

## Assessment of Parents and Teachers' Attitude towards Sexuality Education as a Subject in Nigerian Secondary Schools

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**Abstract.** The study investigated the assessment of parents and teachers' attitude towards sexuality education as a subject in Nigerian Secondary schools. The survey research method was adopted. The sample for the study consisted of 400 teachers and parents selected from Edo South Senatorial District in Edo State. The research instrument was a questionnaire titled: "Assessment of Parents and Teachers Attitude of Sexuality Education". Data collected was analyzed using the disproportionate stratified random sampling technique. Analyses of data revealed among others that teachers and parents have a good attitude about sexuality education as a subject in Nigerian secondary schools. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that sexuality education should be introduced in schools early enough. Since both parents and teachers are understandably disposed to sexuality education, public enlightenment should be carried out to improve on public attitude towards sexuality education.

**Keywords:** Parents, Teachers, Attitude, Sexuality Education, Secondary Schools

### 1. Introduction

In every age and society, human sexuality has always been a topic of discussion and debate although, this concept is mostly misunderstood by many, especially, parents and teachers because of little knowledge about sexuality education. The concept, sexuality dates back to many years ago in Nigeria, especially among the Edo people in the mid-west region. The aged people were reported to have laid emphasis on care of self, act of procreation, emerging population and health concern. These views led to the re-thinking and re-identification of the relationship

between sexuality and human activity and behavior. Invariably, the concept of sexuality has undergone many changes in the past forty years. The emergence of the sexual revolution has also impacted greatly on sexual orientations, patriarchy, sexual relations, family formations and reproduction (Adepoju, 2005).

Sexuality education has been conceptualized by various scholars. According to AHI (2003), sexuality education is a planned process of education that fosters the acquisition of factual information; the formation of positive attitudes, beliefs and values as well as the development of skills to cope with the biological, psychological, socio-cultural and spiritual aspects of human sexuality. The issues listed to be learnt are those related to anatomy, physiology and bio-chemistry of the sexual response system which determines identity, orientations, thoughts and feelings as influenced by values, beliefs, ethics and moral concern (Adepoju, 2005). It is the interactive relationship of these dimensions that describes an individual's total sexuality (SIECUS, 1995). Also sexuality education teaches religious principles, beliefs, rules and regulations and ethical considerations that affect everyday interactions just as culture, role models in the family and friends impact on people as well. Sexuality education is simple the art of learning how to conform to a certain art of living by being able to reason, examine and monitor oneself in clearly defined term.

Sexuality education seeks to assist young people in understanding positive view of sexuality, provide them with information and skills about taking care of their sexual health, and help them make sound decisions now and in the future.

Comprehensive sexuality education programmes have four main goals which SIECUS Report (2001) outlined to:

- Provide accurate information about human sexuality.
- Provide opportunity for young people to develop and understand their values and beliefs about sexuality.
- Help young people develop relationships and interpersonal skills, and
- Help young people exercise responsibility regarding sexuality relationships, including abstinence, pressures to become prematurely involved in sexual intercourse, and the use of contraceptive and other sexual health measures.

Sexuality education is a very important concept that should be included in our school curriculum. This is supported by Ikpe (2004) that sexuality defines the very essence of one's humanity including one's self-image, being male or female, physical look and reproductive capacity, that is a natural part of life. It is about the way people are made, how they feel about themselves, what roles they play in the society and how they procreate.

Culture as a way of life determines to a large extent, human behavior. It is a patterned, learned, shared and adaptive and it is transmittable from one generation to the other (Basso, 1997). Culture has a way of influencing everything we do. It can be perpetuated and has the potential to overpower intervention programs and educational innovations. According to Panneerselvam and Ramakrishnan (2005), the world culture denotes acquired behaviours which are shared by and transmitted among members of society. It is heritage into which a child is born. However, most Nigerian cultures abhor open discussion on sexual matters, though Western education is affecting this world view.

Religious and spiritual beliefs influence feelings about morality, sexual behavior, pre-marital sexual behavior, adultery, divorce, contraception, abortion and masturbation (Greenberg, Bruce & Haffer, 2000). Sexuality education can be seen as yet another religion which is not necessarily different from what already obtains.

## 2. Statement of Problem

In view of the foregoing controversies that surround sexuality education in Nigeria, it is doubtful if parents and teachers would have alignment of

opinions concerning this emerging area if presented as a school subject. Their perceptions are very important here because they are the principal stakeholders in the curriculum process. Thus, unless they have good perceptions of the subject, they may not be able to fulfill their roles in the implementation process. Their awareness, understanding, and commitment are necessary for effective implementation of any curriculum programme. The thrust of this study therefore is to find out how parents and teachers perceive sexuality education as a subject of study in Nigerian secondary schools, at a time when everyone needs knowledge on sexuality education as a way of combating the scourge of HIV/AIDS.

## 3. Research Questions

To guide the study, two research questions were raised and answered:

- Are parents favourably disposed towards sexuality education?
- Are teachers favourably disposed towards sexuality education?

## 4. Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is the descriptive survey research method. The population of this study includes parents and secondary school teachers of the South Senatorial District of Edo State, Nigeria. The sample size of the study was 400 respondents. Using the disproportionate stratified random sampling technique, two hundred (200) teachers and two hundred (200) parents were sampled. The instrument was Attitude on Sexuality Education in Secondary Schools questionnaire. It was sub-divided into two sections: A and B. Section A contained the demographic data and Section B had fifteen four-choice statements on a Likert type scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

The internal consistency reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach alpha formulae and an alpha value of 0.90 was obtained which showed that it was highly reliable for use. Data was collected by the researchers with the help of school teachers and students who took the questionnaire home to their parents and collected them from them after filling. Data was analysed using simple percentages, mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions raised.

**5. Presentation of Results**

The data collected were analyzed based on the research questions earlier raised.

**Research Question One:** Are parents favourably disposed toward sexuality education?

**Table 1:** Parents’ disposition towards sexuality education

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean Percentage
Parents’ disposition toward sexuality education.	200	44.51	2.46	74.17%

Table 1 shows a mean of 44.51 and standard deviation of 2.46 and a mean percentage of 74.17%. This means that parents have good disposition towards sexuality education.

**Research Question Two:** Are teachers favourably disposed toward sexuality education?

**Table 2:** Teachers’ disposition towards sexuality education

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean Percentage
Teachers’ disposition toward sexuality education.	200	45.71	2.53	76.18%

Table 2 shows a mean of 45.71, standard deviation of 2.53 and a mean percentage of 76.18%. This shows that teachers have good disposition to sexuality education.

**6. Discussion of Findings**

From the results, it shows that parents and teachers have good disposition to sexuality education. This is supported by the works of Brindis and Davis (1998) and the United States National Commission on Adolescent Sexual Health (1995). Iyamah (2007) noted that since the outbreak and diagnosis of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) that causes the Acquired Immune-Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) in 1981, research on human sexuality and sexuality education seem to have increased and more focused on the adolescents needs. Nwagbara (2004), Adara (2002), Ukoha (2004) are few to be mentioned. The studies on sexuality education focused on different perspectives.

The need for sexuality education in secondary schools cannot be overemphasized. Sexuality education has the potential to prepare an individual for good life in the society both physical, socially, emotionally, physiologically and otherwise. Since sexuality education is only a topic in Social Studies, and considering the importance of sexuality education in checking social ills (like teenage pregnancy, promiscuity and the likes), the topic should be mounted as a separate subject in the Nigerian secondary schools to get the desired publicity and prominence.

**7. Conclusion and Recommendations**

The findings of this study revealed that both parents and teachers have good disposition towards sexuality

education and so should be introduced in Nigeria secondary schools as a subject.

The study hereby recommends that sexuality education be introduced in Nigerian secondary schools and in major component of Social Studies seeing that both parents and teachers feel favourably disposed. The researchers further recommend that there should be more enlightenment targeted at the poorly educated and rural dwellers on the importance of sexuality education, to enable them change their poor perception towards sexuality education.

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