

A COUNSELLOR'S ASSESSMENT OF PARENTAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS SEX EDUCATION IN THE HOME: A CASE STUDY OF KOGI CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT OF KOGI STATE

BY

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Abstract

The study is a counsellor assessment of parental attitude towards sex education in Kogi Central Senatorial District comprising of five local governments of Adavi, Ajaokuta, Okehi, Okene, and Ogori/Magongo but for the purpose of this research Okene and Ogori/Magongo LGA is sampled. The study consists of six research questions and two hypotheses. The study reveals that parents have positive attitude towards sex education, but 45.5% negative attitude needs to be improved upon, as it reflects their non-significant difference in sex or locations of parents towards sex education. However parents differ slightly in the age for sex education and the contents of sex education. It therefore recommends further education of parents on sex education, improving the curriculum contents of sex education among others are required.

Keyword: Counsellor, Assessment, Parental attitude And sex education

Introduction

Sex education has become a social crisis that newspapers, periodicals, journals and magazines often carry sensational stories of teenage sex escapades, pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases like gonorrhoea, syphilis and herpes (Ogunjimi, 2006). Most recently (relatively) but more dangerous are the reported cases of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV-AIDS) while the reports of expulsion of pregnant students by school authorities were also common (Momoh, 1988). As counsellors, on daily basis socially sexual misconduct is reported. Ogunjimi (2006) citing Akingba (1999) claimed that nearly one million adolescents aged 13-19 years become pregnant in Nigeria and about 100,000 pregnancies occur out of wedlock and are unintended. Although up to date statistics were not available about the situation in Nigeria, there is no doubt that the figure would have doubled. Akingba (1999) submission is that hundreds of Nigeria teenage girls roam about the streets of Nigeria's urban centres offering themselves to various men for economic gains. These sex escapades often result in pregnancies, venereal diseases and at some other times, fatal abortion.

What are the causes of this social phenomenon? Trefor (1975) feels that sexual revolution in its current advanced state is characterized by demands for new forms of sexual freedom from repressive codes and styles of the past. Momoh (1988) was of the opinion that victims are mainly teenagers from the secondary schools which are scattered through the nooks and crannies of the country. But personal experience has shown that even in the College of Education, Polytechnic, and University education the situations are not better. Adeboyega (1986) pointed out that school girls and boys in the cities had been known to commit horrible acts in their bid to get rid of pregnancies. He contended that their activities had always been influenced by what they had seen in television and cinema, phone sets, in the websites of romance and pornographic materials from their parents. This calls for parental attention and other stakeholders.

Statement of the Problem

Ignorance of sex and its associated problems is prevalent in and among secondary and tertiary institution students. The life of students are shattered with the passing of incorrect information among themselves, they get misled by others. Today, the problems resulting from the lack of sex education to our youth are numerous. They are unwanted pregnancies, increase abortion, high incidence of sexually transmitted diseases and high rates of sexual promiscuity. All these have led to inability to concentrate, poor school performance, deterioration of mental health of students, high rate of school dropouts, increase in illiteracy and over population. To the guidance counsellors, the introduction of sex education is proper. However, despite the increasing sexual problems, parents are seem not equip in providing their children with proper knowledge of sex education. Young people regard sex as fun rather than what it really is. They see it as a personal and private affair of the participants, which it is not. They take to themselves as a teacher (which is not good enough) and have been guided by mythologies and misconceptions about sex especially in a typical African setting where sex education is sacrilege and abomination. Young ones are expected to discover accidentally most sex education needs,

whereas, the misinformation, secret, misinterpretation and fables about sex functions lead to dangerous consequences. Therefore, information about sex education from parents will give an insight to people understanding of sex functions to compliment the efforts of the school system. If parents are unable to answer her questions regarding social, rural and sexual attitudes, then they have failed as parents and should not blame their children for failing. As children grow older, their interest in sex increases (Egushi, 2009; Aniebve, 2007). This is the thrust of the counsellor in this study.

Research Questions

1. What is the percentage of parents' attitude towards sex education in Kogi Central Senatorial District?
2. Who among parent should have the main responsibility for educating their children about sex.
3. How do parent feel about discussing sexuality with their children?
4. At what age will parents begin sex education?
5. Is there a difference in the attitude of parents towards sex education based on gender?
6. Is there a difference in parents' attitude towards sex education based on location (rural/urban)?

Hypotheses

- Ho₁: There is no significant difference between male and female parents' attitude towards sex education.
Ho₂: There is no significant difference in attitude of parents based on local (rural and urban).

Literature Review

Sex education is a lifelong process of building a strong foundation for one's sexual health. It includes the course of developing attitudes, belief and values and acquiring information, motivation, skills and critical awareness to enhance one's sexual health and avoid negative sexual consequences. Lee and Peggy (2016) observed that sex education involves more than sexual development and reproductive health; it encompasses interpersonal relationships, affection, intimacy, body image, values and gender roles. Education on sexuality can come from a wide range of sources include home, school, peers, media and religion institutions (Akingba, 1999; Adegboyega, 1986; Momoh, 1988). Of major importance is the sex education that takes place in the home. Parents are a child's first source of sexual health learning. Daily occurrences in the home provide opportunities for discussions on sexuality, making parents the primary sex educators of their children go through each stage of growth and development, parents can provide the vital education and guidance that is needed to make healthy sexual choices (Ogunjimi, 2006). Infants and toddlers learn about sexuality through interactions with their parents talk to them, dress them, cuddle them and play with them. Even if the biological aspects of sexuality are not discussed at this stage, these early interactions are important for setting the stage for future sexual learning (Lee & Peggy, 2006),

Most studies that have been done concerning parents and adolescents' attitudes towards sex education have focused on school-base sexual programming. Several authors have noted that while school-based sex education programs are effective in increasing students' knowledge about sexual topics, they are less effective in influencing students' attitude and behaviours. Instead the home has been cited as the ideal place for sexual education in influencing attitudes, values and behaviour (Brock & Beazley, 1995; Stout & Rivara, 1989). In a study by Werner-Wilson & Fitzhawz (2021), adolescent indicate a desire for more interaction with their parents on sexual health issues and identified their parents as having a significant influence on their sexuality. In the study, both parents and teens agreed that parents should be aware of what was being taught in the school so that after the classes, discussion at home would be easier.

Asekun-Olarimoye, Dairo & Adeomi (2011) conducted a research on parental attitudes and practice of sex education of children in Nigeria. The result shows that a majority of respondents had basic knowledge of sex education and positive attitude towards it. The major barrier to better attitude and practice were the fear and misconception about the effect of sex education on children. Nagpal & Fernandes (2015) examine the attitude of parents towards sex education. The result shows that there is not much of gender variation in the attitude towards sex education. Mahajan & Sherma (2005) in other research shows that parents, teachers hardly play any role in imparting proper information to the youngsters. Finally, Jankoviz, Maletestinic & Striehl (2013) conducted a study on parents' attitudes on sexual education – what and when? The study was conducted in 23

elementary schools in the town Rijeka Croatia. The parents have positive attitude to sex education but they have find some topics inappropriate to be talked about in sex education.

Methodology

The study was the cross-sectional survey carried in two local government areas of Kogi Central Senatorial District of Kogi State, namely: Okene and Ogori/Magongo. The researcher randomly select parents with at least basic education qualifications from various parastatals and agencies such as teachers in primary and secondary, health workers, local government officials and other agencies residing in Okene/Ogori-Magongo; a sample population of five hundred and fifty parents of both male and female from the two local government areas was selected in rural and urban area. The questionnaires have two sections which contained bio-data, knowledge and attitude of the parents towards sex education as well as when they feel sex education should be conducted. Data was collected using self-administered structured questionnaire. Eligible participants were educated mothers and fathers of children between the ages of 3 and 25 are potentially valid respondents in rural and urban location. Twenty (20) students in year three at the Federal College of Education, Okene were trained on how to select and administer the questionnaire to the respondents on a ratio of twelve (12) mothers to eight (8) fathers with ratio 5 to 3 as benchmark. This is because the researcher feels mothers should be more responsible to sex education than fathers. Each 20 respondents had at least two (2) single parents either as fathers or mothers. An age range of respondents was pegged at sixty (60) years.

The population of the study include mothers/fathers from selected two local government areas of Okene and Ogori-Magongo. The choice of target population was informed by the possibility that those categories of working parents will be able to fill the questionnaires correctly i.e. primary/secondary teachers, health workers, local government workers, other parastatals and agencies staff with basic primary education qualifications. Selected parents from the two local governments will be as follows, based on the population of the local governments:

	Okene LGA	Ogori-Magongo LGA
1. Primary/Secondary Teachers	150	90
2. Health Workers	50	50
3. Local Government Workers	60	40
4. Other Agencies	60	50
Total	320	230 Total = 550

A fifteen-item questionnaire on parents' attitude towards sex education was used. The questionnaire was the modified instrument of Maria Stopes International (2000) to accommodate differences in environment and culture. To make it suitable for a questionnaire, the instrument has two sections: Section A elicited personal information in respondents, while Section B measured their attitudes towards sex education in Kogi State Central Senatorial District. The majority of the questions were analysed in percentile answer representation and distribution in a descriptive representation. The independent t-test was used for questions 5 and 6 which were hypotheses and analysed on the attitude of parents based on sex and locations based on t-test. A total of five hundred and fifty questionnaires were properly filled and analysed. The bio data shows parents' age range to be 25-30 years 93 representing 5%, 31-40 years 243 representing 44.18% and 51-60 years respondents 214 representing 38.91%. The sex of respondents showed 251 male representing 45.63% and 299 female representing 54.37%, while the qualifications of represented by non-formal education 30 representing 5.45%, SSCE 110 representing 20%, OND/NCE/Diploma 200 representing 36.37%, first degree or its equivalent 150 representing 27.28% and postgraduate 60 representing 10.90%

Research Question 1: What is the percentage of parents with positive and negative attitude towards sex education in Kogi State Central Senatorial Districts in two LGAs?

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentage showing the attitude of parents towards sex education

Attitude	Frequencies	Percentage
Positive	306	55.5
Negative	244	45.5
Total	550	100

Table 1 above showed that 306 responses which constituted 55.5% of the respondents exhibited positive attitude while 244 responses constituted of 45.5% exhibited negative attitude towards sex education.

Research Question 2: Is there a difference in the attitude of parents towards sex education based on gender?

Table 2: Descriptive statistics showing the mean scores of secondary school students' attitude towards sex education on gender

Sex	N	Mean	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation
Female	299	56.02	0.98	16.17
Male	251	57.00		15.84

Table 2 above showed that the male parents had a mean score of 57.00 with a standard deviation of 16.17 while the female parents had a mean score of 56.02 with standard deviation of 15.84. This showed that the male had the higher mean score than their female counterparts with a mean difference of 0.98. To determine if this difference is significant, an independent sample t-test statistics was used to test hypothesis one as shown below:

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between female and male attitude towards sex education based on gender.

Table 3: Independent sample t-test statistics showing the significant difference between the mean scores of female and male parents' attitude to sex education in Kogi Central Senatorial District

Sex	N	Mean	Mean Diff.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Female	299	26.02	0.98	16.17	548	0.56	Not significant
Male	251	57.00		0.58			

Table 3 showed that the observed difference shown in table 2 is not significant since the calculated sig. value of 0.56 is higher than 0.05 alpha level of significant. The hypothesis that says that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of female and male parents to sex education is therefore retained.

Research Question 2: Is there a difference between the attitudes of parents towards sex education based on location (urban and rural)?

Table 4: Descriptive statistics showing the mean scores of parents' attitude towards sex education based on location (urban and rural).

Sex	N	Mean	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation
Urban	348	56.24	0.42	15.30
Rural	202	56.66		17.20

Table 4 above showed that the urban students had a mean score of 56.24 with a standard deviation of 15.30 while the urban students had a mean score of 56.66 with a standard deviation of 17.20. This showed that the rural parents had the higher mean score than their urban counterparts with a mean difference of 0.42. To determine if this difference is significant, an independent sample t-test statistics was used to test hypothesis two as shown below:

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in parents' attitude towards sex education based on location (urban and rural).

Table 5: Independent sample t-test statistics showing the significant between the mean scores of male and female parents' attitude to sex education based on location.

Location	N	Mean	Mean Diff.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Urban	348	56.24	0.42	0.29	548	0.76	Not significant
Rural	202	56.66					

Table 5 showed that the observed difference shown in table 4 is not significant since the calculated sig. value of 0.76 is higher than 0.05 alpha level of significant. The hypothesis that says there is no significant difference between the mean scores of urban and rural parents' attitude to sex education is therefore retained.

Questions 4 to 6 show positive acceptance to sex education. However, there is variation on when to start sex education. This is area of disparities between rural and urban and between fathers and mothers and percentile levels.

Discussion

The persistent occurrence of sex related crises among youth requires the need for sex education. A review of literature and experiences has shown the need for sex education. The finding shows that 45.5% of the sample have a negative attitude towards sex education. This may be based on rural and gender differences or other variables not assessed. The second finding shows that both males and females (fathers and mothers) have the same attitude towards sex education. The finding shows that there is no significant difference in the attitude of parents based on location – urban and rural people. However, it is assume that children in the rural areas may be closer to their parents in relating sex issues than urban parents who are not always at home most of the time.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it shows there is need to educate parents on the importance of sex education because of 45.5 per cent negative attitude of parents. Educational planners should review the curriculum to give room for would-be parent to know more about sex education before the adolescent age. The old age tradition of sex education is sacrilege with different types of mythology can be eradicated through awareness programme in places of worship, mass media etc. Finally, the study will enable parents to be able to stand up to their responsibility, instead of shying away from it. It will help the parents to be well informed of their role so as to bring up their children with good conduct and upbringing sexually.

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