

Research Article

A Study of the Level of Awareness and Attitude of Upper Basic Social Studies Students towards Sex Education

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Abstract: The study investigated the Social Studies students level of awareness and attitude towards sex education. This study employed an ex-post facto research design. Four hundred students participated in the study. The research instrument was the questionnaire tagged “Students Level Awareness and Attitude Towards Sex Education (SLAATSE). The data collected were analysed using the using t-test statistics test of significance. Data collected were tested using one-way sample and independent-sample t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The research found out that there is no significant difference in Social Studies students level of awareness of sex education; that there is no significant difference in Social Studies students' attitude towards sex education; that Social Studies students level of awareness and attitude towards sex education did not vary based on gender. One of the recommendations is that Social Studies teachers should teach comprehensive sex education without any element of bias to any aspect of sex education content.

Keywords: Social Studies; Social Studies Students; Level of Awareness; Attitude; Sex Education; Awareness and Attitude towards Education; Gender.

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INTRODUCTION

Students face mounting pressures concerning sex, together with conflicting norms and messages. Sex is perceived as negative and associated with guilt, fear and disease, but through the media and friends, it is portrayed as positive and desirable. Such mounting pressures and demands may be perpetuated by inaccurate information, skills, misinformation and awareness of their rights and by gender expectations.

Few young or adolescents receive adequate information and preparation for their sexual lives. This leaves most of them possibly vulnerable to abuse, unintended pregnancy, exploitation, Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Infections (STDIs), including HIV, and coercion. Many adolescent students approach adulthood confronted with misinformation, confusing and conflicting messages about sex and sex education. This is habitually aggravated by silence, non-approval or displeasure of open discussion of sexual issues by adolescents and adults, including teachers and parents, and embarrassment at the very time when sex education is most needed (Chukwuma, Obiekea & Ovi, 2013). There are many sceneries globally were adolescents or young students who are becoming sexually active and mature at a very earlier age. We have a choice before us; allow children to discover through the mired of

misinformation, abuse, outright exploitation, and lack of information that they will find or learn from unscrupulous peers. Learn and discover from the internet and other media; alternatively confront the task of providing clear or flawless, accurate and scientifically-reliable sex education founded on the universal best values of fundamental human rights and respect (Onoyase, 2018).

The formal introduction of sex education in schools has met with a lot of misconception and controversies by parents, students, teachers and the society in general. Sex education also referred to by some scholars as sexuality education, attracts superfluity of meaning from different experts and scholars. Sex education for Frimpong (2010) is the systematic effort to advance healthy knowledge in the individual on matters of sexual functioning, growth and development, attitudes and behaviour by way of direct teaching. Similarly, Njoku (2008) expatiated that sex education is an organised education process that cultivates or promote the acquisition of relevant and accurate information. According to him, it is the development of positive behaviours and attitudes, values, beliefs, the formation of skills to handle the psychological, social, spiritual, cultural, and biological facets of human sexuality.

Sex education range from direct teaching around biological plumbing across decision-making and value-oriented approaches (Lamp, 2013). The resultant outcome of sex education is the advancement and progression in the awareness of bodily functions and sexually mature attitude and behaviour or even abstinence. Finger (2000) asserted that sex education could make adolescents delay their first intercourse or, if already sexually active, use preventive measures like contraceptives.

Sex education awareness is defined as the facts or information acquired (formally or informally) by students on concepts and contents in sex education. The knowledge that is received by these students or adolescents does not automatically relate to their attitudes; one may know something but still have a different attitude towards it (Gardner, 2015). An attitude can change and influence an individual's behaviour towards an issue. Attitude does not deal with experience or application.

In this study, attitude is conceptualised as the views a student have toward the issues brought up in sex education; that is, what they think about the subject or how they personally feel towards it. Attitude is a psychological premise, understanding, belief, or proposition concerning or relating to those things that are believed to be true. This means that an attitude is an individuals' perception of what he or she considers right; it may not necessarily be supported by other people (Ndidi, 2012).

Effective sex education is a significant aspect of sexual abuse, misinformation, abuse, unintended pregnancy, exploitation, Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Infections (STDIs), HIV prevention. It is also vital to the realisation of Universal Access targets for reproductive health. Comprehensive sex education can drastically shift the trajectory of sexual abuse, misinformation, abuse, unintended pregnancy, exploitation, Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Infections (STDIs), HIV. Adolescents will be apparent in their press for better and more sex education to meet their information and prevention needs. Therefore, comprehensive sex education has to be implemented in schools. Nevertheless, for the success or attainment of any education, the awareness and attitude of the students have to be established. Based on this premise, the study examined Social Studies students' level of awareness and attitude towards sex education.

Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, lots of studies have done since the introduction and teaching of sex education in schools' to ascertain students' awareness and attitude towards it. According to Omale (2011), sex education is indeed an aspect of secondary school programme or curriculum, and it was taught even though the parts of social skills

and preventive measures such as contraception were not taught.

Sex education has been introduced in schools to help boost students' awareness and attitude on the risks of irresponsible sexual behaviour. According to Mukoro (2017), efforts to enhance students level of awareness have not yielded the need result because students do not seem to be applying their awareness acquired to their sexual behaviour. The increasing rate of teenage and unwanted pregnancies, misinformation, sexual abused and exploitation, STD infections, HIV infections, are devastating factors to the growth and development of the nation, adolescents and their future. This study focused on the Social Studies students' level of awareness and attitude towards sex education.

Research Questions

The study was guided with the following research questions:

1. What is the level of awareness of sex education of Social Studies students?
2. What is the attitude of students towards sex education?
3. What is the difference between male and female students level of awareness of sex education?
4. What is the difference between male and female students' attitude towards sex education?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were postulated and tested.

1. There is no significant difference in the level of awareness of sex education of Social Studies students.
2. There is no significant difference in the attitude of Social Studies students towards sex education.
3. There is no significant difference between male and female students level of awareness of sex education.
4. There is no significant difference between male and female students attitude towards sex education.

Concept of Awareness

Traditionally, the term awareness has often been used synonymously with the term "consciousness", which has been called a "mongrel" concept, owing to the variety of its definitions (Block, 1995). Awareness involves the agent or actor whose cortical representation is activated when attention is directed to it (Damasio, 1994). The word awareness according to American Heritage in his dictionary of English Language (2000) is defined as the state of the fact of knowing, familiarity, or understanding gained through experience or study, it is synonymous with information, learning, erudition, lore, scholarship. Longman, in his dictionary of contemporary English (2003) also defined awareness as the skills, knowledge,

and understanding that one has gained or acquired through learning or experience. In continuation; knowing that something has happened or is true: spoken used to say that something is not valid, based on what you know: information that you have about a particular situation and event among others; It is a state of knowing. Awareness encompasses complex cognitive reasoning, insight, association, learning, communication, and progression.

According to Reinhardt, Mletzko, Sloep and Drachsler (2012), awareness is the understanding of the activities and actions of others, which offer a framework for one's activity. Awareness does not denote some or any unique category of the mental or intellectual state existing independently or separately of action. But an individual being aware of issues or something. Awareness embroils knowledge of who is around and within, what activities or actions that are occurring, who is interacting or communicating with whom; it provides a perception of one another in the day-to-day work environments (Noorriati, Shireen, Hashim, 2013).

The Concepts of Attitude

Attitude has been explained, described and defined by many authors in different ways. Even though it has no single universally accepted definition, all the definitions still convey the same meaning. Longman dictionary (2000), defined attitudes as opinions and feelings which a person has about something and Arken (1999) sees it as learned predispositions to respond positively or negatively to particular objects, situations, concepts or other persons. Arken felt that attitudes are not inborn in man but are acquired through life. Ratanasiripong and Chai (2013), agreed with Arken when he said that attitudes are learned through orientation. He further stated that attitudes could be either positive or negative.

Britannica (1997) described attitude as a predisposition to classify objects or events and to react to them with some degree of evaluative consistency. Han, Ferris, Waller, Tharp, Walter and Allmond (2012) also agreed with this view when he stated that attitude is a relatively enduring predisposition to respond in a reasonably consistent manner toward a person, object, situation, or idea. By enduring, it connotes that attitudes of an individual can persist for a long time. Attitudes are not objectively observable but inferred from behaviour and manifest in conscious experience, verbal reports, gross behaviour and the like.

Bohner and Dickel (2011) stated that attitudes are important determinants of behaviours. The above definitions show that attitudes determine the way individuals behave towards issues, situations, events, objects and other people. They also show that attitudes meted out to objects or other persons as the case may

be, do not necessarily depend on their real situations but rather, on the way they are perceived. The definitions also reveal the consistency and enduring characteristics of attitudes which therefore suggests that to make people change their attitudes would require an excellent programme on attitudinal change, especially where such attitudes affect others negatively.

Sex Education

Sex education is a significant component or aspect of well-being and overall health man. It is a key positive aspect of healthy living and personal health. This implies that sex education should be available and accessible to all as a significant aspect of health services and promotion (Oganwu, 2003). Sex education is essentially relatively an extensive one used to describe teaching relating to human sexual anatomy, reproduction, intercourse and other components connected to human sexual behaviour. It can be said to be a mechanism or procedures, which stands for the protection, enhancement and development of the human person and family based on putative ethical values and ideas (European Expert Group on Sexuality Education, 2016). Mavedzenge, Doyle and Rose (2011) see it as the education which teaches young ones what he or she should know for his or her conduct and relationship with others.

Omale (2015) defined sex education as not just a unit or aspect in human reproduction and education on pregnancy and how babies are born. Rather, it is that which have a comprehensive scope and objectives of assisting the young ones in assimilating sexual values, ideals and norms that would provide them with a fundamental understanding of practically every component sex education, and enable them to recognise inaccurate information, sexual abuse and exploitation, for them to interact sympathetically with others who differ in their sexual values, ideals and norms.

Literature Review

Nonhlahla (2008) surveyed the attitude of students towards sex education. Two hundred students were sampled. The result showed that students had positive attitudes towards sex education. Students differ in their view based on gender. Frimpong (2010) investigated students' attitude and knowledge of sex education. One hundred and twenty (120) students were involved in the study, while, ANOVA was used to analyse the data. The study indicated that there was no significant difference in the knowledge and attitude of students towards sex education. More so, students' gender has a significant influence on the knowledge and attitude of students towards sex education. Jagadish and Siddegowda (2013) examined the awareness and attitude of students in 8th, 9th and 10th standard. The study was conducted in Nine-Districts of Karnataka State, India, covering 1296 students. The findings indicate that the knowledge level is low among the

students and a positive attitude towards sexuality education. Gender and location were also significant.

Kamalpreet (2013) investigated parents, students, and teachers' attitude toward sex education. The study made use of 200 teachers, parents and students from Ludhiana district of Punjab. The result indicated that students' sex education attitude were not significant. Gender was significant. Omale (2013) examined Social Studies Students' opinion on sex education in Dekina, Kogi State. Four hundred and ninety-seven students were sampled. The result demonstrated that students' view and attitude was positive. Students' gender was significant.

METHOD

Table 1. Demographic information of Sampled Social Studies students

Variables	Groups	F	%
Gender	Male	186	46.5
	Female	214	53.5
Total		400	100

As indicated in Table 1, 46.5% of sampled students in the research are male, while 53.5% of the respondents are female.

Data Collection Tools

The study instrument was the questionnaire tagged "Students Level Awareness and Attitude Towards Sex Education (SLAATSE)". The instrument consisted of two sections, section 'A' and 'B'. Section 'A' contained personal information of the respondent, while Section "B" was made up of 20-items instrument based on Students Awareness and Attitude Towards Sex Education. The 20-items in the questionnaire were put into clusters as follows: Cluster A involved information on Students Awareness which contained items (1–10) and Cluster B bordered on Students attitude which formed items (10–20). The items in the instrument were rated or made up on a four-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA) 4, Agree (A) 3, Disagree (D) 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1.

Table 2: One sample statistics Mean and Standard Deviation of Level of Awareness of Sex Education of Social Studies Students'

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
AWARENESS	400	2.20	0.52	.0485

Table 2 revealed that the mean ratings of the participants on the ten items on students' level of awareness of sex education had a mean rating of 2.20 and is lesser than 2.50 (cut-off point). Since the mean score is below the cut-off point of 2.50, one can,

The research design utilised in this study was the Ex-post facto design. In this design, a researcher intends to describe conditions that already exist and attempts to determine the reasons for the existing differences in behaviour (Gay, 1992).

Sample

The research was carried out on 400 Social Studies students drawn from forty (40) public Upper basic schools. In each school, ten (10) students in Delta Central Senatorial District were sampled. The sampling technique for the study was the simple random sampling technique to draw sample from the population. Demographic data of Sampled Social Studies students used for the study is given in Table 1.

Method of Data Analysis

In the analysis of the data, besides using the descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation to provide answers to the research questions, one-way sample and independent-sample t-test were used at 0.05 level of significance. Given the four-point scale in the questionnaires, a mean of 2.50 and above was accepted as cut-off point and considered a high level of awareness and positive attitude while a mean score below 2.50 was deemed to be a low level of awareness and negative attitude towards sex education.

RESULTS

Research Questions 1

What is the level of awareness of sex education of Social Studies students?

therefore, infer that the sex education awareness level of Social Studies students is low.

Research Questions 2

What is the attitude of students towards sex education?

Table 3: One sample statistics Mean and Standard Deviation of Attitude of Social Studies Students' towards Sex Education

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ATTITUDE	400	2.67	0.27	.06451

Data presented in Table 3 shows the mean responses of Social Studies students attitude towards sex education. The average of the mean response of 2.67 on the ten items on students attitude towards sex education indicated that Social Studies students have a positive attitude towards sex education. Since the mean score was above the cut of point of 2.50, one can,

therefore, infer that the attitude of Social Studies students towards sex education was positive. Thus, they are positive dispose to sex education.

Research Question 3

What is the difference between male and female students level of awareness of sex education?

Table 4: Two sample statistics Mean and Standard Deviation of Level of Awareness and Gender of Students

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Mean Difference
Awareness	Male	186	1.72	.31147	.06088	.2400
	Female	214	1.48	.30108	.06464	

Data in Table 4. showed the male and female Social Studies students level of awareness of sex education. It is revealed from the table that male students mean level of awareness of sex education is 1.72 and a standard deviation of 0.31, while that of their female counterparts is 1.48 and a standard deviation of .30. It implies that male students had a slightly (.24)

higher level of awareness of sex education than the female students.

Research Question 4

What is the difference between male and female students' attitude towards sex education?

Table 5: Two sample statistics Mean and Standard Deviation of Attitude towards Sex Education and Students Gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Mean Difference
Attitude	Male	186	2.68	.26987	.06599	.02288
	Female	214	2.65	.30441	.07390	

Data in Table 5 showed the male and female students attitude towards sex education scores. It is revealed from the table that male students mean attitude towards sex education is 2.68 and a standard deviation of 0.27, while that of their female counterparts is 2.65 and a standard deviation of .30. It implies that male

students had a slightly (.023) higher positive attitude towards sex education than the female students.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the level of awareness of sex education of Social Studies students.

Table 6: One-Samples t-test for Social Studies Students Level of Awareness

Variable	Test Value = 0						
	N	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	5% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Awareness	400	-.363	399	.718	-.03273	-.21464	.14918

Table 6 shows the testing of the level of awareness of sex education for significance; the result revealed that there is no significant difference in students level of awareness of sex education. The analysis shows a no significant result at t (t= -.363), df (399) with p=0.718 at 0.05 level of significance. Since the (p<0.718) result is higher than the level of

significance (0.05), the null hypothesis is, therefore accepted. This implies that students did not differ in their level of awareness of sex education.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the attitude of Social Studies students towards sex education.

Table 7: One-Samples t-test for Social Studies Students' Attitude towards Sex Education

Variable	Test Value = 0						
	N	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	5% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Attitude	400	-.242	399	.000	-.05651	-.21289	.18711

Table 7 shows the testing of the attitude of Social Studies students towards sex education for

significance. The result shows that there is no significant difference in Social Studies students' attitude

towards sex education. This is revealed by the calculated t (-.242), df (399), $P < 0.001$ with a mean difference of (-.057) at a significant level of 0.05. Since the ($p < 0.001$) result is higher than the level of

significance (0.05), the null hypothesis is, therefore accepted. This demonstrates that there exists no significant difference in Social Studies students' attitude towards sex education.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference between male and female students level of awareness of sex education.

Table 8: Independent Samples t-test of Social Studies Students' Level of Awareness by Gender

	Levene Test for Equality of Variance		t-test for Equality of Means				Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	N	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference		Lower	Upper
Awareness									
Equal variances assumed	400	.765	.526	399	.612	.2400	.11182	-1444	.25081
Equal variances not assumed			.526	40.767	.612	.2400	.11182	-1444	.25082

Table 8 shows the testing of the level of awareness of environmental education by gender for significance. The result established that there was no significant difference in Social Studies teachers' level of awareness of environmental education. The analysis shows a no significant result as t (0.526), df (399), with $p = 0.612$ at 0.05 level of significance. Also, the Levene's test for equality of variance shows no significance too ($F = 0.83$) and $P < 0.765$ compared to the level of significance of 0.05. Therefore, the null

hypothesis is accepted. This denotes that there was no significant difference between male and female Social Studies students' level of awareness of sex Education. Hence, it is concluded that the gender of students' does not affect their level of awareness of sex education.

Hypothesis 4

There is no significant difference between male and female students' attitude towards sex education.

Table 9: Independent Samples t-test of Social Studies Students' Attitude by Gender

	Levene Test for Equality of Variance		t-test for Equality of Means				Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	N	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference		Lower	Upper
Attitude									
Equal variances assumed	400	.522	.322	399	.781	.02278	.09807	-16756	.21522
Equal variances not assumed			.322	34.465	.781	.02278	.09807	-16765	.21531

Table 9 shows the testing of students' attitude towards sex education by gender for significance. The result shows that there is no significant difference in Social Studies student' attitude towards sex education. The analysis shows a no significant result at t (0.322), df (399), with $p = 0.781$ at 0.05 level of significance. Also, the Levene's test for equality of variance shows no significance too ($F = 0.344$) and $P = 0.522$ compared to the level of significance of 0.05. Therefore, the null

hypothesis is accepted. This submits that there is no significant difference between male and female Social Studies student' in their attitude towards sex Education. Hence, it is concluded that the gender of students' does not affect their attitude towards sex education.

DISCUSSION

The finding of the study validated that there is no significant difference in students level of awareness

of sex education and that students possessed a low level of awareness of sex education. The finding that students had a low level of awareness of sex education is not surprising since studies have shown that most students lack adequate and accurate information on issues concerning body and sexuality. This finding conforms with the works of Frimpong (2010), Jagadish and Siddegowda (2013), Kamalpreet (2013) and Omale (2015) who had earlier reported that students possessed a low level of awareness of sex education; and indicated a no significant difference in the level of awareness of sex education of students. It is at variance with Orji and Esimai (2003) Ojo and Fasuba (2005) who reported that students level of awareness of sex education was high and revealed a significant difference in the level of awareness of sex education of students. Students lack appropriate and valuable information, especially concerning their bodies, self-respect and sexuality. They are not equipped and well informed with the relevant and accurate skills and knowledge to make and make responsible decisions and choices in their sexuality and social lives. Many adolescents have given in to confide in friends and schoolmates who in most cases, mislead and give them unknowingly or knowingly inaccurate information. Also, most of them get and source information from their peers and social media, which in most cases are incorrect and inappropriate. It is likely that for these reasons, students level of awareness of sex education was found to be low. Omale (2014) noted that the low level of awareness of sex education showed by the students is understandable. He linked it to the relative lack of information and access to accurate information friends, social media, pornographic films and materials, which in most times mislead them and result in more confusion and havoc.

The finding of the study related that there is no significant difference in Social Studies students' attitude towards sex education. Students possess positive attitude towards sex education. This finding is in agreement with Nonhlahla (2008), Nwaoba (2010), Frimpong (2010), Jagadish and Siddegowda (2013), Eko, Abeshi, Osonwa, Uwanede and Offiong (2013), Kamalpreet (2013), Kinley (2015) who reported that students possessed positive attitudes towards sex education. This finding can be considered as a consistent result as it shows that the students are favourable to sex education programmes and its teaching. The conclusion that the participants have positive attitude towards sex education is also easy to understand. The fact is that students indicated that sex education programmes would provide valuable information, especially with regard to sexuality. They believe that sex education could improve their

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

The study result empirically demonstrated that there is no significant difference in students' level of

knowledge of sexuality. This positive attitude could also be seen as a reflection of their exposure to sex education in various areas in school.

Regarding the students' gender and their level of awareness of sex education, the present study revealed a no significant difference between both genders and their level of awareness of sex education. Thus, male and female students did not differ in their level of awareness of sex education which confirmed with conclusions found by previous studies. This finding is in credence with Orji and Esimai (2003), Ojo and Fasuba (2005), Nwaoba (2010), Nakpodia (2012), Ugwu (2012), and Omale (2015) in their study on students attitude towards sex education found no significant difference between male and female students in relation to their gender. The observation of no significant difference in respect of gender indicates that students gender do not influence their level of awareness. The main reason for almost equal sex awareness of male and female students can as a result of the fact that irrespective of gender, students still lack access to appropriate and accurate information to update their awareness regarding sexuality and sex issues.

The result of the study proved that male students showed a slightly positive attitude to their female counterparts. The hypothesis tested revealed that this observed slight difference in the mean scores of male and female students was not significant. This means that students attitude towards sex education was not sensitive to gender. This finding implies that students gender is not a significant factor that can influence students' attitude towards sex education. This result is consistent with Ugoji (2009), Nwaoba (2010), Eko, Abeshi, Osonwa, Uwanede and Offiong (2013), Onoyase (2018), reports that there is no significant difference between male and female students' attitude towards sex education. This result is in contrast with Nonhlahla (2008), Ojo and Fasuba (2005), Frimpong (2010) and Omale (2013), that reported a significant difference in their studies. The study, therefore, indicated that the variable of gender did not affect the attitude of students towards sex education. These findings could be attributed to the fact that some students may be are aware of sex education either through their parents, peers or the media, etc. The reason for this is that both genders believed that sex education and its programmes provide accurate, valuable information, especially concerning reproductive health and sexuality. Having no significant difference between male and female students proves that the attitude towards sex education has no relation with students' gender.

awareness of sex education and students level of awareness of sex education is low. The study result also established that there is no significant difference in Social Studies students' attitude towards sex education.

And that students possess positive attitude towards sex education. Gender had no significant influence on students' level of awareness and attitude towards sex education. One can thus conclude that a good number of students lack sex education awareness, likewise being positively disposed to the teaching and learning of sex education in Upper Basic schools. Considering that it is important to teach sex education in schools, it can be said that it may be of great benefit to organise sex education activities and programme to increase students level of awareness and sustain their attitude.

Recommendations

Founded on the findings study the results, it was recommended that:

1. Social Studies teachers should teach comprehensive sex education without any element of bias to any aspect of sex education content.
2. There should be public awareness or enlightenment campaigns by the government to help increase students level of awareness of sex education.
3. In the teaching of sex education, emphasis should not be on students' gender.
4. Social Studies teacher should be trained on innovative and new pedagogies that allow them to implement sex education curriculum effectively.
5. Necessary information for the proper understanding of sex education by students, teachers and parents should be provided.
6. There should be engagement of all effort and resources necessary for the effective implementation of sex education in teaching and learning.

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