

Article

Knowledge and Attitude of Students Toward Sex Education in Secondary School Students in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance of Katsina State, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study was designed to investigate the knowledge and attitudes of students toward sex education in secondary schools in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State, Nigeria. The desire to embark on this study was borne out of the realization from observation of the researchers that teachers may be facing a number of stress factors due to the demanding nature of their career. Appropriate research questions and hypotheses were raised to guide this study towards achieving the stated objectives. The descriptive survey research method was used. A total of one thousand, two hundred and twenty-one (1221) questionnaire were administered in nine secondary schools in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance of Katsina State, Nigeria. A pilot test was conducted to determine the reliability of the instrument using the split-half method of reliability with the reliability index of 0.05. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher with the support of two research assistants. Frequency counts, percentage, means scores, t-test statistical techniques were employed in the data analysis. At the end of the analysis, the findings showed that students have positive attitude towards the knowledge of sex education. The attitude of adolescent differ toward the introduction of sex education in secondary schools on the basis of gender of the respondents. There is a significant difference in the attitude of male and female adolescents towards the introduction of sex education in schools. It is therefore recommended among others that the knowledge of sex education should be included into the school curriculum and the need for comprehensive counseling programmes in secondary schools.

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1. Introduction

In the past two decades some continents of the world have seen their peace and social partnership with each other threatened on daily basis by many dangerous catastrophic, disastrous and deadly problems. The problem vary from one continent to the other but sometimes it could be a global one that affect the entire universe. Examples of such problems are terrorism, human trafficking, gender discriminations, floods, earthquakes, militancy, hurricane, plane crash, road crash, draught, HIV/STDS, religious extremism, COVID 19, kidnaping, human trafficking, organ harvesting, banditry among others.

The magnitude effect of many of these problems on human survival and development are enormous and their prevalence rate have been alarming, causing problems to both international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), educationists, industrialists and the entire human race. That which has attracted the

attention of the whole world mostly, is HIV/STDs because of the large numbers of lives that have been lost through the devastating and incurable nature of the disease. Apart from HIV/AIDS disease that is commonly known to people, there are more than 30 other STDs, not known to people. Some cause death, some without cure, some make a woman incapable of even having baby, some cause sexual problems, others make sex impossible or painful (Joe Bebedrier, 2000). Few examples that are mentioned in this study are as follows: gonorrhoea, syphilis, herpes or genital herpes, hepatitis B, human papilloma virus (HPV), pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) etc. Beside other minor sources of contracting these diseases, the major source is through unprotected sexual intercourse or sexual risk taking behaviours in form of one or all these cases, sexual abuse or immoralities, promiscuity, fornication, adultery, homo sexuality and commercial sex work/prostitution.

The efforts of different organizations worldwide to curb/fight to a standstill, the spread of HIV/AIDS infections have been in the increase. For example, the issue of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other related diseases being addressed by the United Nations. The Nigeria government since 1996 has set up different committees or institutions to take charge of the prevention, treatment and care of HIV/AIDS such as HIV/AIDS Emergency Action Plan (HEAP). The presidential committee on AIDS, National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA). Also some notable Nigeria based non-governmental organization like society for family Health Association for reproductive and family Health (AREH) and Action Health Incorporated (AHI) have all initiated, implemented and sponsored various intervention programmes with heavy financial support to promote HIV/STDs free society in Nigeria. This seems not to have produced much desired outcome in Nigeria because studies have shown that in 2003, there were estimated 3,600,000 people living with HIV/AIDS, in 2004, there were cases of 300,000 deaths from AIDS and 2 million AIDS orphans in Nigeria. That at present around 520,000 people are estimated to require ART (anti-retroviral therapy) and more than one million female sex workers with an estimated 30% in some areas of Nigeria with HIV infection rate all in Nigeria alone.

Records have also revealed that youths are more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS infections than adults. Records show further that in Nigeria 60% of all new HIV infections fall between the ages of 15 and 25 years. Reason for this are many as young people are known to be restless, careless, adventurous, and desire to explore the unknown world, through risky sea, fearlessly run through dangerous terrace and ignorantly venture into acts like exhibiting sexual risk taking behaviours.

It is as a result of these foregoing facts that the researchers feel that there is need to design and implement a new educational programme targeting particularly the youth who will later grow to become responsible or otherwise adults in the society. This programme will provide youths with accurate information on sex related issues, by giving them skills to discover the causes and effect of any social and sexual actions taken, to make them informed about taking decisions over their entire life and be able to seek and reduce the risk of potentially negative outcomes from sexual behaviours like unwanted pregnancies and sexual transmitted disease etc.

The teaching and learning of sex education and other sexual related issues has become very much expedient, urgent, imperative and most timely considering the number of youths that have affected the huge resources, the government has expanded on STD/HIV control and how the country economy has been badly affected. Unfortunately sex education is not yet taught in most Nigeria schools despite its approval by National Council on Education since 1999. This lackadaisical practice may hamper the effective teaching and learning of sex concepts in Nigeria. In a nutshell, the positive sexual attitude and practice exhibited by the youths of any society to a large extent depend largely on the knowledge acquired and the level of understanding they have in sex education.

National Teachers Institute (1990) cited by Ipinasanmi (2004) highlight the importance of sex education among the secondary school students and the inclusive of sex

education programme into school curriculum. Also, Anderson (1975) listed six points in support of sex education being taught in school as thus:

- i. To promote a health normal approach to boys and girls relationship.
- ii. To become aware of normal needs and desires of adolescence.
- iii. To become of false standard of behaviours.
- iv. To become (the students) aware of the impossible results of sex drives and emotion.
- v. For the students to develop a wholesome understanding of physical attraction and love.
- vi. To help the youth or the teenagers to develop an attraction or wholesome family relationship.

Dichi (1975) arouse the interest of the public in appreciating the teaching and learning of sex education in Nigeria schools by enumerating the gains each person can benefit:

- i. It makes people to know that materials decision will not be based on physical attraction or emotional dependence alone but a genuine friendship, common interest or appreciation of admirable qualities.
- ii. It helps to prevent to a reasonable extent a lot of mishaps between both partners.

Ogundipe (2004) justified the inclusive of sex education in the school curriculum by identifying the roles of sex education in school programme as follows:

- i. sex education provides adequate information in abstinence, communication skills, the ability to say no to a wrong idea and the strength to cope with the societal pressure and that it make the child to be less vulnerable to sexual abuse and harassment and create a better relationship with their family and the society.
- ii. It assists to drastically reduce the number of teenagers that patronize cyber cafe in search of erotic films.
- iii. It provides the children with the skills and strategies to abstain from sexual immoralities.
- iv. It curbs the growing promiscuity and redirect the energy skill and knowledge of the young generation towards immorality.
- v. It check children from immoralities because of student's curiosity, they ought to be safe guarded from the dangers involved in close intimacy with the opposite sex.
- vi. It seeks both to reduce the risk of potentially negative outcome from sexual behaviours like unwanted pregnancy and infection with STDs and to enhance the quality of relationship.
- vii. It also develops youth ability to make decision over their entire life time from the on-going.

It is important to point out that proper teaching and learning of sex education is essential to enable the students to have adequate knowledge (awareness) and forming positive attitude on sex education and their knowledge in sex education will influence their attitude and practices.

Sex education is important but so many times people are ignorant of this most basic information. The phrase "how come no one told me?" will come up time and time again. This could be after a sex educator has help up on emotional drawing of the female genitalia, talking about the importance of breathing and relaxation during sex, shown a workshop group of vibrator for the first time and told them exactly what to do with it.

Effects of Sex Education

The effect of sex education on sex behaviours has been debated since early proponent attempted to include it in educational curriculum. One of the objectives of education in sexuality is that it would in long way or other lead students to try what they had learnt. The character of this argument has been phrased in a variety of ways although many of the assumptions underlying this approach are tedious, the contention continues to exist.

To offset opponents of sex education in the curriculum who use this contention, proponents of sex education attempt to discount the contention argument. For example, walker identifies a seventh grade life science instructor who believes that unpleasant curiosity about sex is more likely to foster adolescent mistake that would acknowledge about sex, a similar statement was made in the year 1965 report of the world.

Ignorance of sex and its associated problems is prevalent in and among secondary school students. The lives of students are shaped with the passing of incorrect information among themselves. They get misled by others as today, the problems resulting from the lack of sex education to our youth are numerous. They are unwanted pregnancies, increase abortion, 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 out of school children and drop in. Consequently, the educational opportunity for the Nigeria youths is greatly hampered and this possess a great loss to the society. Religious bodies view sex education as premature, dangerous and likely to lead to sexual promiscuity. To behavioural scientist, the introduction of sex education is proper. However, despite the increase in sexual problems, parents and schools are still not providing teenagers with proper knowledge on sex, while 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 talk to themselves as a student (which is not good enough) and have been guided by mythologies and misconceptions about sex.

Many administrations have been greatly worried about the appropriate level of which sex education can be introduced. Who should teach sex education, what to teach and what not to? It should however be realized that sex education if properly given does not arouse morbid curiosity but does exactly the opposite to young people, whereas, the misinformation, secret misinterpretation and fables about sex functions lead to dangerous consequences. Therefore, information about sex education gives an insight to people understanding of sex functions.

The purpose of the study is to examine the knowledge and attitudes of students toward the introduction of sexuality education in secondary schools. Therefore, the intent and purpose of this study is to determine through investigation the level of knowledge and attitudes of secondary school students on sex education in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance of Katsina State, Nigeria and the following specific objectives are of interest:

1. To determine differences in the attitude of male and female adolescents towards the introduction of sex education in schools.
2. To find out the difference in the attitude of adolescents towards the introduction of sex education in secondary schools on the basis of their age range.

To guide this study, the following questions are raised.

1. What is the attitude of male and female adolescents towards the introduction of sex education in schools?
2. What is the attitude of adolescents towards the introduction of sex education in secondary schools on the basis of their age range?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female adolescents towards the introduction of sex education in schools.

HO2: There is no significant difference in the attitude of adolescents towards the introduction sex education in secondary schools on the basis of their age range.

2. Materials and Methods

The data obtained from the study were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages. Inferential statistics were used for testing the hypotheses. The method used in this research study is survey research. It was chosen for the study because it seeks to identify the attitude of students towards the introduction of sexuality education in schools. The responses of the subjects would reveal their attitude.

Kerlinger (1993) pointed out that the survey method is the best one to use when one is interested in finding the options and attitudes of people on a matter.

This study was carried out within the Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance of Katsina State, Nigeria. However, the population of the study comprises all secondary school students in the Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, under Katsina State. This population is so heterogeneous that students of various ages and sexes are present, hence the suitability of this study.

The target population of the study consist of all SS2 and SS3 students in public secondary schools in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance numbering thirty-four thousand five hundred and sixty (34,560) (Katsina State Ministry of Education 2023). The sample size for the study is one thousand two hundred and twenty-one (1,221) students which is 10% of the population of twelve thousand two hundred and eight (12,208) from nine secondary schools selected for the study in Katsina local government, Jibia local government and Kaita local government areas (being the population samples from the three local government areas).

The researchers used purposeful sampling techniques in the selection of respondents. According to Jegede (1999), this is the type of sampling technique used for selection for the purpose of carrying out a specific study. The researcher's wish prevails considering the following criteria:

1. Both males and females were included.
2. Students of senior secondary schools two and three (SS2 and SS3) of all the schools representing, one thousand two hundred and twenty-one (1,221) respondents were selected.

A self-designed questionnaire, titled Knowledge and Attitude of Adolescents towards Sex Education (KAASE), was used to collect the data for the study. The questionnaire contained two sections, A and B. Section A had four items (items 1 and 2), and it inquired about the personal data of the respondents. This related to the respondents age and sex while section B, sort the position of agreement of some statements on sex education. Section B had fifteen (15) items; the items were written in statements. On the questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate whether they "strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," or "strongly disagree" with each of the statements. The items were structured using the Likert method or scaling techniques that strongly disagree, ranging in weight from 4 to 1, respectively. In other words, "strongly agree" was weighted 4, "agree" was weighted 3, "disagree" was weighted 2, and "strongly disagree" was weighted 1.

The researchers' secured an introduction letter from the Federal College of Education Katsina to present to the Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance of Katsina State, Nigeria and to the schools selected for the research work. The questionnaire were administered on the respondents with instructions on how to respond or fill out the questionnaire. The researchers seek the help of experts in the Department of Educational Measurement and Evaluation in relation to the validity of the instrument that was used in the study. The researchers went through the various items on the questionnaire and selected the relevant items. At the end, only items found to be in line with the objectives and purpose of the study were used as items in the instrument; in other words, the face validity was accordingly determined and was found adequate.

To establish the reliability of the instrument, the researcher made use of the test-retest approach. Some proposed number of questionnaires were administered to a set of

students, and after two weeks, the questionnaires were administered to the same students and their responses were compared using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The researchers paid visit to the schools after seeking permission from the principal in each school. Researchers' administered the questionnaire on the students after explaining to them how to fill the questionnaire and since the respondents are literate, it was easy for them to understand both the explanation given and the research instrument. The data obtained from the study were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation. Inferential statistics was used for testing the hypotheses (t-test) to test the level of significance at 0.05 level.

3. Results and Discussion

The study was designed to investigate the attitude of adolescents towards the introduction of sexuality education in secondary schools students in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance of Katsina State of Nigeria. To realize the goals, an attempt was made to ascertain the age range and gender.

1. The study established whether or not there is a significant difference between male and female students in secondary schools with regard to their attitude towards the introduction of sex education in their schools.
2. It also established if there is a significant difference in the attitude of students toward the introduction of sexuality education in secondary schools based on their age range.

The data collected from the field is collated, sorted, organized and presented for data analysis through providing answers to research questions and testing of null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance for acceptance or otherwise. The personal information of the students is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Personal information of the Respondents

SN	Items	Category	Number	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Male	599	53.4
		Female	522	46.6
		Total	1121	100.0
2	Age	15-17 years	763	68.1
		18-20 years	358	31.9
		Total	1121	100.0

The table 1 provides information on the personal characteristics of the respondents in the study. The majority of the respondents (53.4%) were male, while 46.6% were female. The majority of the respondents (68.1%) were in the 15-17 years age group, while 31.9% were in the 18-20 years age group.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by School

School	Frequency	Percentage
GGSS DUTSIN SAFE	21	1.72
NATSINTA	141	11.55
GDSS DUTSIN SAFE	149	12.20
FAMILY SUPPORT	28	2.29
GGCK	157	12.86
GCK	300	24.57
SEO	200	16.38
GSS KAITA	115	9.42
GSS YANDAKI	110	9.01

Total	1221	100
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The percentage distribution of the sample by different schools shows that students (1.72) served as respondents from GGSS Dutsin safe, (11.55) served as respondents from Natsinta, (12.20) served as respondents from GDSS Dutsin safe, (2.29) served as respondents from Family support, (12.86) served as respondents from GGCK, (24.57) served as respondents from GCK, (16.38) served as respondents from SEO, (9.42) served as respondents from GSS Kaita and (9.01) served as respondents from GSS Yandaki that were selected

Answers to Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the attitude of male and female adolescents towards the introduction of sex education in schools?

Table 3: Attitude of male and female adolescents towards the introduction of sex education in schools

Gender	Number	Mean	Std.dev	Mean difference
Male	599	41.07	5.745	3.253
Female	522	44.32	7.755	

The results presented in table 3 investigate the attitude of male and female adolescents towards the introduction of sex education in schools which compare the mean scores between genders. The mean score for females ($M = 44.32$, $SD = 7.755$) was higher than the mean score for males ($M = 41.07$, $SD = 5.745$). The mean difference of 3.253 indicates that female adolescents had a more positive attitude towards the introduction of sex education compared to male adolescents. This finding suggests that female adolescents were more receptive and supportive of incorporating sex education into the school curriculum compared to their male counterparts.

This analysis indicates that there is a noticeable gender difference in attitudes towards sex education, with females showing a more positive attitude than males. This finding is in line with the study by Ogunjimi (2006), where the researcher reported more female students responding positively to sexuality issues taught in and outside the school and UNESCO (2018) advocated for inclusive learning environment. However, opposed to this finding is Donatus and Mary (2013), who found no significant difference in the attitudes of male and female students towards sexuality education.

Research Question 2: What is the attitude of adolescents towards the introduction of sex education in secondary schools on the basis of their age range?

Table 4: Attitude of adolescents towards the introduction of sex education in schools based on age range

Age range	Number	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean difference
15-17 years	763	42.60	7.140	0.045
18-20 years	358	42.55	6.520	

The results presented in table 4 examines the attitude of adolescents towards the introduction of sex education in secondary schools based on their age range which compares the mean scores between the 15-17 years and 18-20 years age groups. The mean score for the 15-17 years age group ($M = 42.60$, $SD = 7.140$) was slightly higher than the mean score for the 18-20 years age group ($M = 42.55$, $SD = 6.520$). The mean difference of 0.045 indicates that adolescents in the 15-17 years age group had a marginally more positive attitude towards the introduction of sex education compared to those in the 18-20 years age group. However, it is important to note that the difference in mean scores between the two age groups was very small, suggesting that age had little to no impact on adolescents' attitudes towards sex education introduction in secondary schools.

This analysis indicates that there is no substantial difference in the attitudes of adolescents towards sex education based on their age range, as both groups show similar levels of acceptance. This finding indicates that adolescents, regardless of their age range

held similar attitudes towards the incorporation of sex education into the school curriculum. The results suggest that age is not a significant factor in determining adolescents' attitudes towards sex education in secondary schools. In line with this finding is that Kirby (2007) and Blake et al (2001) sexuality education is not affected by age groups.

Testing of Hypotheses

The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significant using the t-test statistic.

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female adolescents towards the introduction of sex education in schools.

Table 5: t-test results of difference in male and female adolescents' attitude towards introduction of sex education in schools

Gender	Number	Mean	Std. Dev.	t-cal.	Df	p-value	Alpha	Decision
Male	599	41.07	5.745	8.043	1119	0.000	0.05	Reject
Female	522	44.32	7.755					

The results presented in table 5 is t-test results which showed that the t-calculated value of 8.043 with 1119 degrees of freedom was statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($p < 0.000$). Based on the t-test results, the null hypothesis (Ho1) is rejected. There is a significant difference in the attitude of male and female adolescents towards the introduction of sex education in schools. This finding is consistent with the earlier interpretation of the descriptive statistics, which showed that female adolescents had a more positive attitude towards sex education introduction compared to their male counterparts.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the attitude of adolescents towards the introduction in secondary schools on the basis of their age range.

Table 6: t-test results of difference in the attitude of adolescents towards the introduction of sexuality education in schools based on age range

Age range	Number	Mean	Std. Dev.	t-cal.	Df	p-value	Alpha	Decision
15-17 years	763	42.60	7.140	0.100	1119	0.920	0.05	Accept
18-20 years	358	42.55	6.520					

The results presented in Table 6 is t-test which showed that the t-calculated value of 0.100 with 1119 degrees of freedom was not statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($p = 0.920$). Based on the t-test results, the null hypothesis (Ho2) is accepted. There is no significant difference in the attitude of adolescents towards the introduction of sex education in secondary schools based on their age range. This finding is consistent with the earlier interpretation of the descriptive statistics, which showed that the difference in mean scores between the age groups was negligible.

The summary of the major findings indicate that Gender significantly influence attitudes towards sex education, with females showing more positive attitudes and that Age do not significantly impact attitudes towards sex education, as attitudes are similar across age ranges . These findings highlight the importance of considering gender when implementing sex education programs in schools, while also suggesting that age might not be a critical factor in shaping attitudes towards these programs. While gender significantly affect attitude towards sex education, age do not appear to play a significant role. These findings underscore the importance of considering gender diversity when designing and implementing sex education programs in secondary schools. Thus, there is need according to Fonner et al (2014) to address evolving needs of students on sex education.

The study attempt to examine the perception of students towards the introduction of sexuality education in secondary schools in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State, Nigeria, variables such as sex and age were investigated.

As a result of evidence from the analysis of data interpretation of results and discussion of the finding of this study, the following summaries were drawn:

1. The perception of male and female secondary school students towards the introduction of sex education in the school; have significant difference. \
2. There is no significant difference in the attitude of adolescents towards the introduction of sexuality education in secondary schools on the basis of their age range

4. Conclusion

The findings suggest that gender is a significant factor in shaping adolescents' attitudes towards sex and sexuality education, while age range do not have a significant impact. These demographic differences should be considered when designing and implementing inclusive sex education programs in secondary schools. This suggests that interventions aimed at improving attitudes towards sex education should focus on addressing gender- specific.

5. Recommendations

By implementing these recommendations, schools can create a more inclusive and effective sex and sexuality education program that caters to the diverse needs of adolescent students:

- a. Develop sex education curricula that address the unique needs and concerns of both male and female students to ensure an inclusive learning environment.
- b. While age was not a significant factor in this study, educators should still consider the developmental needs of adolescents at different age ranges when designing sex education content.
- c. Implement a whole-school approach to sex and sexuality education, involving not only the curriculum but also school policies, teacher training, and community engagement.
- d. Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of sex education programs and make necessary adjustments to address the evolving needs and concerns of the student population.

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