

# Perceived Influence of Sexuality Education N the Personal-Social Development of In-School Adolescents in Owerri Municipality of Imo State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

The study investigated perceived influence of sexuality education on the personal social development of in school adolescents in Owerri municipality of Nigeria. Through stratified random sampling technique, 800 in school adolescents were drawn from six randomly selected schools in Owerri municipality of Imo State, Nigeria. Questionnaire was used to collect data. Three research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. Mean score and Z-test statistics were used for data analysis. Results showed that sexuality education should be covered in many areas and taught during moral instruction, Biology, integrated science classes and in group counseling. Result also showed that sexuality education equips one with positive attitudes towards relationship and enhances personal-social development of adolescents. Based on the findings, the implications were highlighted and recommendations made.

**Keywords:** Influence, Sexuality , Personal-Social, Development, Adolescents

## 1. Introduction

For laymen, sexuality education should be confined from the hearing of children and adolescents. This informed the varied stands of parents, teachers and religious leaders to the introduction and implementation of sexuality education in secondary schools in Nigeria. In reality, sexuality education especially among the adolescents is a necessity that should be pursued vigorously. Achalu (2000) defined sexuality education as a comprehensive course of action by the school calculated to bring about the socially desirable attitudes, practices and personal conduct on the part of children as a human and the family as social institution. According to Maduakonam (2001) sexuality education is an appropriate approach for safe sexual behaviour to make vital modifications in life style. It provides accurate information in developing positive and healthy attitudes and values which enable people to express their sexual impulse and behaviour in a socially and ethically acceptable manner.

However research evidences show that adolescents are not well exposed to sexuality education and do not have the right sexual behaviour. Onuzulike (2006) opined that the consequences of these were linked to the existence of myriad of health and social problem like teenage pregnancies, prostitution, cases of rape and unsafe abortion, throwing away of new born babies and indiscriminate use of contraceptive. According to Eke in Unachukwu (1999), adolescents personal and social behaviour are dominated by attempts to satisfy important needs within the context of peers and family, and to a less extent, other people. All aspects of a child's experience at home, in school and outside school contribute to personal social development of an individual. Marical in Nwamuo (2006) defined personal social development as a fundamental aspect of the education of a whole child which is essentially concerned with the development of life skills. In the context of this study, personal social development is the interpersonal relationship of an individual and his environment. Parents can positively influence development by providing a structured environment that is both demanding and responsive to children's individual needs. Peers also affect development by providing opportunities for social skill development by influencing formation of attitudes and values, among adolescents.

Adolescence is a period of sexual development from initial appearance of secondary sex characteristics (puberty) to sexual and reproductive maturity (World Health Organization, (W.H.O.) 2002). It is a period when adolescents are learning a great deal about themselves and how to adjust to change in their bodies physiologically and physically. Adolescents are young boys and girls between the ages of 12 and 19 years or more depending on the stipulation of a given country or society. At this period, adolescents need correct information of what is happening around them as they are known to rebel against social and familiar norms that are divergent to their sexual feelings and desires. This results in early sexual initiation, unprotected sexual activities and multiple partners. This shows the need for sexuality education on personal social development of an adolescent. According to Siecus (2005) sexuality education fosters effective and creative use of ones sexuality.

Certain factors motivate adolescents to engage in premarital sex. Such factors include pornographic films, home video as well as "sexy" music. This constitute sexually provoked environment to the adolescents (Anikweze, 1997). Furthermore, the cultural norms are breaking down with its attendant problems such as lack of regard for

the preservation of virginity, and disrespect for the views of the elders. It is against the background of safe and healthy living that the researchers are moved towards ascertaining perceived influence of sexuality education on the personal social development of in-school adolescents in Owerri municipality of Imo state of Nigeria.

Sexuality education seeks to assist young people understand positive view of sexuality, provide them information and skills about taking care of their sexual health, and help them make sound decisions now and in the future. It is envisaged that enriching school curriculum with sexuality education will enhance adolescents' positive development about issues of sexuality. The present school curriculum does not contain sexuality education contents, but has few related topics. It therefore becomes imperative to find areas of sexuality education covered in the secondary school curriculum, assess the medium of sexuality education implementation in secondary school and assess the extent to which sexuality education equips secondary school adolescents with positive attitude towards sexual relationship. The study investigates therefore perceived influence of sexuality education on the personal social development of in-school adolescents in Owerri municipality of Imo State of Nigeria.

## 2. Research Questions

Three research questions guided the study

- i. What areas of sexuality education does the school curriculum cover?
- ii. What is the medium of implementing sexuality education in secondary schools?
- iii. How does sexuality education equip adolescents with positive attitudes towards relationship?

## 3. Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study at 0.05 level of probability.

- i. There is no significant difference between male and female respondents on the perceived influence of sexuality education on the personal-social development
- ii. There is no significant difference between junior and senior in-school adolescents on influence of sexuality education on the personal-social development.

## 4. Method

The study adopted ex-post-facto design. The study was carried out among in-school adolescents in Owerri municipality of Imo State of Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of 20, 157 junior and 16, 115 senior secondary school students from the eighteen (18) existing secondary schools in Owerri municipality (Ministry of Education Owerri, 2002). A simple random sampling technique through stratification was used to draw 800 students made up of 455 junior and 345 senior in-school adolescents.

The instrument for the study was structured questionnaire. The questionnaire had four sections. Section A sought for information on the students personal data, while sections B, C. and D sought for information on areas of sexuality education covered in secondary school curriculum, ways of implementing sexuality education in secondary school and how sexuality education equip the adolescents with positive attitudes towards relationships respectively. The questionnaire is a scale measure of a four point rating responses. The face validity of the instrument was determined by giving draft copies to two experts in measurement and evaluation and one expert in field of Educational Psychology Faculty of Education University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

The reliability of the instrument was determined in a preliminary study among 50 adolescent students in Owerri North that is outside the municipality. The reliability of the instrument was estimated for the three clusters of the instrument using Cronbach Alpha, giving average reliability of 0.79. Copies of the instrument were administered to the respondents by the researchers with the help of research assistants. Mean score statistic was used to analyze the research questions while Z-test was employed for analyzing the hypotheses.

### Mean Ratings of the Area of Sexuality Education Covered by Secondary School Curriculum

Result of the analysis on table 1 show the all the 8 items were all rated very high and accepted by the respondents as the areas of sexuality education covered by secondary school. The standard deviation showed that the respondents are close to one another in their responses to each item which indicates homogeneity in their responses.

### Mean Ratings of the Medium of Implementing Sexuality Education in Secondary School

Results from the analysis on table 2 show that all the 8 items were accepted by the respondents as good medium of implementing sexuality education in secondary schools.

### Mean Ratings on the Extent Sexuality Education Equips Adolescents towards Positive Relationships

Results in table 3 show that with exception of item 4 with mean score of 2.37, all the other five (5) items have mean score above the cut-off mean of 2.50. This indicates that sexuality education equips the adolescents extensively with positive attitudes towards relationship. From the measure of inter-rater consistency, Standard deviation respondents rating for each item is slim, indicating homogeneity in responses.

### **Result of no Significant Difference between Male and Female Adolescent Students on the Perceived Influence of Sexuality Education on Social Personal Development**

The result in table 4 show that male had a mean rating of 2.96 with Standard deviation 0.98, while female had a mean rating of 3.35 with Standard deviation of 0.73, yielding a calculated Z-value of 6.38. Since this is greater than the table critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of probability, the hypothesis is rejected showing that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the perceived influence on sexuality education on their personal social development.

### **Z-test result of no Significant Difference between Junior and Senior In-school Adolescents on Influence of Sexuality Education on Personal Social Development.**

Result from the analysis on table 5 shows that senior respondents had a mean rating of 3.34 and Standard deviation of 0.64 while junior respondents had a mean rating of 3.32 with Standard deviation 0.84, yielding a calculated Z-value of 0.38. Since this is less than the critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of probability, the hypothesis is accepted. This infers that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of senior and junior in-school adolescent on influence of sexuality on personal social development.

## **6. Discussion**

The study was guided by the three research questions and two hypotheses which focused on areas of sexuality education covered in secondary school, how sexuality education equips students with positive attitudes towards relationships and the medium of implementing sexual education in secondary school. The result showed that areas sexuality education covered in secondary school curriculum include human anatomy and physiology, secondary sexual characteristics, danger of casual sex, pre-marital sex relationship, importance of sexual abstinence and danger of unprotected sex. This is in line with Onyegagbu (2002) that sexuality education is integrated into secondary school, biology and integrated sciences curriculum for sustainable development. Also according to the result the medium of implementing sexuality education in secondary school include issues in sexuality being discussed during guidance programme in school taught in biology, religion, integrated science and health science classes respectively. This finding is in consonance with Nnodim (2007) who believe that sexuality education should be taught in biology and integrated science classes. Okafor (1997) and Adesanya (1984) also had similar conclusions on how sexuality education equips the adolescents with positive attitudes towards relationship. The result shows that sexuality education does not help adolescent terminate relationship that is seductive. However sexuality education helps one to learn to relate with opposite sex without fear, helps one to identify relationship that might lure to casual sex, and discourages one from pre-marital and casual sex. This discovery agreed with Ochiagha's (1994) submission that human sexuality education is a programmed package for equipping individuals with appropriate knowledge, skills and information that will enable them to understand and handle their sexuality personally and in relation to others. Similarly, Anyaegbunam (2003) stated that sexuality education is the process of acquiring information and forming attitudes and beliefs about sex, sexual identity, relationship and intimacy. In this study there is a strong notion that sexuality education equips adolescents with positive attitudes towards relationship. The result of the study also showed that no significant difference exist in the mean ratings of senior and junior secondary school adolescents on influence of sexuality education on the personal social development. However significant difference exists in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the perceived influence on sexuality education on the personal social development.

## **7. Conclusion and Recommendation**

It is imperative that sexuality education equips in-school adolescents with positive attitudes towards relationship. It has been discovered that absence of sexuality education in our school programme is one of the problems facing our society. This made this study a necessity.

The implication of the findings is that parents will realize the need to discuss sexual matters with their adolescent children thereby having interests in their feelings and concerns. It equally implies that teachers and school guidance counsellors will realize the need and medium through which adolescents should be guided appropriately on sexual matters. Equally the government and curriculum planers through the findings of the study will see the need to draw educational policies regarding sexuality education with regards to adolescents (including youths and adult generations).

The present study was limited by the fact that during the period of data collection some schools were on vacation resulting to unnecessary delay in data collection. It would have been easier if the data was collected at the beginning or middle of a term. Furthermore, the location nature of the schools used for the study also caused delay in data collection. The researchers then suggest that the work be replicated in other areas (schools) in Imo state, Nigeria.

Finally, the study recommends that there is urgent need for teachers and counselors to be equipped with materials of teaching sexuality education in secondary schools which must be integrated in the curriculum. Such

include materials for explaining anatomical and physical change in man. Sexuality education should be one of the school subjects, included in the school timetable and made compulsory at levels of secondary and tertiary levels of education.

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## Tables

**Table 1: Mean Ratings of the Area of Sexuality Education Covered by Secondary School Curriculum.**

S/N	Item	$\bar{X}$	STD	Decision
1	Human anatomy (structure )	3.46	0.603	<b>Accepted</b>
2	Human physiology (functions)	3.62	0.652	<b>Accepted</b>
3	Secondary sexual characteristics such as breast, pubic hair, etc	3.68	0.529	<b>Accepted</b>
4	Danger of casual sex	3.48	0.804	<b>Accepted</b>
5	Danger of per-marital sex	3.50	0.696	<b>Accepted</b>
6	Danger of unprotected sex	3.41	0.784	<b>Accepted</b>
7	Relationship (boy-girl, boy-boy, girls-girls)	3.53	0.760	<b>Accepted</b>
8	<b>Importance of sexual abstinence</b>	<b>3.66</b>	<b>0.824</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

**Table 2: Mean of the Medium of Implementing Sexuality Education in Secondary School**

S/N	Item	$\bar{X}$	STD	Decision
1	Issues on sexuality matters are discussed during guidance programme in school	3.52	0.730	Accepted
2	Aspects of sexuality are taught in biology class	3.37	0.620	Accepted
3	Sexuality education is taught during moral instructions	3.16	0.773	Accepted
4	Information on sexuality education is given during group counseling	3.36	0.758	Accepted
5	It is also taught in religious programme	3.16	0.480	Accepted
6	It is taught in integrated science class	2.73	1.190	Accepted
7	It is also taught in health science class	3.37	0.684	Accepted
8	<b>Printed information on sex education and sexuality transmitted disease are provided in schools along with other sex related issues (using posters)</b>	<b>3.18</b>	<b>0.873</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

**Table 3: Mean Ratings on the Extent Sexuality Education Equips Adolescents towards Relationships Positively**

S/N	Item	$\bar{x}$	STD	Decision
1	Helped one to learn to relate with opposite sex without fear	3.64	0.598	Accepted
2	With sexuality education one can identify relationship that might lure one to casual sex	3.25	0.584	Accepted
3	terminate relationship that will hurt	2.91	0.733	Accepted
4	terminate relationship that is seductive	2.37	1.011	Accepted
5	one will be discouraged from causal sex	2.53	1.108	Accepted
6	<b>one will be discouraged form pre-marital sex</b>	<b>3.44</b>	<b>0.662</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

**Table 4: Result of no Significant Difference between Male and Female Adolescent Students on the Perceived Influence of Sexuality Education on Social Personal Development.**

Variable	N	$\bar{x}$	STD	Z-cal	$\alpha$	Z-tab	Decision
Male	400	2.96	0.98				
				6.38	0.05	1.96	Rejected
Female	400	3.35	0.73				

**Table 5: Z-test result of no Significant Difference between Junior and Senior In-school Adolescents on Influence of Sexuality Education on Personal Social Development.**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	STD	Z-cal	$\alpha$	Z-tab	Decision
Senior	345	3.34	0.64				
				6.38	0.05	1.96	Accepted
Junior	455	3.32	0.84				

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