

Influence of Sexuality Education on Moral Uprightness of Secondary School Students in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Sexuality issues among secondary school students in Nigeria have reached an alarming state that need urgent preventive and corrective measures. Sexuality education is an educational programme that is designed to inculcate desirable sexual behaviour in students. The thrust of this study was to investigate the influence of sexuality education on moral uprightiness of secondary school students in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. Ex-post facto design was adopted for the study. The study population was 14,236 students from the 21 secondary schools out of which 350 final year students were sampled using the simple random sampling. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. Mean and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions, while chi-square (χ^2) was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 significant level. The finding revealed that; sexuality education has significant influence on rape and pre-marital sex among students in secondary schools in the study area. It was recommended among others that the parents and teachers should teach the adolescents the negative implications of rape on their academic career as well as social life.

Keywords: *Sexuality Education, Moral Uprightness, Rape and Pre-marital sex.*

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Background to the Study

One of the sexual rights which embraced human rights as already recognized in natural laws, international human rights documents and other consensus document, is sexuality education rights (Rubio-Aurioles,2008). Moral uprightness of adolescents is seen as what adults and the society consider to be the right and honest behaviour.

Moral uprightness of adolescents is considered to be what adults and the society choose as the right and honest behaviour which adolescents must adopt. Prominent among such problems are premarital sex, rape, homosexuality, indecent dressing, masturbatory practices and many others. According to Olson and Defrain (2000), the United States lead the world in rates of adolescence pregnancy and abortion; the rate being twice that of England, Canada and France. The attendant consequences of premarital sex on the whole world are that of increased sexually transmitted infections (STIs), especially HIV/A1DS, adolescent motherhood, school drop out and the like.

In Nigeria, sexual behaviour among secondary school adolescents are listed as; sex abuse, sexual promiscuity and sexual maladjustment (Adedipe, 2000; Ndu, 2000 and Nnachi 2003). Nnachi (2003) observed that sex abuse appeared to be one of the most serious offences committed by children and adolescents.

It may be observed that in Benue State, most secondary school adolescents are also engaged in the above mentioned sexual behaviours that are contrary to the moral values and standards set by the society. Okonkwo and Eze (2000) observed that today's situation shows a sharp contrast to traditional Nigerian societal context in which girls avoided premarital sexual experiences for fear of social punishment usually meted out to girls who lost their virginity before marriage. Abekhale (2005) asserts that moral laxity, lack of respect for parents and constituted authority, disobedience, illicit sexual behaviours and lack of respect for cultural values have become rampant to an uncontrollable stage, all in the guise of modernity and civilization.

Rape as a forced sexual behaviour is one of the sexual behaviours among adolescents that has for long received outright condemnation across many cultures and societies the world over. This in most cases is committed by males. However, females of Trobri Island in the South Pacific are known to regularly rape and sexually humiliate male strangers who are unfortunate enough to wander through the area near their village (Olson and Defrain 2000). Premarital sex which is having sexual relationship with a member of the opposite sex before marriage is on the increase in our society. This is contrary to what parents and the society expect of them. According to Makinde (2007), parents and the society expect adolescents to be upright in their moral behaviour. The researchers therefore wish to empirically investigate the influence of sexuality education on moral uprightness of secondary school students in the study area.

Conceptual Clarification

The conceptual clarification is done as follows;

Concept of Sexuality Education

Sexuality is seen as all the characteristics of an individual's behaviour that are related to sexual acts. It refers to people's sexual preference and sexual identity, all which may be described both in purely physical terms, and as an essential part of love and relationships (Idyorough, 2008).

According to Akinade and Suleiman (2005), sexuality refers to sexual acts and sexual behaviours, including preference of individuals about sexual acts such as masturbation, kissing or sexual intercourse as well as sexual behaviours such as dressing and sexual orientation (lesbian, gay). Akinade and Suleiman (2005) sees sexuality education as that which seeks to develop young people's skills such that they are able to make informed choices about their behaviour and feel confident and competent about acting on these choices. Wikipedia (2009) sees sexuality education as that which encompasses education about all aspects of sexuality, including information about family planning, reproduction (fertilization, conception and development of embryo and fetus, through to birth), plus information about all aspects of one's sexuality including: body image, sexual orientation, sexual pleasure, values, decision making, communication.

In the same vein, Action Health Incorporated (2002) defines sexuality education as a life long process of acquiring factual and accurate information on positive attitude, beliefs and values as well as the development of skills to cope with the biological/socio-cultural, psychological and spiritual dimension of sexuality. Esiet (2008) sees sexuality as a life long process, and that messages about sexuality are communicated directly or indirectly through everyday interactions and experiences. She then defines sexuality education as a consciously planned and usually formal process of teaching about sexuality; emphasizing a broad approach to sexuality as natural and positive part of life.

Concept of Moral Uprightness

Colman (2001) sees moral uprightiness as the formation and maturation of a sense of right and wrong in children in the normal course of cognitive development. This indicates that for normal moral uprightiness to occur there must be moral thinking.

According to Wikipedia (2009), morality is a Latin word that comes from "Moralities". Meaning manner, character, proper behaviour and it is associated with three principal meanings: in its first descriptive usage, morality means a code of conduct, which is held to be authoritative in matters of right and wrong; in its second usage, it refers to an ideal code of conduct, one which would be espoused in preference to alternative by all rational people, under specific conditions; in its third usage, morality is synonymous with ethics, the systematic study of the moral domain. To instill moral uprightiness in our adolescents, especially in the area of sexuality, Wikipedia (2009) suggests that homosexuality; bisexuality and tran-ssexuality should be checked through sexuality education. Also included are masturbation, premarital sex and its consequences, rape and indecent dressing.

Statement of the Problem

In Benue State and particularly, Makurdi local government, the researchers has observed that most secondary school students are found trapped in sexual immorality ranging from pre-marital sex, rape, homosexuality to masturbation and indecent dressing among other things. This observed sexual immorality has been attributed to the denial of sexuality education information on these adolescents by both parents and the school authority. Due to the secrecy attached to sexuality matters by the society, most parents find it difficult to pass such information to their children.

Sexual immorality has been on the increase particularly among our adolescents in our present society. The consequences of these immoral acts on adolescents and the entire society cannot be overlooked. This ranges from early pregnancy and abortion, school drop out, vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and many others. Related immoral acts like premarital sex, rape, homosexuality, masturbation and indecent dressing among our secondary school students has become worrisome to the researchers in the study area. It is based on the above scenario that, the researchers wish to investigate the influence of sexuality education on moral uprightness of secondary school students in the study area using rape and premarital sex as the study variables.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of sexuality education on the moral uprightness of secondary school students. The specific objectives of the study are;

1. To determine the influence of sexuality education on rape among students in secondary schools in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State.
2. To ascertain the influence of sexuality education on pre-marital sex among students in secondary schools in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study;

1. What is the influence of sexuality education on rape among students in secondary schools in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State?
2. What is the influence of sexuality education on pre-marital sex among students in secondary schools in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 alpha level.

- Ho₁. There is no significant influence of sexuality education on rape among students in secondary schools in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State.
- Ho₂. There is no significant influence of sexuality education on pre-marital sex among students in secondary schools in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant in the following ways;

The study would provide and assist the Ministry of Education and its parastatal in planning a more comprehensive sexuality education syllabus and ensuring its implementation throughout the state.

The study would also assist school guidance and counsellors to broaden the scope and teaching techniques of sexuality education. The study would also assist principals to monitor and ensure that school counsellors offer sexuality education lessons. The study would also provide an empirical framework for other researchers to expand the scope of the study and related literature.

Methodology

Causal comparative or ex-post factor design was adopted for this study. It is a design in which the independent variables have already occurred and in which the researcher begins with the observation of a dependent variable. The design is also suitable because the variables cannot be manipulated by the researcher (Emaikwu, 2013). The study is confined to Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State. The population of the study consists of 14,236 students from the existing 21 government and grant-aided secondary schools in the study area. Three hundred (350) final year students were sampled from 10 secondary schools using the simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire consisting of 10 items which elicited responses from the respondents. The instrument was structured on a four-point rating scale with the response mode of Strong Agree (SA)⁴, Agree (A)³, Disagree (D)² and Strongly Disagree (SD)¹. The instrument was subjected to face and content validation. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability of instrument, with a coefficient of 0.78, this indicated high reliability. The research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviations. A criterion mean of 2.50 was used as bench mark for decision making, any mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as a positive response and accepted as having the desired influence while any mean score below 2.50 was regarded as a negative response and rejected. The chi-square was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Findings

The results and findings of the study are presented as follows;

Research Question 1:

What is the influence of sexuality education on rape among students in secondary schools in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State?

The data that provide answer to the research question are presented on Table 1:

Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of Respondents' Responses on Influence of Sexuality Education on Rape among Students in Secondary Schools in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State.

Item No	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	(X)	ST.D	Decision
1.	Sexuality education has helped me to avoid touching the sensitive parts of the opposite sex.	240	20	50	40	2.85	0.98	Accepted
2	I have avoided visiting houses of the opposite sex as a result of sexuality lessons.	120	140	20	70	3.36	0.86	Accepted
3.	Lessons on sexuality education have helped to avoid demanding for gifts from the opposite sex.	200	100	20	30	2.84	0.96	Accepted
4.	Lessons on sexuality education have helped me to always assert myself whenever approached for sexual relationship.	120	60	30	30	2.72	0.77	Accepted
5.	Lessons on sexuality education have helped me to stop attending night functions with the opposite sex.	140	80	80	50	2.62	0.80	Accepted
Criterion Mean /Standard Deviation						2.88	0.87	Accepted

Table 1 showed that the respondents rated all the items from 1 to 5 in the cluster well above the cut-off point of 2.50. Their ratings of items 1 to 5 in this cluster are 2.85, 3.36, 2.84, 2.72 and 2.62 with the corresponding standard deviations of 0.98, 0.86, 0.96, 0.77 and 0.80. The five items' ratings are far above the cut-off point of 2.50 which showed that those statements were acceptable to the respondents. The criterion mean of 2.88 and the standard deviation of 0.87 were also above the cut-off point of 2.50. The implication of the result is that sexuality education has influence on rape among students in secondary schools.

Research Question 2:

What is the Influence of Sexuality education on Pre-marital Sex among Students in Secondary Schools in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State.

The data which provide answer to the research question are presented on Table 2.

Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of Respondents' Responses on influence of Sexuality Education on Pre-marital Sex among Students in Secondary Schools in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State

Item No	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	(\bar{X})	ST.D	Decision
6	Lessons on sexuality education have helped me to avoid kissing a member of the opposite sex.	144	180	20	06	2.84	0.83	Accepted
7	I have avoided sexual relationship until I get married as a result of lessons on sexuality education	130	130	50	40	2.89	0.93	Accepted
8	I have said no to any sexual affair with the opposite sex as a result of lessons on sexuality education.	120	120	60	50	2.69	0.87	Accepted
9	Lessons on sexuality education have helped me to avoid romancing the opposite sex.	144	180	20	06	2.84	0.83	Accepted
10	Lessons on sexuality education have helped me to avoid sexual relationship.	160	90	80	20	3.33	0.74	Accepted
Criterion Mean /Standard Deviation						2.92	0.84	Accepted

Table 2 showed that the respondents rated all the items from 6 to 10 in the cluster well above the cut-off point of 2.50. Their ratings of items 6 to 10 are 2.84, 2.89, 2.69, 2.84 and 3.33 with the correspondence standard deviations of 0.98, 0.93, 0.87, 0.83 and 0.74. The five items' ratings are far above the cut-off point of 2.50 which showed that those statements were acceptable to the respondents. The criterion mean of 2.92 and the standard deviation of 0.84 were also above the cut-off point of 2.50. The implication of the result is that sexuality education has influence on pre-marital sex among students in secondary schools.

Hypotheses Testing

The two null hypotheses were tested using chi-square at 0.05 level of significance. The results are presented on Tables 3 and 4 as follows;

Hypotheses 1:

There is no significant influence of sexuality education on rape among students in secondary schools in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State.

Table 3: Chi-square (χ^2) test of Influence of Sexuality Education on Rape among Students in Secondary Schools in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State.

Opinions	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	df	χ^2 -cal	χ^2 -tab	Level of Sig	Decision
No Influence	21 (06%)	175 (50%)	1	27.81	7.82	0.05	Ho Rejected
Has Influence	329 (94%)	175 (50%)					

Values in parentheses are percentages. $\chi^2 = 27.81$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.05 > 0.00$

Table 3 showed that the descriptive and inferential statistics of percentages and chi-square (χ^2) were used to test the influence of sexuality education on rape among students in secondary schools. The results showed that 94% of the respondents agreed that sexuality education has influence on rape among students in secondary schools as against 6% respondents who disagreed with the view.

Table 3 also showed that the chi-square (χ^2) calculated value of 27.81 was greater than the chi-square (χ^2) tabulated value of 7.82 tested at 0.05 level of significance and at 1 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. The alternative hypothesis is accepted indicating that sexuality education has significant influence on rape among students in secondary schools.

Hypothesis 2:

There is no significant influence of sexuality education on pre-marital sex among students in secondary schools in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State.

Table 4: Chi-square (χ^2) test of Influence of Sexuality Education on Pre-Marital Sex among Students in Secondary Schools in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State.

Opinions	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	Df	χ^2 -cal	χ^2 -tab	Level of Sig	Decision
No Influence	77(22%)	175 (50%)	1	172.13	7.82	0.05	Ho Rejected
Has Influence	273(78%)	175 (50%)					

Values in parentheses are percentages. $\chi^2 = 172.13$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.05 > 0.00$

Table 4 showed that, the descriptive and inferential statistics of percentages and chi-square (χ^2) test were used to test the influence of sexuality education on pre-marital sex among students in secondary schools. The results indicated that 78% of the respondents agreed that sexuality education has influence on pre-marital sex among students in secondary schools as against 22% of the respondents who disagreed.

Table 4 also showed that the chi-square (χ^2) calculated value of 172.13 was greater than the chi-square (χ^2) tabulated value of 7.82 tested at 0.05 level of significance and at 1 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The implication is that sexuality education has significant influence on pre-marital sex among students in secondary schools.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding showed that sexuality education has significant influence on rape among students in secondary schools. The result is supported by Njoku (2008) who stated that the pervading scourge of child rape in the country has to a great extent, been indirectly encouraged by the failure of the home front and the larger society to make young girls aware of some basic sexuality education.

The second finding showed that pre-marital sex education has significant influence on rape among students in secondary schools. The result is in line with Erusegbefe, (2005), Ejue and Effiom (2005), Gbenda (2008), Egbochukwu and Ekanem (2008) who suggested the need for sexuality education to be taught in secondary schools to help curb the incidence of pre-marital sex and its consequences on adolescents and the society.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it has been established that sexuality education has significant influence on rape and pre-marital sex among students in secondary schools in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings and conclusion.

1. The parents and teachers should teach the adolescents the negative implications of rape on their academic career as well as social life.
2. The Ministry of Education should provide a curriculum and train teachers that will teach the adolescents at primary and post primary levels of education the negative implications of pre-marital sexual practices.

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