (2012), many adolescents, both male and female, struggle to adapt to their sexually maturing impulses and needs because of the taboos that their societies place on sexual relationships before to marriage. Adolescent males and girls need an introduction to numerous sex education themes. They should know enough about venereal illnesses to avoid spreading them, as well as the process of human reproduction and other aspects of sexual behavior. Adolescents have a lot of questions about sex and sexuality because of the changes occurring in their bodies at this time, and there is often no one who can give them an adequate response. Diverse viewpoints exist on the topic of sex education. The term is mistakenly used to refer to education provided to a young child on how to engage in sexual activity. This runs counter to the idea of teaching kids about the biological and anatomical differences between boys and girls, as well as the knowledge of a healthy, sexual relationship to a child's development, and the fact that education should include teaching kids about family child and sexuality (Abdullahi, 2013).

Most Nigerian culture considers sexuality education as no go area and most of the time they avoid sexuality education and consider it as a taboo to discuss. There are cultural environments where children's knowledge on sexuality is regarded as taboo and these cultural and traditional norms are so strong (Salami, 2015). In certain cultures, it is considered impolite to ask or answer questions about sex. As the primary goal of sex education is to equip the individual with the knowledge and concept that will enable them to make informed and responsible decision about sexual behaviour at all stages. Families, institutions, and school groups are all throwing fingers at one another on how to handle the sex of adolescents (Collins, 2018).

The schools may provide education on sexual development and sexual practices for students, especially as part of affective domain (non-formal) of

curriculum. The students are exposed to varied environmental influences that could hamper positive sexual attitudes. These exist and affect adolescent of the society of which senior secondary school students are prominent. One of the best ways to combat unsavoury social phenomena like prostitution, promiscuity, unwanted pregnancies, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in today's sex is via comprehensive sexuality education in secondary schools (Iwu et al, 2011). Lack of sex education leads many adolescents to have sexual relationships, which may have negative consequences for their personal and social lives and can even lead to the spread of diseases like AIDS (AIDS). Adolescents with these diseases may become carriers or die prematurely. Vesico Vaginal Fistulae (V.V.F.) may develop in adolescent females as a consequence of unchecked sexual activity (Abdullahi, 2013). It is generally acknowledged that young people have a right to sex education since it may help them avoid dangerous situations including sexual assault, exploitation, unwanted pregnancies, and STDs like HIV/AIDS. A large percentage of today's young people feel awkward when the topic of sex comes up in conversation. Young people have a right to a progressive exposure to appropriate and responsible education on thoughts about sex education, making it especially important to begin sex training early in life. This study intends to investigate the knowledge towards sex education among secondary school biology students' in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What is the knowledge of biology students about sex education offered to male and female students?
2. What are the challenges the biology students faced in assessing information on sex education?

Methods

The study adopted non- experimental design of survey research type. The population of the study comprised all the 24,285 biology students in Ekiti State public senior secondary schools. The researchers used simple random sampling to select one hundred and twenty (120) students made up of (50) males and (70) females biology students who participated as sample which were selected from six (6) senior secondary schools in Ekiti State. A total of one hundred and twenty (120) copies of questionnaires were distributed but only one hundred and nineteen (119) were fully completed and returned which was found to be valid for the analysis.

The instrument used for data collection is a questionnaire named knowledge of secondary school students towards sex education, challenges biology students face in assessing information on sex education. The questionnaire had three sections A, B and C. Section A is made up of the personal data of the students which include: gender and age while section B and C were a four –point rating scale. Section B sought relevant information on the knowledge of secondary school students towards sex education. Also, section C obtained information on the challenges biology students face in assessing information on sex education.

The instrument was subjected to face and content validity using three experts from the department of Science Education and Test and Measurement. Twenty students that is not part of the sample responded to the items and the researcher retrieved the copies of the instrument. After two weeks, the same instrument was re-administered to the same 20 students and retrieved after their responses. The two scores were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient of 0.85 was obtained, thus showing that the instrument was reliable. The questionnaire was administered on the students by the researchers. The data collected were coded and analyzed using mean and standard deviation.

Results

Table 1

Responses on the knowledge of biology students about sex education

SN	ITEM	N	SA	A	D	SD	X	S.D	Decision
1	Sex education helps students make informed decision about sex behaviour	119	43 (36.1%)	59 (49.6%)	12 (10.1%)	5 (4.2%)	3.18	0.78	Agreed
2	Unwanted pregnancy is a result of premarital sex	119	58 (48.7%)	46 (38.7%)	8 (6.7%)	7 (5.9%)	3.30	0.84	Agreed
3	It is possible for a student to keep her virginity till marriage	119	67 (56.3%)	42 (35.3%)	5 (4.2%)	5 (4.2%)	3.44	0.77	Agreed
4	Sex education emphasis on puberty stage of students	119	44 (37.0%)	53 (44.5%)	8 (6.7%)	14 (11.8%)	3.07	0.95	Agreed
5	Adolescent's premarital sex activities are increasing in the country.	119	41 (34.5%)	52 (43.7%)	12 (10.1%)	14 (11.8%)	3.01	0.96	Agreed
6	Sex education is designed to assist people in their social and moral development	119	47 (39.5%)	50 (42.0%)	11 (9.2%)	11 (9.2%)	3.12	0.92	Agreed
Grand mean 3.19									

Table 1 shows respondents' responses on knowledge of biology students about sex education. For item 1, 43 (36.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 59 (49.6%) agreed, 12 (10.1%) disagreed, and 5 (4.2%) strongly disagreed. The mean and standard deviation of the responses are 3.18 and 0.78 respectively. With the cutoff point pegged at 2.5, this implies that sex education helps students make informed decision about sex behaviour. For item 2, 58 (48.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 46 (38.7%) agreed, 8 (6.7%) disagreed, and 7 (5.9%) strongly disagreed. The mean and standard deviation of the responses are 3.30 and 0.84 respectively. This is also an indication that unwanted pregnancy is a result of premarital sex. For

item 3, 67 (56.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 42 (35.3%) agreed, 5 (4.2%) disagreed, and 5 (4.2%) strongly disagreed. The mean and standard deviation of the responses are 3.44 and 0.77 respectively. This is also an indication that it is possible for a student to keep her virginity till marriage. For item 4, 44 (37.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 53 (44.5%) agreed, 8 (6.7%) disagreed, and 14 (11.8%) strongly disagreed. The mean and standard deviation of the responses are 3.07 and 0.95 respectively. This is also an indication that sex education emphasis on puberty stage of students. For item 5, 41 (34.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 52 (43.7%) agreed, 12 (10.1%) disagreed, and 14 (11.8%) strongly disagreed. The

mean and standard deviation of the responses are 3.01 and 0.96 respectively. This is also an indication that adolescent's premarital sex activities are increasing in the country. For item 6, 47 (39.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 50 (42.0%) agreed, 11 (9.2%) disagreed, and 11 (9.2%) strongly disagreed. The mean and standard deviation of the responses are 3.12 and

0.92 respectively. This is also an indication that sex education is designed to assist people in their social and moral development. All the items were agreed on. With the grand mean of 3.19 and a cutoff point of 2.5, there is an indication that biology students have adequate knowledge of sex education.

Table 2

Responses on the challenges faced in assessing information on sex education from biology students

SN	ITEM	N	SA	A	D	SD	X	S.D	Decision
7	Any student who talked about sex is a corrupt child	119	31 (26.1%)	26 (21.8%)	28 (23.5%)	34 (28.6%)	2.45	1.16	Disagreed
8	Sex education is not given enough time in school	119	33 (27.7%)	52 (43.7%)	24 (20.2%)	10 (8.4%)	2.91	0.90	Agreed
9	Sex education is not given enough emphasis in school	119	41 (34.5%)	51 (42.9%)	17 (14.3%)	10 (8.4%)	3.03	0.91	Agreed
10	Cultural believe does not permits open discussion on sex-related matters	119	29 (24.4%)	46 (38.7%)	29 (24.4%)	15 (12.6%)	2.75	0.98	Agreed
11	Non-inclusion of sex education in school	119	24 (20.2%)	44 (37.0%)	30 (52.2%)	21 (17.6%)	2.60	1.00	Agreed
Grand mean = 2.75									

Table 2 shows respondents' responses on challenges faced by biology students in assessing information on sex education. For item 7, 31 (26.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 26 (21.8%) agreed, 28 (23.5%) disagreed, and 34 (28.6%) strongly disagreed. The mean and standard deviation of the responses are 2.45 and 1.16 respectively. With the cutoff point pegged at 2.5, this implies that any student who talked about sex is not a corrupt child. For item 8, 33 (27.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 52 (43.7%) agreed, 24 (20.2%) disagreed, and 10 (8.4%) strongly disagreed. The mean and standard deviation of the responses are 2.91 and 0.90 respectively. This is also an indication that sex education is not given enough time in school. For item 9, 41 (34.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 51 (42.9%) agreed, 17 (14.3%) disagreed, and 10 (8.4%) strongly disagreed. The mean and standard

deviation of the responses are 3.03 and 0.91 respectively. This is also an indication that sex education is not given enough emphasis in school. For item 10, 29 (24.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 46 (38.7%) agreed, 29 (24.4%) disagreed, and 15 (12.6%) strongly disagreed. The mean and standard deviation of the responses are 2.75 and 0.98 respectively. This is also an indication that cultural believe does not permits open discussion on sex-related matters. For item 11, 24 (20.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 44 (37.0%) agreed, 30 (52.2%) disagreed, and 21 (17.6%) strongly disagreed. The mean and standard deviation of the responses are 2.60 and 1.00 respectively. This is also an indication that non-inclusion of sex education in school. One of the items was disagreed on while the remaining four items agreed on. With the grand mean of 2.75 and a cutoff



point of 2.5, there is an indication that there are notable challenges faced by biology students in assessing information on sex education.

Discussion

The study reveals for its finding that biology students have adequate knowledge of sex education that sex education helps students make informed decision about sex behavior and unwanted pregnancy is a result of premarital sex and that adolescent's premarital sex activities are increasing in the country. This knowledge could be sourced by the teacher from the biology secondary school curriculum in order to present the correct and adequate information to the students. This finding concurs with Miller, et al 2012 and Alimi, (2022) who found that adolescents are fortified with information on sex education that could guide them through the journey of life.

The study also revealed that there are notable challenges faced by biology students in assessing information on sex education most especially sex education is not given enough time and emphasis in schools. The challenges vary from person to persons, this could be traced to religious belief, custom, parental background among others. This is in support of the finding of Salami (2015) and Alimi (2022) who identified cultural factor and religious factor as the major challenges confronting sex education in schools.

Conclusion

On the basis of the findings of this study, it is concluded that information provided in school provides the students with adequate knowledge of sex education. There are notable challenges faced by biology students in assessing information on sex education. There is difference in the challenges the biology students faced in assessing information on sex education in Ekiti State.

Recommendations

Sequel to the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

1. Curriculum planners should include sex education as a subject in secondary education for adolescents.
2. Government and school administrator should make and encourage policies that would provide students with sex education in secondary school
3. Government and school administrator should provide facilities that would make sex

education compulsory and fascinating for all adolescent students in secondary school.

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