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Sex Education, A Way Forward towards Biology Curriculum Delivery in Secondary Schools in Anambra State (Pp. 224-233)

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Abstract

This study examined the need for the inclusion of sex education in the secondary school biology curriculum in Anambra State since the non-inclusion was viewed as an inadequacy in the biology curriculum. The study was a survey design. Three research questions and one null hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. Mean was used in answering the research questions while t-test statistical analysis was used in testing the null hypothesis at 0.05 statistical level of significance. The population of the study was 525 biology teachers distributed in the 259 government owned secondary schools in the six education zones of the state. 210 were selected to form the sample by simple random sampling who also served as parents out of which 63 were males while 147 were females. A 4-point summated rating scale questionnaire served as the instrument for data collection, which was both content and face validated, and its reliability determined using Pearson Moment Correlation coefficient which gave a value of 0.78. The findings among others showed that 92.38 percent of parents want sex education included in the biology curriculum. Some recommendations were made.

Introduction

The National Policy on Education (2004) specifies that in Nigeria's philosophy of education, education is an instrument for national development and fosters the worth and development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen, for each individual's sake, for the full integration of the individual into the community and for the general development of the society. The national educational goals derived from the philosophy include among others, the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society.

These national goals and philosophy of education can only be achieved through a well-planned curriculum. Uga (1990) sees curriculum as the total situation through which the school makes behavioural changes in those who pass through it. He also says that curriculum is the deliberate, systematic and planned attempts made by the school to change the behaviour of members of the society in which it situates. Wheeler (1980) defines curriculum as the planned experiences offered to the learner under the guidance of the school, while Tyler (1986) sees curriculum as all of the learning of students which is planned and directed by the school to attain its educational goals.

An examination of the secondary school biology curriculum indicates the non-inclusion of sex education. Issues, of sex and adolescents' sexual behaviours have been a controversial and explosive one in both developing and developed countries. This is because it is subsumed in the issue of morality (Esu, 1986).

Anameze (2002) sees sex education as the transmission of appropriate sex-based knowledge, values, attitudes and roles to children. It seeks to teach boys and girls the physiological functioning and use of sex organs and the expected roles of each sex organ. In the past, people thought sex and sexuality only to mean sexual intercourse, whereas they embrace species, growth and development of human body including physical, physiological, and emotional changes of all sexual behaviours.

Isangedighi (1986) stresses that the social tension, stress and inner turmoil among individuals and anxiety caused to families by adolescents' sexuality created room for the inclusion of sex education in the educational system. He goes further to say that this is due to indiscriminate practice of premarital sexuality among adolescents; the nature of adolescent body development; innate drive to act out; exposure of children to modernity; parental attitudes and inability to care, educate and control their children from premarital sex,

HIV/AIDS infection, other sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies, eroding morality, abortions, deaths, dropping out of schools, abandoned babies and child trafficking. All these retard the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategies (NEEDS) as well as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) hence inability to achieve the national educational goals and philosophy.

Thus these problems mentioned above can only be addressed by adopting a constructive and result oriented solution, which is the inclusion of sex education in the secondary school biology curriculum where sexual knowledge and counseling would be given very well by professionals.

Statement of the Problem

Sex is good because it is made possible by God, but man has made the act detrimental to his existence in most cases. The society at large experiences a lot of immoral acts which emanates from pre- or immature sexual relations and lack of sex education which breeds a lot of social ills, deaths, population explosion as a result of unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, et cetera. These prevent the achievements of the national goals and philosophy of education which in turn retard the development of the nation economically. The researchers therefore thought it wise to carry out a study on the need to include sex education in the secondary school biology curriculum.

Purpose of the Study

The attentions of the Nigerian educational and curriculum planners seem not have been drawn on the relevance of including sex education in secondary school biology curriculum. The purpose of this study therefore includes the following:-

- To determine the need for the introduction of sex education in secondary school biology curriculum.
- To ascertain the opinions of parents as regard the inclusion of sex education in secondary school biology curriculum.
- To find out if teachers' opinions about the inclusion differ based on gender.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide this study.

1. What are the needs for the inclusion of sex education in secondary school biology curriculum?

2. What are the opinions of parents as regards the inclusion of sex education in secondary school biology curriculum?
3. Will teachers' perceptions for the inclusion of sex education in secondary school biology curriculum differ due to gender?

Null hypothesis

The female teachers perceptions for the inclusion of sex education in secondary school biology curriculum will not differ significantly from those of their male counterparts.

Method

A descriptive survey design was used. This is because the information on facts, opinions, perceptions and views of the selected representation of the population were collected and analyzed, and the findings generalized for the entire population (Nworgu, 1991). The population was made up of 525 biology teachers from 259 government owned secondary schools scattered all over the six education zones of Anambra State (Aguata, Awka, Nnewi, Ogidi, Onitsha, and Otuocha). 210 (40%) biology teachers were selected out of the 525 through simple random sampling to serve as the population sample. 63 of them were males while 147 were females, for the fact that fewer male teachers were found in secondary schools (statistical records of Anambra State Post Primary Schools Service Commission, 2007). A 4- point summated rating scale questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection, thus, Strongly Agree (SA) = 4; Agree (A) = 3; Disagree (D) = 2; and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. This instrument was both face and content validated by three authorities from the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of the instrument was determined after computing the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) of data collected from the first and second administration of the questionnaire to 210 biology teachers in Enugu State (since it was part of the old Anambra State, thus have the same characteristic as the new Anambra State). This yielded a coefficient of 0.78, high enough for the instrument to be considered fit for the study. Mean was used in answering the research questions. Standard Deviation was used to determine level of final agreement or disagreement of the respondent to each questionnaire item, while t-test statistical analysis was used in testing the null hypothesis at 0.05 statistical level of significance.

Decision Rule

Biology teachers also answered the questions meant for the parents since they are also regarded as such. Any response with a mean of 2.5 and above was regarded as accepted or agreed, while that with 2.0 or less was not accepted.

Results

All the responses to the items in Table 1 scored more than 2.5 which is the accepted mean. This implies that there is need for the inclusion of sex education in secondary school biology curriculum.

Table 2 shows that most parents are of the opinion that sex education be taught in schools since 194 (92.38%) are of the view that it should not be left in the hands of parents alone. 185 (88.1%) say parents feel shy discussing sex issues with their children.

In table 3, all the items except item 9 each has its mean to be more than 2.5, which means the items were accepted by the respondents irrespective of gender. Item 9 however, has a mean of 1.8 for the male teachers and 1.6 for the female teachers, meaning that both did not agree to that item irrespective gender and this implies that sex education should be taught in schools and not left to the parents alone.

Findings and Discussion

Generally, biology teachers upheld the view that there is need for sex education in secondary school biology curriculum. This gains support from Esu (1986), who was of the view that sex education is required.

Most parents (92.38%) are of the view that sex education be taught in schools and not left in their hands since 88.1 percent of them feel shy discussing sex issues with their children. This gains support from Orhunger (1990) who says that it is the school that extends the range of human contacts of the child and introduces the child to values which are far beyond those of the immediate family. Cremin (1978) also said that our nation has made schools the central element in the complex phenomenon of education.

All the respondents accept the fact that the teaching of sex education in schools will go a long way towards reducing the problems associated with sex issues such premature death, abortion, school drop out, venereal diseases including HIV/AIDS, child trafficking, indiscipline, child abuse, unwanted pregnancies, etc cetera. This gains support from Isangedighi (1986), and

Ifedi (1977) who believe that adolescents' sexual problems can be reduced through sex education.

Biology teachers irrespective of gender favoured the inclusion of sex education in secondary school biology curriculum as evidenced from the fact that 61.9 percent of them admitted that neither the male nor the female teachers will find it difficult discussing sex education with either the female or male students respectively.

The female teachers' perceptions for the inclusion of sex education in secondary school biology curriculum did not differ significantly from those of their male counterparts. This gained support from Ofogebu (2004), who in his study in Imo State found that 80 percent of both the male and female teachers believe that sex education is necessary for a balanced education of the child.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study it becomes imperative that sex education be included in secondary school biology curriculum. This is because it will go a long way towards helping the nation achieve its millennium goals which include halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases, reducing child mortality, and improving maternal health as well as the economic empowerment development strategies, since all problems associated with premarital sex (e.g unwanted pregnancies, child abuse, child trafficking, dropping out of schools premature death, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) including HIV/AIDS, population explosion, et cetera) will be addressed.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:-

- A programme of study should be developed by the education policy makers and curriculum planners with a view to including sex education in secondary school biology curriculum. Such programme should among other things include Population Education, Adolescent Sexuality, Venereal diseases e.g. HIV/AIDS Education, and Sexual morality.
- Government should institute welfare and social service schemes for adolescents whose parents cannot adequately take care of.

- Parents have to be morally sound and of good behaviour so as to have the moral justification to counsel their children or wards.
- Workshops and Seminars should be organized to even educate both parents and teachers on sex education.
- Various religious denominations should find ways of discussing sex and its implications with their youths.

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Table 1: *Needs for the Inclusion of Sex Education in Secondary School Biology Curriculum.*

S/N	ITEMS	TOTAL	RESPONSES			MEAN	STANDARD	
		SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	(\bar{X})	DEVIATION (SD)	
1.	Adolescents sexual problem such as unwanted pregnancies will be reduced.	140	30	25	15	3.4	1.9	
2.	Students will be aware of the dangers in premarital sex and avoid them.	115	80	10	5	3.4	1.9	
3.	Students will be exposed to different birth control measures that will help to avoid unwanted pregnancies.	80	95	25	10	3.2	1.8	
4.	Students will develop good behaviour.	140	35	25	10	3.4	1.9	
5.	Social tension, stress, innertumoil and anxiety caused families by adolescent sexuality would be curbed.	50	110	30	20	2.9	1.7	

Table 2: Parents' Opinions towards the Inclusion of Sex Education in Secondary School Biology Curriculum

S/N	ITEMS	TOTAL RESPONSES				MEAN (\bar{X})	STANDARD DEVIATION (SD)	
		SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)			
1.	Parents see sex education as a social taboo and hardly discuss it with their children	76	64		31	39	2.8	1.7
2.	Sex education should be left only to the parents of each child.	12	4		100	94	1.7	1.3
3.	Parents have wrong perception of teaching sex education in secondary schools.	60	90		28	32	2.8	1.7
4.	Parents are very shy to discuss sex issues with their children.	72	113		10	15	3.2	1.8

Table 3: Teachers' perceptions for the inclusion of sex education in secondary school biology curriculum based on gender

S/N	ITEM	GEN- DER	TOTAL RESPONSES				MEAN (\bar{X})	STANDARD DEVIATION (SD)	
			SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)			
1.	Adolescent sexual problems such as unwanted pregnancies can be reduced.	M	43	10	5	5	3.4	1.9	
		F	97	20	20	10	3.4	1.9	
2.	Students will be aware of the dangers in premarital sex and avoid them.	M	30	30	2	1	3.4	1.9	
		F	85	50	8	4	3.4	1.9	
3.	Students will be exposed to different birth control measures.	M	20	35	5	3	3.1	1.8	
		F	60	60	20	7	3.2	1.8	
4.	Tension, stress, anxiety etc. caused by adolescents' sexualities to the family will be reduced.	M	20	29	10	4	3.0	1.7	
		F	30	81	20	16	2.9	1.7	
5.	Constraints to the inclusion of sex education are misconception, lack of government approval and support.	M	15	36	2	10	2.9	1.7	
		F	30	84	8	25	2.8	1.7	
6.	I will like to teach sex education.	M	40	22	1	0	3.6	1.9	
		F	70	68	7	10	3.1	1.8	
7.	I will be very comfortable teaching sex education.	M	29	30	30	1	3.4	1.9	
		F	43	90	7	7	3.1	1.8	

8.	<i>I will be bold enough to teach all about sex education to both male and female students.</i>	M	10	30	20	3	2.7	1.7
		F	28	51	49	19	2.6	1.6
9.	<i>Sex education should be left only to the parents of each child.</i>	M	3	0	40	20	1.8	1.3
		F	9	4	60	74	1.6	1.3
10.	<i>Sex education will help the students in their future and family life</i>	M	40	10	10	3	3.4	1.9
		F	80	50	10	7	3.4	1.9
<i>Mean of Means and Standard Deviation</i>							3.07	1.77
							3.96	1.74

Table 4: T-test Analysis on the Biology Teachers Perception for the Inclusion of Sex Education in Secondary School Biology Curriculum based on Gender

<i>GEN DER</i>	<i>ME AN \bar{X}</i>	<i>STANDARD DEVIATION (SD)</i>	<i>t-Cal</i>	<i>-Crit</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>f</i>
<i>M</i>	3.07	1.77	0.12	.96	10	08
<i>F</i>	2.96	1.74				

0.05 = Significance

Since t- critical is more than the Calculated value, the null hypothesis is accepted