



Attitude of parents towards sex education on their teenage children in Ikeduru Local Government Area, Imo State

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Abstract

This study investigated parental attitudes towards comprehensive sex education of teenagers Ikeduru Local Government Imo State. The researcher adopted a descriptive survey design for a total population size of 84,936 and a sample size of 460 using Taro Yamene. The data collected was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 26). The Objectives include To determine the attitude of parents towards sex education of teenagers in Ikeduru L.G.A., Imo State; and to identify the influence of level of education, cultural background, and religious affiliation on parental attitudes towards sex education of teenagers in Ikeduru L.G.A., Imo Also, Four Research Questions were used, which include: What is the attitude of parents towards sex education of teenagers in Ikeduru L.G.A., Imo State?; What is the influence of level of education, cultural background, and religious affiliation on parental attitudes towards sex education of teenagers in Ikeduru L.G.A., Imo State? The findings highlight the need for culturally sensitive and effective sex education policies, practices, and training. The results of the tests of the show, among others, that there is no significant difference between literate and illiterate parents in their attitudes towards the teaching of sex education of teenagers; and that there is no significant difference in the attitude of parents whether married, single, divorced, widowed etc toward the teaching of sex education. 26.2% of the respondents were of the opinion that teaching of sex education is something they always wanted to encourage. Also, 33.1% strongly agreed that the teaching of sex education provides opportunity for proper counseling. Based on the analysis and findings, we recommend that there is need to Conduct workshops for parents and educators, develop culturally relevant sex education curricula, engage community leaders in promoting sex education, and Monitor and evaluate sex education programs.

Keywords: Attitude, parents, sex education

Introduction

Background to the Study

Sexuality is an inherent aspect of human nature, influencing our thoughts, actions, and interactions. It plays a crucial role in physical and mental health, making it a fundamental focus of healthcare. Adolescence is a critical life stage when individuals transition from childhood to adulthood, facing various challenges, including navigating their sexuality. (Obeagu and Obeagu, 2019; Okoroiwu *et al.*, 2021) ^[14, 15]

Unfortunately, many adolescents lack access to reliable information and guidance on sex and sexuality due to societal myths and misconceptions. Parents, as primary agents of socialization, often struggle to provide adequate sex education, either due to inadequate knowledge or beliefs that discussing sex will corrupt their children. (Priceton, 2015).

According to Adeyemo, (2016), research shows that early experiences shape later sexual behavior, highlighting the importance of parents' roles in developing their children's sexual attitudes. Globally, the consequences of inadequate sex education are alarming, with escalating rates of unwanted pregnancies, STIs, HIV/AIDS, and prostitution among adolescents.

In Nigeria, surveys indicate a rise in school dropouts, teenage pregnancies, prostitution, and criminal abortions, with a concerning increase in homosexuality, lesbianism, and rape in educational institutions. The high number of adolescents attending antiretroviral therapy clinics underscores the urgency of addressing these issues.

In Imo State, Nigeria, sex education is a sensitive topic, often shrouded in cultural and religious taboos. However, the need for comprehensive sex education cannot be

overstated, given the high rates of teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in the region.

Historically, Sex education has its roots in ancient civilizations, where it was often linked to religious and cultural practices. In modern times, sex education emerged as a distinct field in the early 20th century, with the establishment of organizations like the American Social Hygiene Association (ASHA) and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). UNICEF. (2020)

Looking at it From the Global Perspective, sex education is recognized as a critical component of health education. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) emphasizes the importance of comprehensive sex education in promoting sexual health, rights, and well-being. In the Nigerian Context, sex education is not comprehensively integrated into school curricula, and cultural and religious factors often hinder open discussions about sexuality. However, efforts are being made to address these challenges, with organizations like the Society for Family Health (SFH) and the Nigerian government implementing initiatives to promote sex education. Specifically, Imo State, like other parts of Nigeria, faces challenges in providing comprehensive sex education. Cultural and religious beliefs, limited resources, and inadequate teacher training hinder effective implementation. Despite these challenges, there is a growing recognition of the need for sex education, particularly among parents, educators, and healthcare providers. The issue of sex education for teenagers has become a topic of concern in many societies across the world. The teenage years are a critical period of development when individuals

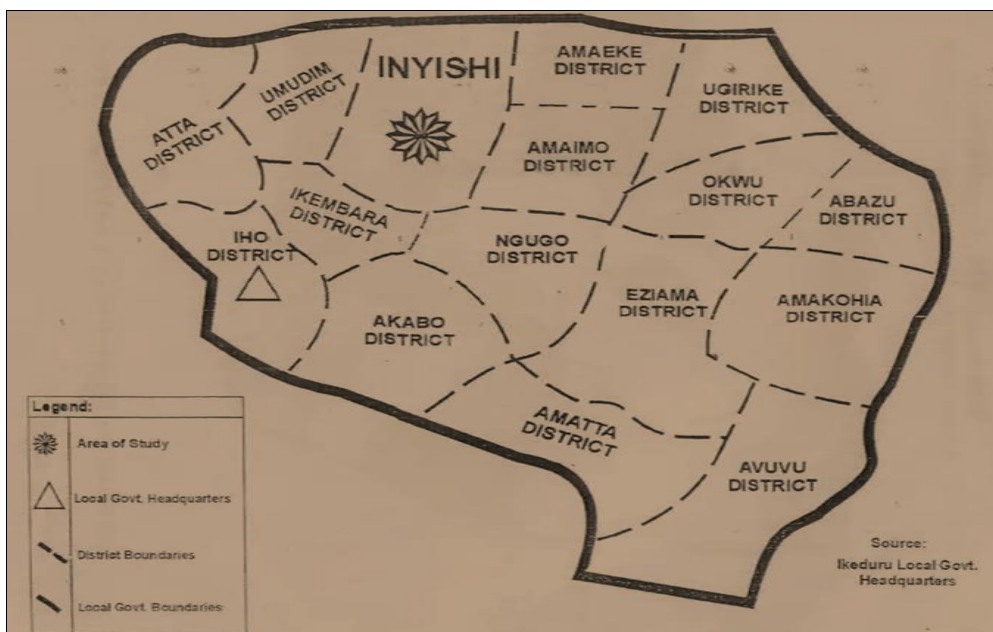
are exposed to a range of physical, emotional, and social changes. It is during this period that young people often become curious about sex and sexuality, and may engage in risky sexual behavior if not properly educated. Sex education is therefore essential for teenagers to have a healthy and responsible approach to sexual relationships. In Nigeria, particularly in Imo State, sex education is still a taboo subject that is not openly discussed among parents and their teenage children. The cultural and religious values of the society often dictate that sex education should not be talked about, and that it is the sole responsibility of parents to provide their children with appropriate information. However, studies have shown that many parents in Imo State lack the necessary knowledge and skills to provide their teenage children with adequate sex education. Furthermore, there is a lack of consensus among parents in Imo State about the appropriate age to start sex education for their children. Some parents believe that sex education should be delayed until their children are older, while others believe that it should start at an early age. This lack of agreement among parents on the appropriate age to start sex education has resulted in a lack of consistency in the provision of sex education to teenagers. In addition, there are various factors that influence parental attitudes towards sex education in Imo State. Some of these

factors include religious and cultural beliefs, lack of knowledge and skills, fear of promoting sexual behavior, and the belief that sex education should be the responsibility of schools rather than parents. These factors have contributed to the negative attitudes of some parents towards sex education, and have hindered the provision of adequate sex education to teenagers. Moreover, there are several challenges faced in providing sex education to teenagers in Imo State. These challenges include lack of appropriate curriculum, lack of qualified sex educators, lack of resources, and resistance from some parents and religious leaders. These challenges have resulted in inadequate sex education for teenagers and have contributed to the high rates of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections in Imo State. The main aim of this study is to investigate the attitude of parents towards sex education of teenagers in Ikeduru Local Government Area, Imo State.

Materials and Methods

1. Research Design

The research design used for this research was descriptive survey design.
Area of Study



Map of Ikeduru LGA

Ikeduru Local Government Area (LGA) is located in the western part of Imo State, in southern Nigeria, West Africa. It was previously carved out of Mbaitolu / Ikeduru LGA. It has its headquarters at Iho (Ihuo). The chairman of the Ikeduru LGA is Chief Sam Aka who hails from Iho-Dimeze. The Ikeduru LGA has the following neighbors, Mbaitolu, Mbano, and Mbaise, and they share a common culture and markets.

2. Climate

With an annual temperature of 29.36°C, 0.1% lower than the national average for Nigeria, the district of Ikeduru has a tropical wet and dry climate. Towns and villages include Abazu, Akabo, Amaimo, Amakohia, Owu Amakohia, Amatta, Avuvu, Atta,

Eziamma, Ikembara, Inyishi, Iho, Ngugo, Okwu, Ugiri, Umudim, Uzoagba

3. Population for the Study

The population for this study comprised all the parents of the teenage students in all the selected government and private secondary schools in Ikeduru LGA.

4. Sample and Sampling technique

Cluster sampling technique was adopted such that the existing three senatorial zones of the state were used. There is a total of 24 autonomous communities in Ikeduru Local government Areas which includes Inyishi, Amaeke, Eziamma, Amaimo, Umuofor, Umuiiri, Okwu, Avuvu, Owuala Avuvu, Amakohia, Umudim, Atta, Ngugo, Atta West, Owubinubi,

Ikembara, Ugirike, Umuonyekwu, Abazu, Akabo, Amatta, Iho-Dimeze, Ebikoro, and Uzoagba

To select the schools used, the names of all the secondary schools in each Local government Area were written on pieces of paper and squeezed. This was done community by community. A total of 115 schools were picked from the autonomous communities. In each of the selected schools four copies of the questionnaire were administered i.e. twenty questionnaires for each of the autonomous communities.

Also, stratification was made by grouping the students into SS₁, SS₂, SS₃ and JSS₃. The reason why this was done is to ensure that only students, who are able to explain to their parents about how to fill the questionnaire, were given copies of the questionnaire. These students were briefed on how to fill the questionnaire. Copies of the questionnaire were given on a total of 460 teenage students, for onward transmission to them

parents from the selected schools. However only 362 copies of the questionnaire were returned meaning 78.7% responses rate. In the selection of students from their classes, i.e. SS₁, SS₂, SS₃ and JSS₃. Simple random method was used. In using this method only one yes was written and so many Nos. were written on pieces of paper for the students to pick. A student, who picked yes out of the rolled pieces of paper from the hat, was given a copy of the questionnaire to give his/her parents. This process was repeated until the required numbers of students were selected from the schools and in each class.

The break down of the Local government area and names of school is in Appendix B.

5. Instrument for Data Collection

To achieve the purpose of this study, a questionnaire was developed that contained thirty (30) statements in four (4) sections. Section A consisted of five (5) statements on personal information, section B Eight (8) statements on parental attitude, section C Eleven (11) statements on the teaching of sex education in secondary school, section D six (6) statements on parental opinion about sex education.

6. Validation of Instrument

In order to validate the instrument for this study, a draft questionnaire prepared by the researcher was submitted to four (4) professional experts from the field of health education to vet the questionnaire in order to establish face validity. On the basis of the suggestions, made by these experts the statements were restructured wherever necessary and a final draft questionnaire was produced for the study.

7. Method of Data Collection

In the administration of this instrument, the researcher reached out to parents through their children. In doing this, the researcher and 3 research assistants after obtaining permission from the relevant authorities visited selected schools and gave copies of the questionnaire to the students

for onward transmission to their parents. The children returned the filled questionnaire from their parents to the researcher 7 days after administration. Period of one week was given for the teenagers to return the filled questionnaire in order to allow parents to whom questionnaire were given enough time to complete the questionnaire.

Method of data Analysis

The data to be collected from the respondents will be analyzed by the researcher using the mean statistics method. The weight that will be assigned to the scales is shown below-

Strongly Agreed (S.A) – 4 points

Agreed (A) – 3 points

Disagreed (D) – 2 points

Strongly Disagreed (SD) – 1 point

The mean of the scores obtained was calculated with the formular, $\bar{x} = \frac{\sum fx}{N}$ where,

\bar{x} = mean

\sum = summation sign

F = Frequency

X = Score

N = Total number of respondents

The cumulative mean was calculated as

$$X = \frac{4 \times 3 + 2 \times 1}{5} = \frac{10}{5} = 2$$

Decision rule

Any item below 2.5 will be rejected, while items from 2.5 and above will be accepted. This will be used as basis for decision making.

Ethical Consideration

The researcher ensured that the respondents were fully informed about the research work and its purpose. No name was mentioned in the write up and every information gotten was kept in confidence.

The participant was not forced to participate in the research work but their voluntary consent was obtained, the participant wishes were respected and maintained, the precaution to protect the participant from physical and mental harm were maintained, there was no falsification of data.

Results and Discussions

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to assess parents’ attitude towards the teaching of sex education of teenagers in Ikeduru Local Government Area, Imo State. To achieve this purpose, a total of 460 copies of questionnaire were distributed but 362 were returned, meaning 78.7% response rate. The data collected were statistically analysed, the results of which are presented and discussed in this chapter.

Results

The demographic characteristics of respondents include Age, Gender, Marital Status, Location and Number of children used for the study.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

S/No	Variable	Age group	Freq.	Percen- Tage (%)
1.	Age	No response	3	8
		20 - 30 years	57	15.7
		31 - 40 years	75	20.7
		41 - 50 years	74	20.4

		51 - 60 years	79	21.8
		61 years and above	74	20.4
		Total	362	100.0
S/No	Variable	Age group	Freq.	Perce-n-tage (%)
2.	Gender	No response	3	8
		Male	165	45.6
		Female	194	53.6
		Total	362	100.0
3.	Marital Status	Married	197	54.4
		Divorced	64	17.4
		Widow/Widower	39	10.8
		Single	2	6
		Separated	61	16.9
		Total	362	100.0
4.	Location	Rural	179	100
		Total	179	100.0
5.	Number of children	1 - 2	87	24.0
		3 - 4	141	39.0
		5 - 6	89	24.6
		7 and above	45	12.4
		Total	362	100.0

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey

Column 1: showed 79 (21.8%) of the respondents fell within the age range of 51 – 60 years, 75 (20.7%) were between 31 – 40 years of age and 74 (20.4%) were within 41 – 50 years and above. Of the total number of respondents, only 3 (8%) indicated no response.

Column 2: showed that majority 194 (53.6%) of the respondents are females. This may be because female parents seem to be more concerned and in-charge of the sex education of their children especially female children. However, 165 (45.6%) of the respondents are males, while only 3 (8%) indicated no response.

Column 3: contained data on marital status of the respondents, 197 (54.4%) are married, 64 (17.4%) are divorced while 39 (10.8%) are widow/widower, 2 (0.6%) are single and 61 (16.95%) are separated.

Column 4: showed that most of the respondents 183 (50.6%) were literate. This may be due to their level of educational exposure as more enlightened people are likely more than the ones that are not literate. However, 179 (49.4%) of the respondents were illiterate. This may also be attributed to level of their public awareness and comprehension of the subject matter. Such awareness could be provided by the electronic media such as radio.

Column 5: showed that most of the respondents, 141 (39.0%) have between 3 and 4 children. This may be because many people in the country have realized the socio-economic benefit of having a sizeable number of children. However, 89 (24.6%) of the respondents indicated that they have between 5 and 6 children while 45 (12.4%) indicated that they have 7 and above.

Table 2: Frequencies and percentages of responses on assessment of parental attitude towards the teaching of sex education

		SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
1 (Var.6)	Teaching of sex education is something I always want to encourage	95 28.6	75 22.6	77 23.2	85 25.6	323 100	3.23	Accepted
2 (Var.7)	Teaching of sex education is an important form of social service	70 21.7	100 31.1	70 21.7	82 25.5	322 100	3.22	Accepted
3 (Var.8)	Teaching of sex education is interesting because it deals with reality of life	50 16.6	80 26.5	80 26.5	92 30.5	302 100	3.02	Accepted
4 (Var.9)	Teaching of sex education is good because it enlightens children about facts of life	60 17.5	70 20.5	152 44.4	60 17.5	342 100	3.42	Accepted
5 (Var.10)	It encourages exploring the body	80 25.6	70 22.4	72 23.1	90 28.8	312 100	3.12	Accepted

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey

		SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
6 (Var.11)	Teaching of sex education is dull	112 39.0	40 13.9	60 20.9	75 26.1	287 100	2.87	Accepted
7 (Var.12)	It promotes immoral behaviour	120 34.6	103 29.7	52 15.0	72 20.7	347 100	3.47	Accepted
8 (Var.13)	Teaching of sex education is good because it gives a person the opportunity to correct misconception about the subject matter.	125 35.5	140 39.8	50 14.2	37 105	353 100	3.52	Accepted

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey

In table 2, majority, 95 (26.2%) of the respondents were of the opinion that teaching of sex education is something they always wanted to encourage. 85 (23.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Results of this study have shown that 100 (27.6%) of the respondents agreed that teaching of sex education is an important form of social service. 85 (22.7%) of them strongly disagreed while. Most of the respondents, that is 92 (25.4%) strongly disagreed that teaching of sex education is interesting because it deals with the reality of life. However, 80 (22.1%) agreed.

It is shown on this table that most of the respondents 70 (19.3%) agreed that teaching of sex education is good because it enlightens children about facts of life. 60 (16.6%) strongly disagreed.

A total of 90 (24.9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that sex education encourages exploring the body but 80 (22.1%) strongly agreed... The findings also revealed that 112 (30.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed that teaching of sex education is dull. However, 75 (20.7%) of them strongly disagreed.

A total of about 120 (33.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed that teaching of sex education promotes immoral behaviour, 72 (19.9%) of them strongly disagreed.

A total of 140 (38.7%) out of the total number of respondents were of the opinion that teaching of sex education is good because it gives a person the opportunity to correct the misconception about the subject matter. Although 50 (13.8%) of them disagreed.

Table 3: Frequencies and percentages of responses on teaching of sex education of teenagers

		SD	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
9 (Var.14)	Teaching of sex education provides opportunity for proper counseling	120 36.1	88 26.5	74 22.3	50 15.1	322 100	3.23	Accepted
10 (Var.15)	The teaching of sex education exposes students to immorality	200 57.3	90 25.8	45 12.9	14 4.0	349 100	3.49	Accepted
11 (Var.16)	It allows students to understand their body better	90 25.6	111 21.6	80 22.8	70 20.0	351 100	3.51	Accepted
12 (Var.17)	Exposure of students to sex education will lead to experimentation	180 50.4	100 28.0	10 2.8	67 18.8	357 100	3.57	Accepted
13 (Var.18)	Teaching of sex education may encourage spread of HIV/AIDS	180 51.7	80 23.0	57 16.4	31 8.9	348 100	3.48	Accepted
14 (Var.19)	Teaching of sex education may promote waywardness	210 58.5	100 27.9	33 9.2	16 3.5	359 100	3.59	Accepted
15 (Var.20)	I am indifferent to the teaching of sex education to secondary school students.	200 60.2	50 15.1	42 12.7	40 12.0	332 100	3.32	Accepted

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey

		SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
16 (Var.21)	Teaching of sex education to secondary school students should be discouraged	150 43.7	119 34.7	45 13.1	29 8.5	343 100	3.43	Accepted
17 (Var.22)	My negative attitude to the teaching of sex education is because it is left in the hands of young teachers.	250 70.4	72 20.3	13 7.3	20 5.6	355 100	3.55	Accepted
18 (Var.23)	I will appreciate if its teaching is handled by professionals.	190 54.8	112 32.3	20 5.8	25 7.2	347 100	3.47	Accepted
19 (Var.24)	My attitude to its teaching is because of my own experience	180 51.1	100 28.4	32 9.1	40 11.4	352 100	3.52	Accepted

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey

In table 3 above, an indication was made that majority of the respondents, 120 (33.1%) strongly agreed that the teaching of sex education provides opportunity for proper counseling. However, 74 (20.4%) of them disagreed.

A total 200 (55.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed on the opinion that the teaching of sex education exposes students to immorality. A total of 45 (12.4%) respondent 45 (12.4%) disagreed.

Similarly, 111 (30.7%) of the respondents agreed that sex education allows students to understand their bodies better. However, 80 (22.1%) disagreed.

The results on the table indicated that most respondents, 180 (49.7%) strongly agreed that exposure to sex education leads students to experimentation. However, 67 (18.5%) strongly disagreed.

Similarly, 180 (49.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed that teaching of sex education may encourage the spread of HIV/AIDS. 57 (15.7%) of them disagreed,

A total of 210 (58.9%) respondents strongly agreed that the teaching of sex education may promote waywardness and 33 (9.1%) disagreed.

Similarly, 200 (55.2%) which constitute majority of the respondents were indifferent to the teaching of sex education to secondary school students. 45 (11.6%) of the respondents disagreed.

It is indicated in the table that 150 (41.4%) that is majority of the subjects who responded strongly agreed that teaching of sex education to secondary school students should be discouraged. However, 45 (12.4%) disagreed.

The findings also revealed that majority, that is 250 (69.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed that their negative attitude to the teaching of sex education is because the issue is left in the hands of young teachers. But 20 (5.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed.

The table also shows that 190 (52.5%) of respondents appreciated the teaching of sex education if it is handled by professionals. However, 25 (6.9%) of them strongly disagreed.

Most, 180 (49.7%) of the respondents observed that their attitude towards the teaching of sex education was because of their own experiences. 40 (11.0%) of the respondent submitted

that their attitude to sex education was not based on personal experiences.

Table 4: Frequencies and percentages of responses on parental opinions about sex education

		SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
20 (Var.25)	Teaching of sex education will be acceptable to me if female teachers can teach female students.	160 44.8	182 51.0	0	15 4.2	357 100	3.57	Accepted
21 (Var.26)	My attitude is a dictate of my belief.	210 58.7	90 25.1	38 10.6	20 5.6	358 100	3.58	Accepted
22 (Var.27)	Sex education should focus on safe sex.	100 31.1	120 37.3	62 19.3	40 12.4	322 100	3.22	Accepted
23 (Var.28)	Sex education should focus on abstinence education	200 55.6	100 27.8	30 8.3	30 8.3	360 100	3.60	Accepted
24 (Var.29)	Sex education if handled taught by experts will produce the desired purposes.	150 41.8	100 27.9	59 16.4	50 13.9	359 100	3.59	Accepted
25 (Var.30)	Sex education will serve as a tool which provides guidelines for the planning implementation and evaluation of HIV/AIDS prevention in schools.	180 50	120 33.3	25 6.9	35 9.7	360	3.60	Accepted

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey

In table 4 above, a total 160 (44.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the teaching of sex education would be acceptable to them if female teachers could teach female students. However, 182 (50.3%) of the respondents agreed. Majority of the respondents 210 (58.0%) strongly agreed that their attitude towards the teaching of sex education were the dictates of their beliefs. 38 (10.5%) of them disagreed.

The findings also reveal that while most, 120 (33,1%) of the respondents were of the view that sex education should focus on safe sex, 62 (17.1%) disagreed.

It is also indicated in the table that majority, 200 (55.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed that sex education should focus on abstinence. However, 30 (8.3%) strongly disagreed.

The table also shows hat 150 (41.4%) were of the opinion that sex education if handled/taught by experts would produce the desired purposes but 50 (13.8%) strongly disagreed.

Majority of the respondents that is 180 (49.7%) strongly agreed that sex education will serve as a tool which provides guidelines for the planning, implementation and evaluation of HIV/AIDS prevention in schools. Although 35 (9.7%) of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis I

There is no significant difference in the attitudes of parents towards sex education of teenagers in Ikeduru L.G.A., Imo State. To test this hypothesis, t-test was used and below are the results as shown in the table.

Table 5: t-test for difference between male and female parents in their attitude toward teaching of sex education of teenagers

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	Df	t	P
Male	165	1.5387	.51017	.02681	357	8.126	.000
Female	194	7.5663	2.49040	1.70766			

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey

t = 1.96, df 357 < 0.05

The above table 5 shows that the calculated t value of 8.126 which is greater than the table value of 1.96 at the df of 357. The P at.000 is lower than the 0.05 level of significance set for the study. There is therefore no significant difference between the attitude of male and female towards the

teaching of sex education of teenagers s. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Hypothesis II

There is no significant difference in attitude of parents of different age groups. To test this hypothesis one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used and the results as stated in the table below.

Table 6: Summary of ANOVA for differences between the attitude of parents of different age groups.

Source	Df	Ss	Ms	F	P
Between age groups	4	3620.99	405.248	16.891	.000
Within age groups	356	1907.92	53.592		
Total	360	22699.91			

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey, F4, 356 = 2.37 < 0.05

It is indicated in table 6 above that P.000 is lower than 0.05 level of significance set for the study. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. A look at the table above shows, that the calculated F value is 16.891 which are higher than the table value of 2.37at df 4,356. This is so because of the 0.05 level of tolerance set for the study.

Hypothesis III

There is no significant difference between literate and illiterate parentsin their attitude to the teaching of sex education of teenagers. To test this hypothesis t-test was used and the results are shown in the table below:

Table 7: t-test for difference between literate and illiterate parents in their attitude in teaching of sex education of teenagers.

Location	N	Mean	SD	Se	Df	t	P
Literate Parents	179	1.5055	.50056	.02631	360	7.213	.000
Illiterate Parents	183	4.5663	1.04140	1.70766			

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey

t = 1.96 df 360 < 0.05.

The results in table 7 above revealed that the calculated t value at

7.213 is greater than the table value of 1.96 at 360 degree of freedom. The P is.000 which is lower than the 0.05 level of significance set for this study. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between literate and illiterate parents in their attitude to the teaching of sex education of teenagers is therefore rejected.

There is no significant difference between literate and illiterate parents in their attitude to the teaching of sex education of teenagers

Hypothesis IV

There is no significant difference in the attitude of parents to the teaching of sex education of teenagers based on marital status. To test this hypothesis, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used in order to ascertain the difference between various groups based on marital status. The parameters used were married, divorced, widow/widower, single and separated. The results are shown in the table below.

Table 8: Summary of ANOVA for difference between the attitude of parent in teaching of sex education of teenagers based on marital status

Source	Df	Ss	Ms	F	P
Between Groups	4	3395.92	848.981	72.728	.000
Within Groups	356	41550.986	116.722		
Total	360	44946.906			

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey
 $F_{4, 356} = 2.37 < 0.05$

The data in table 8 above indicate that P.000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance set for this study. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. The reason for this result may be that people irrespective of their marital status have the same notion about the teaching of the subject matter. Considering the data on the above table the calculated F value of 72.728 is greater than the table value of 2.37 at df 4,356. It therefore suggests that parent’s attitudes to the teaching of sex education of teenagers change base on their marital status.

Discussion

Hypothesis I

There is no significant difference between male and female parent in their attitude towards the teaching of sex education of teenagers s.

The findings reveal no significant difference. The reason for this may be because the issue of sex education calls for the involvement of both parents. However, mothers appeared to be more concern about the sexual life of their children because they don’t want them to make mistakes. Whereas fathers concern though noticeable is a passing one. This is in line with the observation of Sheriff and Hovland (1961) in what is called “latitude of acceptance model” according to which they argue that an individual is also prepared to slightly alter his position either side of his maintained position either positively or negatively. The range within which the individual oscillates exhibits his latitude of acceptance. It also implies that the level of understanding of the subject matter is not the same for both parents. To support this, Microsoft Corporation (1993), 2003) broadly defines sex education as any instruction in the processes and consequences of sexual activity ordinarily given to children and adolescents. Today the term refers to classroom lessons about sex taught in primary and secondary schools usually as part of biology/health science class.

Based on some of the reasons mentioned above the null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Hypothesis II

There is no significant difference in the attitude of parents on account of their age groups. The outcome of the test on this hypothesis reveals no significance difference in the

attitude of parents on account of their age’s groups. This may also be attributed the level of education and awareness among various age groups to support this statement, Shoop and Hayhow, (1994) and Stinger (1997) point out that all education about harassment need to be age and grade related. It should describe what type of conduct constitutes, but, to reduce the possibility of establishing a climate of fear, the curriculum should help the students distinguished between contact perceived as menacing (and violation of the target privacy) and flirting which can be desired, feels good, makes the recipient happy and increase self esteem Stein and Sjostrom (1994) suggest that a curriculum on human sexuality can easily cover harassment, but the problem can also be discussed in courses such as history, social studies contemporary issue, English and health education. Co-teaching by males and females sends “a powerful message about the relevance of sexual harassment to both sexes”

In line with this Brandenburg (1997) also suggest that classes should include both male and female students so that they can gain an understanding of each other’s perceptions. It is critical not to make the male feel threatened. The null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis III

There is no significant difference between literate and illiterate parents in their attitude towards the teaching of sex education of teenagers on accounts of their locations. The results of the test of this hypothesis show no significant difference between literate and illiterate parents in their attitudes towards the teaching of sex education of teenagers. This may be due to the assumption that individuals irrespective of their educational background can learn and become enlightened through diverse ways as there are indications that attitude are learned and if learned can be unlearned. However, attitude remains relatively stable and calm but changes in several ways such as through an accumulation of experiences, age, poverty, education, environment etc.

Some psychologists and social scientists in recent time have concerned themselves with critical questions in the dynamics of personality development which seek to know how an individual develops an attitude towards himself, objects, issues and situations. The developed attitude could be classified as either positive or negative in orientation. In relation to this, Krenzy (1962) states the major determinants of attitude formation as the individual wants, information, group affiliation and personality. An individual develops a favourable attitude towards people who satisfy his wants. Tyler (1949) asserts that one importance of attitude is that it arises from the fact that it has strong influences upon behaviour and also strongly influences the kinds of satisfaction and values the individual chooses. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Hypothesis IV

There is no significant difference in the attitude of parents to teaching of sex education of teenager’s base on marital status. The results of the test on this hypothesis show that there is no significant difference in the attitude of parents whether married, single, divorced, widowed etc toward the teaching of sex education. This may be attributed to the assumed multidimensional aspect of attitude formation

among individuals irrespective of their marital status. To support this, Streufart (1978) stresses that the cognitive component of attitude involves the trait perception of the observed object, event, issue or person in relation to how one can view it and what stereotypes, one has towards its emotions are not likely to interplay in this dimension. On the affective dimension, the responses are primarily emotional one, when one's feelings toward as object event, issue or person is manifested play as to weather the cognitive or affective measure of an object is baked up by actions the are positive of negative. The findings signify that every individual maintain his/her relative position along a dimension of his/her attitude toward a particular object or issue.

According to interviews conducted for Onyekwere Family Foundation (2022), most parents (65%) believe that sex education should encourage young people to delay sexual activity but also prepare them to use birth control and practice safe sex once they do become sexually active. In fact, public opinion is overwhelmingly supportive of sexuality education that goes beyond abstinence. Similarly, Destiny Landry and Luxury (2021) state that moreover, public opinion polls over the years have routinely shown that majority of Americans favour broader sex education programs over those that teach only abstinence. The null hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The study's findings provide valuable insights into the attitudes of parents towards comprehensive sex education in Imo State secondary schools. The discussion is organized around the study's objectives.

Parental Awareness and Knowledge

The study revealed that a significant majority of parents (83.2%) were aware of comprehensive sex education, but their knowledge was limited. This suggests a need for targeted education and awareness programs.

Parental Attitudes

Parents exhibited mixed attitudes:

- Support:** 71.5% believed sex education is essential.
- Concerns:** 55.8% worried about potential promotion of immorality.
- Cultural/Religious Restrictions:** 42.1% cited cultural/religious objections.

These findings indicate a tension between recognizing the importance of sex education and concerns about its potential impact.

Influencing Factors

The study identified factors influencing parental attitudes:

- Level of Education:** Higher education levels correlated with more positive attitudes.
- Cultural Background:** Cultural values and norms significantly influenced attitudes.
- Religious Affiliation:** Religious beliefs played a crucial role in shaping attitudes.

These factors underscore the complexity of parental attitudes.

Implications

- Policy Makers:** Develop culturally sensitive policies.
- Educators:** Provide comprehensive, age-appropriate sex education.

- Community Engagement:** Address cultural/religious concerns.
- Parental Education:** Enhance parental awareness and knowledge.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have several implications for policy, practice, and future research:

- Policy makers should consider the influence of level of education, cultural background, and religious affiliation on parental attitudes towards sex education when designing policies.
- Educators and healthcare providers should receive training on culturally sensitive and effective sex education methods.
- Communities should address cultural/religious restrictions, lack of resources, and inadequate trained educators to ensure adequate sex education provision.
- Future research should explore effective strategies to overcome challenges in sex education provision.

This study contributes to the understanding of parental attitudes towards sex education and challenges in provision in Ikeduru L.G.A., Imo State. The findings highlight the need for culturally sensitive and effective sex education policies, practices, and training. Addressing cultural/religious restrictions, lack of resources, and inadequate trained educators is crucial for ensuring adequate sex education provision.

- Explore effective strategies to overcome challenges in sex education provision.
- Investigate the impact of sex education on adolescent health outcomes.
- Develop and evaluate culturally sensitive sex education programs

Conclusion

Parental attitudes towards comprehensive sex education in Imo State secondary schools are complex and influenced by multiple factors. Addressing these factors through targeted interventions will enhance the effectiveness of sex education programs. Parents in Imo State hold diverse attitudes towards sex education for their teenage children, shaped by cultural, religious, and socio-economic factors. While some parents advocate for comprehensive approaches to sexual health education, others remain indifferent or strictly opposed. The implications of these attitudes are significant, affecting adolescent understanding and behaviours regarding sexual health.

An open dialogue facilitated through education, community initiatives, and school engagement can help shape positive parental attitudes, making way for informed discussions around sex education. As society navigates the fine balance between cultural values and the necessity of knowledge, it is paramount to ensure that teenagers are appropriately educated, equipped, and empowered to make healthy choices regarding their sexual health—essential for fostering a healthier future generation.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis and findings, we recommend that there is need to

- Conduct workshops for parents and educators.
- Develop culturally relevant sex education curricula.

3. Engage community leaders in promoting sex education.
4. Monitor and evaluate sex education programs.

Suggestion for further Study

1. Investigate student outcomes after sex education.
2. Explore teacher training programs for effective sex education delivery.
3. Develop evidence-based, culturally sensitive sex education materials.

These research directions will further illuminate the role of comprehensive sex education in promoting adolescent well-being.

Conflict of interest

The authors declared that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript.

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