



Advances in Research
2(12): 869-878, 2014, Article no. AIR.2014.12.015

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The Influence of Sexuality Education on Inappropriate Sexual Behaviours among Secondary School Students

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Author's contribution

This whole work was carried out by author JJO.

Original Research Article

Received 23rd March 2014

Accepted 7th June 2014

Published 25th July 2014

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the influence of parents, teachers and government attitudes towards sexuality education on inappropriate sexual behaviours of secondary school students. One hundred and twenty-five senior secondary school students were used for the study. Related literatures that discussed issues of Sexuality education, sexual behaviours among students were used as theoretical basis for the study. Three research questions and hypotheses were developed for the study. A research instrument titled "Sexuality Education for Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour. (SEISB) was used to collect data for the study. The instrument had 14 items which was validated with a reliability coefficient of 0.82 which shows that it was reliable for the study. Linear correlation and regression analysis was used as a statistical tool to test for relationship between the independent and dependent variables. From the findings, it was discovered that there is no significant relationship between parents' and teachers' attitude and government activities towards inappropriate sexual behaviour among secondary school students. Recommendations were also made. This study will be significant to counsellors and the general public in sensitizing parents on issues regarding sexuality education so as to guide in order to curb inappropriate sexual behaviours among secondary school students.

Keywords: Adolescence; sexuality; education; behaviours; students; secondary school.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The task of developing appropriate behaviour patterns among young people continues to be a challenge for young people themselves and those who are responsible for their formation. More significantly, sexuality development among adolescents comes with a lot of challenges. Sex education during this period is very necessary because of the nature of the adolescent period which is predominantly inquisitive. The young person at this stage wants to know and seeks basic information about issues that are related to them. When such information is not provided, they are likely to get it from elsewhere and in the wrong way. One of such issues is sex related issues. This makes sexuality education a veritable tool for learning values of responsible sexual behaviour.

Sexuality education is a lifelong process of acquiring information and forming attitudes, beliefs and values about gender towards building a strong foundation for sexual health. All theories of adolescent development give sexuality a central role in negotiating the transition from child to adult. Sexuality education takes place on a daily basis in homes, schools, faith-based institutions, and through the media [1]. In a study of the perception of sexuality education among secondary school students in Kwara State, (1) found out that the respondents had no knowledge of sex education, either from parents or teachers. They agreed that knowledge of sexuality education will be very helpful and therefore should be introduced into the secondary school system.

Sexuality Education in secondary schools is about enabling students to understand the physiological, social and emotional changes they experience as they mature, develop healthy and rewarding relationships including those with members of the opposite sex and make wise, informed and responsible decisions on sexuality issues. It is premised on the importance of the family as the basic unit of society. This means encouraging healthy, heterosexual marriages and stable nuclear family units with extended family support. The teaching and learning of Sexuality Education is based on respect for the values and beliefs of the different ethnic and religious communities in Nigeria on sexuality issues (Ministry of Health (MOH) and Registry of Births and Death (RGD), [2].

It has been observed that parents sometimes lack sufficient knowledge and interest in issues of sexuality education as it relates to their adolescent children in secondary schools. This accounts for many sexual related misconducts that we find in children. [3] Whose position supports the above idea states that most parents around the world and Nigeria in particular, react very negatively to the idea of sex education. This idea frustrates the idea of fully introducing and implementing the curriculum for sex education in secondary schools. Further more, some parents try to evade or they do not give satisfactory answers to questions asked by children in relation to sex education [4].

In a study carried out by [5] on Family and Sex Education, A survey of parental attitudes, he found out that parents have variety of views regarding the aims of sex education for adolescent student. They feel strongly that concern for sexual development for children should begin even before the school age. According to him, parents also feel that teachers of sex education should have special characteristics and training on how to present issues of sex education.

The role of teachers in ensuring the effectiveness of sexuality education in secondary schools is very important. However it has been observed that some teachers attitude towards sex education have not been very supportive. While some lack necessary skills for imparting the knowledge, some others out rightly become very passive towards its implementation. This is supported by the position of [6,7] who states that teachers who teach sexuality education are either passive or they present the subject matter of sex education within a wider context that it loses its focus at the end of the day.

In a study by [8] found out that teachers were unwilling to participate in sex education for their students for various reasons which include risk of exposure to issues of sexuality, and the tendency to become promiscuous as a result of the knowledge of sexuality. Others reasons where the age the of the teachers and their religious orientations which creates varied disposition towards the subject matter of sexuality education. This perceived unwillingness on the teachers is a great obstacle to the main objectives of sex education.

The goals of Sexuality Education are to help students make wise, responsible and informed decisions through the provision of accurate, current and age-appropriate knowledge on human sexuality and the consequence of sexual activities. It is also to help students know themselves and build healthy and rewarding relationships through the acquisition of social and emotional skills of self awareness, management of their thoughts, feelings and behaviours. It also includes development of empathy for other Sexuality education is a lifelong process of acquiring information and forming attitudes, beliefs and values about gender towards building a strong foundation for sexual health. All theories of adolescent development give sexuality a central role in negotiating the transition from child to adult. Sexuality education takes place on a daily basis in homes, schools, faith-based institutions, and through the media.s, possession of effective communication, problem-solving and decision-making skills.

Sexuality education is also meant to help students develop a moral consciousness, respect for themselves and for others as sexual beings. This is premised on the family values derived from a healthy, heterosexual marriage as the origin of family which constitute the basic unit of society. This comes with the inculcation of positive mainstreams values and attitudes about sexuality [2].

Furthermore, Sexuality Education helps students to have love and respect for themselves and others. This will enable them build positive relationships based on love and respect, which are the foundations for strong family relationships, make responsible decisions for themselves, their families and society. The knowledge of sexuality education will also help students practice abstinence before marriage which is the best protection against sexually transmitted diseases and unintended pregnancies among students.

Basic content of sexuality education includes human development, interpersonal relationships, sexual health related issues and sexual behaviour. It also includes cultural values and norms of society regarding appropriate sexual behaviour, and how the laws of the land relates to appropriate sexual behaviour and the responsibility of the individual towards promoting values of appropriate sexual behaviour.

It is becoming more obvious by the day that the values and attitudes of our youth/students towards sexuality are increasingly being shaped by their peers, exposure to the media, popular culture and the internet. Adolescence is a complex stage in life as the adolescent attempts to find his/her own identity and often struggles with new social relationships. The

period of middle adolescence (generally from 15-17 years old) can be a turbulent period for adolescents. The desire for the adolescent to prove that he or she is physically, emotionally and cognitively mature may result in a tendency to act on impulse and experiment with various activities (including sexual activities). The above actions are carried out without the realisation of the possible unpleasant consequences that may arise from such experimentation. The need for peer acceptance can put so much pressure on the adolescent that it can hinder one's ability to act responsibly. Given the pressures faced by the middle adolescent from within themselves and from peers, it is important to build a strong sense of self-worth, personal conviction and an understanding of the possible consequences of sexual behaviour [2].

Through sexuality education, secondary school students will have the opportunity to develop a positive self-esteem, develop their character, and expand their understanding and repertoire of skills to deal with various issues related to sexuality which are of prime concern at this stage.

Adolescence is also the transitional period from childhood to adulthood where major changes take place that are physiological, psychological and intellectual. It is a critical period in a person's life that influences his or her well-being later in life. One of that well-being is sexual behaviour.

Sexual behaviour in adolescents range from normal and developmentally appropriate attitudes to sexuality, in appropriate sexual behaviours that manifest in different ways, and a strong desire to experiment on sexual activities. Earlier studies have suggested a strong correlation between sexual abuse and inappropriate sexual behaviours in adolescents. More recent studies have broadened this perspective, recognising a number of additional stressors, parental characteristics and environmental factors like school, government that are associated with intrusive and frequent inappropriate sexual behaviours among secondary school students.

Inappropriate sexual behaviours include behaviour that are coercive, persistently intrusive, injurious and frequent. Some examples of such are masturbation, homosexuality, lesbianism, rape, coitus, sexual harassment, sexual bullying etc.

One of the inappropriate sexual behaviours of secondary school students is sexual harassment. This behaviour harms the sexual integrity of adolescents in their peer relationship. Sexual harassment is unwelcome attention of a sexual nature, occurring through verbal and physical interaction [9]. Sexual harassment is likely to affect a student's academic performance or work ability and may create a hostile or threatening atmosphere for the student. Sexual harassment happens not just between the sexes, but also among girls or just boys. Examples of such acts are continually asking someone out when they have communicated a lack of interest, unwanted requests for social or sexual activity, making sexual jokes, gestures, or remarks, inappropriate touching (brushing up against grabbing, patting or pinching in a sexual manner) spreading sexual rumours about someone, making comments about a persons body, clothing, sexual orientation, or sexual harassment. This may take place take place in public, either in front of school staff or teachers [10].

Sexual harassment and bullying are very similar. It involves comments, gestures, actions, or attention that is intended to hurt, often or intimidate another person which also includes spreading gossip of a sexual nature. This kind of behaviour is upsetting no matter how it is

called. Like anyone who is being bullied, students who are sexually bullied or harassed can feel a great deal of emotional stress if the situation continues without relief.

Masturbation is another inappropriate sexual behaviour found among secondary school students which is the rubbing of the genitals and sexual organs of the female in terms of self stimulation as if one is engaging in sexual intercourse for self satisfaction for both male and female students.

Homosexuality is sexual intercourse between two males which is an inappropriate sexual behaviour found among secondary school students.

Lesbianism is an inappropriate sexual behaviour involving female and female found among secondary school students. Heterosexuality is sexual intercourse involving both male and female found among secondary school students which is inappropriate in nature.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Incidences of inappropriate sexual behaviours continue to be on the increase among secondary school adolescent students. Sexuality education which should be a tool that will help students to cope with the challenges that face them in this regard seems not to be properly implemented. There is therefore a gap which raises a question on the role of parents, teachers, and government agencies on the effective implementation of sexuality education among secondary students. This study intends to find out the role which parents, teachers and government officials may play influencing sexuality education and sex habits of secondary school students.

2.1 Purpose of the Study

The objective of this study is to find out how the role of parents, teachers and government officials can help in promoting sexuality education in the secondary school system.

2.2 Research Questions

1. Is there any relationship between parent's attitude towards sexuality education and inappropriate sexual behaviour among secondary school students?
2. Is there any relationship between teacher's attitude towards sexuality education and inappropriate sexual behaviours among secondary school students?
3. Is there any relationship between government activities towards sexuality education and inappropriate sexual behaviours among secondary school students.

2.3 Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between parents attitude towards sexuality education and inappropriate sexual behaviours among secondary school students.
2. There is no significant relationship between teachers attitude towards sexuality education and inappropriate sexual behaviours among secondary students.
3. There is no significant relationship between government activities towards sexuality education and inappropriate sexual behaviours among students.

3. RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURE

The descriptive survey research design was adopted to elicit information from the respondents. The population for this study is comprised of 24 secondary schools, in Ethiopia East Local Government Area of Delta State. The simple random sampling technique was used to select five secondary schools from the population for the study. Twenty-five students were randomly selected from the five secondary schools which gave a total of 125 students for the study. The instrument used for the collection of data was titled, Sexuality Education for Inappropriate Sexual Behaviours (SEISB). The instrument is made up of fourteen items. It has content validity and a reliability level of 0.82. This indicates the instrument is reliable and suitable for data collection. The questionnaire has two sections, section A contained question on biographic data, while section B consisted of 14 items indicative of impact of sexuality education on inappropriate sexual behaviour among secondary school students. The instrument was personally administered to the respondents by the researcher in the selected schools. The method of data analysis was linear correlation and regression at .05 level of significance.

4. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Research Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between parent attitude and inappropriate sexual behaviour among secondary students.

1. Is there any relationship between parents attitude and inappropriate sexual behaviour among secondary school students.

To test this Research Question and Hypothesis, a linear correlation and Regression analysis was performed with parents attitude and sexual behaviour among secondary school students. The results are presented in Table 1a and 1b below.

The data in Table 1a showed that there was no significant/relationship between parents and inappropriate sexual behaviours among secondary students ($r=0.04$, $p>0.05$).

The data in Table 1b shows that $F(1,124) = 0.21$, $p=0.65$. This indicated no statistically significant correlation between parent's attitude and sexual behaviour among secondary school students. Hypothesis 1 is therefore accepted. The adjusted R^2 value of -0.006 showed that only 0.6% of sexual behaviour among secondary school students was due to parents attitude. The Beta (B) weight of 0.04 in Table 1b shows that parents is not a good predictor of sexual behaviour in secondary school students.

Table 1a. Linear Correlation for Relationship between parent attitude and inappropriate sexual behaviour among secondary school students

| | Sexual behaviour | Parents attitude | Sig. (1-tailed) |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Sexual behaviour | 1 | | 0.32 |
| Parent's attitude | 0.04 | 1 | 0.32 |
| Mean | 10.31 | 9.31 | |
| Standard deviation | 1.78 | 1.62 | |

* Significant ($p<0.05$)

Table 1b. Linear regression of parents attitude and sexual behaviour among secondary school students

| Model | R | R squared | Adjusted R squared | Std Error of the estimate | Significance | Remark |
|---|---------------|------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1 | 0.04a | 0.00 | -0.00 | 1.79 | | |
| Anova on multiple regression analysis | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | Sum of square | Df | Mean square | F | Significance | Remark |
| Regression | 0.67 | 1 | 0.67 | 0.21 | 0.65a | Not significant |
| Residual | 396.26 | 124 | 3.20 | | | |
| Total | 396.93 | 125 | | | | |
| Significant of regression weights of variable in the equation 2 | | | | | | |
| Model | B | Std. Error | Beta | t-Ratio | Significance | Remark |
| Parents Attitude | 0.05 | 0.10 | 0.04 | 0.46 | 0.65 | Not significant |

a. Predictor (Constant): Parents Attitude; b. Dependent Variable: Sexual Behaviour; * Significant (p<0.05)

4.2 Research Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between teachers attitude and inappropriate sexual behaviour among secondary school students.

To test this Research Hypothesis, a linear correlation and Regression analysis was performed with teachers attitude and sexual behaviour among secondary school students. The results are presented in Table 2a and 2b below.

Table 2a. Linear Correlation for Relationship between teachers attitude and inappropriate sexual behaviour among secondary school students

| | Sexual behaviour | Teachers attitude | Sig. (1-tailed) |
|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Sexual behaviour | 1 | 1 | 0.48 |
| Parent's attitude | -0.001 | 11.64 | 0.48 |
| Mean | 10.31 | 1.87 | |
| Standard Deviation | 1.78 | | |

* Significant (P<0.05)

Table 2b. Linear Regression of teacher attitude and sexual behaviour among secondary school students

| Model | R | RSquared | Adjusted R squared | Std Error of the estimate | Significance | Remark |
|---|---------------|------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1 | 0.01a | 0.00 | -0.01 | 1.79 | | |
| Anova on multiple regression analysis | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | Sum of square | Df | Mean square | F | Significance | Remark |
| Regression | 0.01 | 1 | 0.67 | 0.00 | 0.96a | Not significant |
| Residual | 396.92 | 124 | 3.20 | | | |
| Total | 396.93 | 125 | | | | |
| Significant of regression weight of variables in the equation 2 | | | | | | |
| Model | B | Std. error | Beta | t-Ratio | Significance | Remark |
| Teachers Attitude | -0.01 | 0.09 | 0-0.01 | -0.06 | 0.96 | Not significant |

c. Predictor (constant): Teacher attitude; d. Dependent variable: Sexual Behaviour * Significant, (p<0.05)

The data in Table 2a showed that there was no significant correlation between teachers and inappropriate sexual behaviour among secondary school students ($r=0.00$, $p>0.05$).

The data in Table 2b shows that $F(1, 124) = 0.00$, $p=0.96$. This indicated no statistically significant correlation between teacher's attitude and sexual behaviour among secondary school students. Hypothesis 2 is therefore accepted. The adjusted R^2 value of -0.008 showed that only 0.8% of sexual behaviour among secondary school students was due to teachers attitude. The Beta (B) weight of -0.01 in Table 2b shows that teachers attitude is not a good predictor of sexual behaviour in secondary school students.

4.2 Research Hypothesis Three

There is no significant relationship between Government activities and inappropriate sexual behaviour among secondary school students.

To test this Research Hypothesis, a linear correlation and Regression analysis was performed with government activities and sexual behaviour among secondary school students, the result are presented are presented in Table 3a and 3b below.

Table 3a. Linear correlation for relationship between Government activities and inappropriate sexual behaviour among secondary school students

| | Sexual behaviour | Government activities | Sig. (1-tailed) |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Sexual behaviour | 1 | 1 | 0.20 |
| Government activities | 0.08 | 11.32 | 0.20 |
| Mean | 10.31 | 1.75 | |
| Standard Deviation | 1.78 | | |

Table 3b. Linear regression of parents attitude and sexual behaviour among secondary school students

| Model | R | R squared | Adjusted R squared | Std error of the estimate | Significance | Remark |
|--|---------------|------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1 | 0.08a | 0.01 | -0.00 | 1.78 | | |
| Anova on multiple regression analysis | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | Sum of square | Df | Mean square | F | Significance | Remark |
| Regression | 2.29 | 1 | 2.29 | 0.72 | 0.40a | |
| Residual | 396.64 | 124 | 3.18 | | | |
| Total | 396.93 | 125 | | | | |
| Significance of regression weights of variable in the equation 2 | | | | | | |
| Model | B | Std. Error | Beta | t-Ratio | Significance | Remark |
| Government Attitude | 0.08 | 0.09 | 0.08 | 0.85 | 0.40 | Not significant |

e. Predictor (constant): Government Activities; f. Dependent variable: Sexual behaviour.
* Significant, ($p<0.05$)

The data in Table 3a showed that there was no significant correlation/relationship between government activities and inappropriate sexual behaviours among secondary students ($r=0.008$, $p>0.05$).

The data in Table 3b shows that $F(1,124) = 0.72$, $p = 0.40$. This indicator no statistically significant correlation between Government activities and sexual behaviour among secondary school students. Hypothesis 3 is therefore accepted. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.006 showed that only 0.6% of sexual behaviour among secondary school students was due to parents attitude. The Beta (B) weight of 0.08 in Table 3b shows that government activities is not a good predictor of sexual behaviour in secondary school students.

5. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Results in hypotheses one, was accepted which shows that parents attitude had no statistical significant relationship on inappropriate sexual behaviour among secondary school students. This is in line with other research study of [2], which supports the view of ministry of health Singapore, 2012, which says that the need for peer acceptance can be overwhelming strong and hinder one's ability to act responsibly. Given the pressures faced by the middle adolescent from within themselves and from peers, it is important to build a strong sense of self worth, personal conviction and an understanding of the possible consequences of inappropriate sexual behaviours. The studies of [3] which had earlier pointed out the negative attitude attitudes of parents may also account the for the result above. Parent who do not support sexuality education would not do anything that will influence it positively.

Results in hypothesis two, was accepted which shows that teachers attitude had no statistical relationship on inappropriate sexual behaviour among secondary school students. This is in line with other research study of [8] which states that teachers are unwilling to engage in sexuality education for many reasons. Some of the reasons include religion, age and some perceived biases. The point here is that teachers' attitude may not be affecting the sexual behaviour of the adolescents' because of either lack of sexuality education or lack of teachers' interest in the provision of sexuality education in the population studied. This may form the bases of further investigation in this subject area.

Results in hypothesis three, was accepted which shows that Government activities had no statistical relationship on inappropriate sexual behaviour among secondary school students. This is in line with other research study of [9] corroborates that of the ministry of health Singapore,[2], which emphasised the fact that the desire for peer acceptance may put so much pressure on the young person to the point of not acting rightly as may be expected. This may affect their self concept and self esteem. It is therefore imperative for government to find ways to influence the sexuality education of young people so as to be able to help them avoid inappropriate sexual behaviours.

6. CONCLUSION

From the study it was observed that parents', teachers' and government activities had no significant relationship to student's inappropriate sexual behaviours in the population studied. The implication is that some other factors maybe responsible which should be the subject of another study. The search for possible causes of students' inappropriate sexual behaviour continues because it an ongoing incidence within the school system. It is also necessary to identify the causes so that possible solutions can be advanced for them.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. From the above, parents should caution their wards on the type of friends they keep in order to avoid inappropriate sexual behaviours among secondary school students.
2. The government should organise programmes on sexual education from time to time in order for secondary schools students to know about it and enable them to say no to illicit and pre-marital sex so as not to endanger their lives.
3. Also, counsellors should be given the opportunity to do their job as regards to sensitizing adolescents on issues relating to them in order to assist them in making relevant decisions in life.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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Peer-review history:

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