

A SURVEY OF THE PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS ON THE STUDY OF SEX EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES IN DEKINA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KOGI STATE

Omale Ameh

Department of Social Science Education,
Faculty of Education,
Kogi State University, Anyigba.

ABSTRACT: *This study investigated into Junior Secondary School Social Studies Students perception on the study of sex education in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State. Two research questions were raised to guide the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted of all social studies students in 35 public and 6 registered private Junior Secondary Schools in Dekina LGA. Random sampling was used in selecting 497 students from the 1351 JSS iii Social Studies students from 16 sampled schools using purposive and proportional stratified sampling. The instrument for the study was a questionnaire which was designed by the researcher and validated by experts with a reliability coefficient of 0.98 before its administration. Based on the data obtained and analyzed using sampled mean, standard deviation and percentage, the study indicated that the students have positive perception and attitude towards sex education, and that the best person that they can discuss sex related issues with is their teacher. It was recommended among others that: (i) sex education teachers should teach comprehensive sex education without any element of prejudice to any aspect of the content, (ii) teachers should strive to create a friendly atmosphere with the students so that they can be properly guided on sex related issues.*

KEYWORDS: Perception Of Students, Sex Education, Secondary School Social Studies, Dekina Local Government, Kogi State

INTRODUCTION

The concept of sex education and its introduction in junior secondary schools has witnessed much controversies and misconception by many teachers, parents, the society and students. The concept of sex education which is sometimes called sexuality education or sex and relationship education attracts a plethora of definitions from different people. According to Frimpong (2010), sex education is “the systematic attempt to promote the healthy awareness in the individual on matters of his/her sexual development, functioning, behavior and attitudes through direct teaching”. Similarly, the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) in Njoku (2008), sees sex education as “a planned process of education that fosters the acquisition of factual information, the formation of positive attitudes, beliefs and values as well as the development of skills to cope with the biological, psychological, socio-cultural, and spiritual aspects of human sexuality”.

From these definitions, it can be deduced that sex education is a deliberate, planned and organized learning experience in the aspect of human sexuality which is intended to equip young people with the requisite skills and adequate knowledge which will enable them to develop positive attitude on sex related issues as well as to take rational decisions in line with societal expectations. It is important to note that sex education was not just incorporated into social studies for knowledge acquisition but to help young people develop attitudes, values, goals and practices that are based on sound knowledge which will enable them to express their sexual and mating impulses in a manner that is socially and ethically acceptable as well as personally satisfying (Abdu 2006 and Okafor in Bozimo and Ikwumelu, 1999).

The concept of sex education in Nigerian schools is not a new concept in Nigeria. Adepoju (2005) and Abdu (2006) postulated that traditional form of sex education and family life education has been in existence where kinship systems, age grade and coming – of – age ceremonies or initiation ceremonies where the youths were tutored about manhood and womanhood. It was purely biological and cultural, while various methods of contraceptives were just kept at the domain of married people and kept secret. Many young people were kept in the dark as they were not opportuned to be properly educated on family life and sex education because their training was on “dos and don’ts”.

Traditionally, sex education was to be given to every child and adolescents by his/her immediate family but these practice has been eroded by the influence of modernization, western civilization, and collapsing family life; thereby leaving the young ones at the mercy of the wider society and other socializing agents who may not give accurate information that can assist the young ones in their transition to adulthood. This vacuum in the life of adolescents is what the school needed to fill through the teaching of sex education in social studies.

The recognition of the above gap as well as the risk in adolescents reproductive health who are prone to unplanned sex, unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion, sexual coercion, sexual violence, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and even Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) owing to lack of information or misinformation about the implications of their reproductive behavior and health risks especially from under-age sexual practices and other anti-social practices prompted the Federal government of Nigeria through the National Council on Education (NCE) to incorporate sexuality education into the national school curriculum in 1999 (Onwuzobe and Ekanem, 2009). This became necessary in order to prepare adolescents for their adult roles in line with acceptable societal standard, and to also empower young people to have greater control over their sexuality and reproductive life to their own benefit both socially and economically. It is also a means of safeguarding or protecting the youths against the consequences of sexual ignorance as well as preparing them for responsible life (Njoku, 2008).

Since the family which is the primary agent of socialization where sex education ought to be taught seems not to help the adolescents in this regard, as issues that have to do with sexuality is oftentimes not discussed with them, owing to the belief that keeping them in perpetual ignorance about their sexuality will prevent them from immoral behavior (Abdu, 2006), many adolescents have resorted to confiding in their friends and school mates who often mislead them knowingly or

unknowingly (Udemezue, 2011). Apart from their friends, they also source for information from the internet, television, pornographic films and materials which often mislead them and cause more havoc and confusion.

In Nigeria, many studies have been conducted since the introduction of family life and sex education into the school curriculum to ascertain its acceptability and people's perception of it. Within the area of study, a study conducted by Omale (2011) revealed that sex education was actually part of the school curriculum, and that the teachers actually teach it even though the aspect of contraception and social skills were not taught in the area. This study is significant in that it intends to unravel the perception of students towards sex education in the area. Since the status of family life and sex education in the area as well as teachers perception about the content of family life and sex education has been researched into, this present study is therefore tailored towards ascertaining the perception of students who are the major beneficiaries of sex education in the area.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was :

1. to ascertain the perception of social studies students on sex education
2. to find out students opinion on the best person to discuss sex related issues with.

Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the perception and of social studies students to sex education?
2. Who is the best person to discuss sex related issues with?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted cross-sectional survey design where data are collected at a particular time from a sample, for the purpose of describing the population represented by the sample at that particular time. (Awotunde and Ugodulunwa, 2004).

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of all the social studies students in 41 registered junior secondary schools located across rural and urban areas of the Local Government Area.

Sampling Technique

The study used random sampling in selecting the schools, while purposive and proportional stratified sampling were used in selecting the respondents for the study. The use of random sampling was to ensure that every member of the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample (Awotunde and Ugodulunwa, 2004).

Sample

A total of 497 students from the 1351 J.S.S. III social studies students in the 16 sampled schools were selected using proportional stratified sampling. The choice of J.S.S. III students was based

on the fact that they have spent more years receiving instruction on sex education in social studies which positioned them to respond appropriately to the instrument than other J.S.S students.

Instrument for Data Collection

A structured questionnaire titled Students Perception on Sex Education Questionnaire (SPSEQ) which was designed by the researcher was used in collecting data for the study. The instrument was divided into two parts. Part A sought information on the school and sex of the respondents while part B consists of items on sex education using a 4 point likert scale of strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (B), and Strongly Disagree (SD) with scoring value of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively for positive items while 1,2,3 and 4 was used for negative statements.

Validity of the Instrument

The research instrument was validated by 5 experts from both Test and Measurement and Social Studies Education Department of University of Jos before its administration.

Reliability of the Instrument

Cronbach's Alpha was used to obtain a reliability coefficient of 0.98 from the pilot test which involved 50 students that possessed similar characteristics with the population of interest.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher administered 500 questionnaire to the respondents out of which 497 (99.4%) questionnaire were duly completed and returned.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected based on research question 1 was analyzed with the use of sample mean and standard deviation. Any item with a mean value of 2.5 and above was regarded as positive perception which is considered acceptable while those items with a mean value below 2.5 were considered to be negative and not accepted. For research question 2, percentage was used in analyzing the items used in answering the research question.

RESULTS

The results of the study are presented in tables based on the two (2) research questions.

Research Question 1: What is the perception of social studies students towards sex education?

Table 1: Students' perception on sex education

S/N	Statement	N	\bar{X}	S	Decision
1.	I have been taught about sex education in social studies lesson.	497	3.06	1.05	Accepted
2.	Social studies teachers are very shy to teach about sex organs to the students.	497	3.1	1.12	Accepted
3.	Any student that talks about sex is a bad child.	497	2.47	1.07	Not Accepted
4.	It is necessary to teach students about the functions of sex organs in social studies lesson.	497	2.98	0.99	Accepted
5.	Students need sex education so that they can grow to become responsible adults.	497	3.07	0.99	Accepted
6.	Learning about family life and sex education will encourage students to have premarital sex.	497	2.61	1.13	Accepted
7.	Students do not like sex education in school because it is against their religion.	497	2.49	1.1	Not Accepted
8.	How to prevent pregnancy should be taught during sex education lesson.	497	3.01	0.91	Accepted
9.	How to have a healthy relationship with the opposite sex should be discussed in sex education lesson.	497	2.91	1.04	Accepted
10.	Students do feel shy to discuss about human reproduction with their parents.	497	2.86	1.07	Accepted

Note: N = Number of Respondents, \bar{X} = Mean, S = Standard Deviation.

The result presented in Table 1 revealed the perception of social studies students towards sex education. The respondents tend to agree with most of the issues raised about their perception towards sex education as evidenced by the mean score above the 2.5 as the decision point which shows positive perception towards sex education except item 3 and 7 with a mean score of 2.47 and 2.49 respectively. This is an indication that the students did not consider any child that discusses about sex as a bad child, and that religion is not a reason why students don't like sex education in school.

Research Question 2: Who is the best person to discuss sex related issues with?

Table 2: Students Responses of the students on the best person to discuss sex related issues with.

	Number of respondents	Percentage %
Parents	166	33.4
Teachers	199	40.04
Friends	74	14.89
Religious leaders	22	4.43
Not sure	36	7.24
Total	497	100%

Source: Researchers Field Work

The response of students in table 2 indicated that 33.4% of the respondents considered their parents as the best person that they can confide in as far as sex related issues are concerned while 40.04% were in favour of their teachers. 14.89% considered their friends as the best persons to discuss sex related issues with, 4.43% were of the view that such issues should be discussed with their religious leaders. However, 7.24% of the respondents indicated that they were not sure of who to discuss sex related issues with.

A close look at the table reveals that most of the respondents hold their teachers in high esteem, and look unto them for proper modeling in their reproductive life.

DISCUSSION

The results obtained question one showed that the students have been introduced to sex education based on the response of the respondents. This is in agreement with a study conducted earlier by Omale (2014), where the teachers indicated that the concept of family life and sex education was part of social studies curriculum of their schools. However, in this study, the students indicated that the teachers that handle the concept are very shy to talk about sex organs when teaching sex education.

Moreover, just like the earlier studies conducted by Ojo and Fasuba (2005), Owolabi et al (2005), and Frimpong, (2010) about the attitude of students towards family life and sex education of which the students indicated their positive disposition towards the teaching of family life and sex education, this present study revealed that the students have good perception towards sex education; as they indicated that such teaching would make them to become responsible adults. They also advocated that how to prevent pregnancy as well as how to have a healthy relationship with the opposite sex should also be discussed in sex education.

Furthermore, just as Frimpong (2010) stated in his study that any child who is so inquisitive to ask questions about sex is morally branded a “bad” child and that talking about sex is considered shameful and that it is a taboo to discuss sex related issues with children in Ghana, this study also indicated that the students do feel shy to discuss about human reproduction with their parents but rated the teacher as the best person to discuss sex related issues with. The onus now lies on social studies teachers that handle sex education to exhibit high level of competence in order to help the learners develop attitude, values, goals and practices that are based on sound knowledge which will enable them to express their sexual and mating impulses in a manner that is socially and ethically acceptable as well as personally satisfying.

CONCLUSION

It has been established from the findings of this study that social studies students in Dekina L.G.A have positive perception towards sex education, and that the best person that they can discuss sex related issue with is their teacher. Social studies teachers are therefore expected to effectively handle the concept of sexuality education with all passion in order to achieve the aim of sex education among adolescents in secondary schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this study, the following are recommended:

1. Sex education teachers should teach comprehensive sex education without any element of prejudice to any aspect of the content.
2. Contraception should be taught in sex education in line with the culture of the society.
3. Since the students are of the opinion that the teacher is the best person to discuss sex related issues with, teachers should strive to create a friendly atmosphere with the students so that they can be properly guided on sex related issues.

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