

# RELEVANCE OF SEX EDUCATION TO THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION OBJECTIVES AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EGOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

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## ABSTRACT

*This study sets out to determine the relevance of sex education to the achievement of objectives of senior secondary education among selected secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. In view of this, three research questions were raised and two hypotheses were tested. For the purpose of this study, we adopt the descriptive survey research design. The population for the study consist of all public senior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. The instruments for the study consists of questionnaire designed by the researcher from literatures reviewed, national policy on education and were structured to cover all the research questions, to determine the reliability of the instrument, the researcher trial tested on a representative sample of 20 female and 20 male students from UBTH Staff Secondary School. Result of the data analysis gave alpha coefficient value of 0.79. Findings from the study reveal that majority of the respondents perceive the stated objectives of senior secondary education can be achieved through sex education and therefore relevant in senior secondary education curriculum. Further result establishes that there is a cordial relationship between the relevance of sex education to the objectives of National Policy of Education and gender among secondary school students because both genders acknowledge the relevance. Lastly, we conclude that the relationship between the relevance of sex education to the objectives of National Policy of Education and age of*

*respondents. The result of the hypotheses tested reveals that there is no significant relationship between the perception of sex education and gender of respondents. Secondly, there is no significant relationship between the relevance of sex education and the objectives of National Policy of Education and the age of secondary school students within Egor Local Government Area. Based on these findings, it was recommended that sex education should be taught in schools to help in proper upbringing of youth and achieve academic excellent.*

**Keywords:** Sex Education: National Policy on Education: Achievement: Curriculum.

## INTRODUCTION

Sex is a small word, but it is quite a controversial subject which people desperately want answers to. World Health Organization (2002) however describes sexuality as a central aspect of being human throughout life. It circles round sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. It can be experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. National Aids Control Council (NACC) (2002) sees it as a social construction of a biological drive which often deals with issues such as whom one has sex with, in what ways, why, under what circumstances and with what outcomes a person engages in sex.

Thus, sexuality pertains to the totality of being human - being a female or male - and this

suggests a multidimensional perspective of the concept of sexuality which is shaped by biological, psychological, economic, political, social, cultural and religious factors operating within a particular culture in each society. Knowledge and attitude about sex is so vital that people tend to seek information about it from whatever sources that are available, whether good or bad. However, when accurate information is not available, people will ignorantly accept misinformation for truth. Unfortunately, this is especially noticeable among youths and may lead to dreadful consequences (Olubayo-Fatiregun, 2012).

Young people get information about sex and sexuality from a wide range of sources, including each other, their parents, and teachers, through the media, magazines, books and websites. Some of these sources give accurate information while others do not. Myths and misconceptions about sex and sexuality acquired by young people from wrong sources may be carried throughout life and passed on to their own offspring. It has however been documented that when young people are well informed, there is a delay in the age of onset of sexual activities and increased use of preventive measures against STDs and pregnancy amongst those already sexually active. This leads to an overall reduction in teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

Sex education can be defined as an "education which increases the knowledge of the functional, structural and behavioural aspects of human reproduction" (Chan & Jaafar, 2009). Meanwhile, Alford (2001) describes comprehensive sex education as that which teaches abstinence as the best way to avoid self from contacting sexual transmitted diseases (STDs) and unintended pregnancies. At the same time, it also teaches about condoms and other contraception to reduce the risk of unintended pregnancy and infections with STDs including Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). From

1943 to the present day, discussions on sex education in the newly-christened HEJ (Health Education Journal) both reflect and respond to evolving socio-cultural attitudes towards sexuality in the UK. Changing definitions of sex education across the decades are available, from the prevention of venereal disease and moral decline in war-time Britain in the 1940s, to a range of responses to sexual liberation in the 1960s and 1970s; from a focus on preventing sexually-transmitted infections, teenage pregnancy and HIV in the 1980s, to the provision of sexual health services alongside sex education in the 2000s.

Over the past 70 years, a shift from prevention of pre-marital sexual activity to the management of its outcomes is recommended; however, while these changes over time are notable, perhaps the most striking discoveries are the continuities in arguments for and against the discussion of sexual issues. In this study, normal adolescent populations attending public schools will be included but adolescents handicapped or emotionally disturbed will be excluded.

In Nigeria, Secondary education is a very important aspect of Nigerian educational system under the 6-3-3-4 system. Secondary education is held in high esteem because of its nature, objectives and its importance to the individual and the society at large. Based on this fact above, the government realizing the importance of secondary education expressed their concern through the inclusion of sex education in the National Policy on Education. The aims of this segment of education are clearly stated in the National Policy on Education revised 2004 (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) 2004). The study sets out to examine the preparation for useful living within the society and preparation for higher education, while the specific objectives are to:

- i. Provide an increasing number of primary school pupils with the opportunity for

- education of a higher quality, in respective of sex, or social, religious and ethnic background.
- ii. Diversify its curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and roles possessed by or open to students after their secondary school course.
  - iii. Equip students to live effectively in our modern age of science and technology.
  - iv. Develop and project Nigerian culture, art and language as well as the world's cultural heritage.
  - v. Raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour and appreciate those values specified under our broad national aims, and live as good citizens.
  - vi. Foster Nigerian unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity.
  - vii. Inspire its students with a desire for achievement and self-improvement both at school and in later life (FRN, 2004, cited in Obi, 2012)

Holistic sexuality education is learning about the cognitive, emotional, social, interactive and physical aspects of sexuality. It starts early in childhood and progresses through adolescence and adulthood and aims at supporting and protecting sexual development. Action Health Incorporated (AHI) (2003) however describe sex education as 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 need for sex education cannot be overemphasized as it gradually equips and empowers children and young people with information, skills and positive values to

understand and enjoy their sexuality, have safe and fulfilling relationships and take responsibility for their own and other people's sexual health and well-being. Our view in this paper is that most secondary school students in Nigeria lack sufficient sex education both from homes and schools as sometimes in her environment and in schools young girls are seen dropping out of school because of teenage pregnancy and when they give birth to the child the parents of the girl, out of their mega income that is poor have no choice than to take care of the girl throughout pregnancy till delivery, the boy may run away. Some of them abandon their babies hence the recent increase in the number of orphanages home and high number of abandoned children. Due to the fact that parents are inadequate in this respect, school students tend to rely on their friend's initiative and whatever they can learn from their friends and media.

Hence, they suffer a great deal of emotional stress and strain caused by a variety of reasons which maybe as a result of ignorance. Consequences of insufficient sex education can be dire. In today's world, the problems resulting from the lack of sex education to the youths are so numerous and they may not be able to meet the objectives of senior secondary education. There is a need to carry out this research for teenagers to be well educated on sex so as to make proper and informed decisions and to prevent regrets. Furthermore, this leads to inability to concentrate, poor school performance, high rate of school drop outs, deterioration of mental health of students, increase in illiteracy and over population, this in turn poses a great loss to the society. Some religious bodies view sex education as premature, dangerous and likely to lead to sexual promiscuity. However, to the behavioural scientists, the introduction of sex education is important. Sadly, despite the increasing sexual problems among the youths,

parents and schools are still not providing teenagers with proper and adequate knowledge of sex. This is the problem the researcher wants to find solution to. Hence, this study seeks to assess the relevance of sex education in achieving the objectives of national policy on education among secondary schools in Egor local government area.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following research questions are raised for the study:

1. What is the relevance of sex education to the objective of senior school national policy on education among secondary school students?
2. What is the relationship between the relevance of sex education to the objectives of National Policy of Education and gender among secondary school students within Egor Local Government Area?
3. What is the relationship between the relevance of sex education to the objectives of National Policy of Education and age among secondary school students within Egor Local Government Area?

### **HYPOTHESES**

1. There is no significant relationship between the relevance of sex education to the objectives of National Policy of Education and gender among secondary school students within Egor Local Government Area
2. There is no significant relationship between the relevance of sex education to the objectives of National Policy of Education and age among secondary school students within Egor Local Government Area.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population for the study consisted of 6,606 Public Senior Secondary School Students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo state in 2017/2018 session, (Source: Edo State Ministry of Education, Planning and Statistics Department, 2018). The sample size for the study comprises of 377 respondents. This was estimated using the Taro Yamane formula. The instrument for the study consists of questionnaire designed by the researcher from literatures reviewed, the national policy on education, and was structured to cover all the research questions. Questionnaire was titled, Relevance of Sex Education to the Objectives of Senior Secondary Education among secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area, of Edo state. The questionnaire contained twenty-three (23) items and which were divided into two sections. Prior to presentation of the questionnaire a letter of introduction was sent to the school to seek the authority, consent and approval, and the students were given introduction lecture by the researcher on the topic to guide them as they complete the questionnaire a kind of revision because they have received lecture on sex education. The instruments used for this study were given to three experts in this field of study. They were selected from various Universities in Benin metropolis, including Benson Idahosa University and University of Benin. Their comments and corrections were used to restructure the final draft copy. A test-retest method was used to check for reliability of the instrument of data collection. A pilot study was carried out among 40 different students (20 male and 20 females) from UBTH staff secondary school using the questionnaire. The Cronbach's value of this present study gave alpha coefficient value of 0.79. This moderately high coefficient value indicates that the instrument is reliable to be used for the

study. All statistical procedures were conducted using SPSS (version 21). Descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentage were used to summarize the survey responses in research question 1, 2 and 3. The hypotheses were tested using chi-square statistics. The alpha level was set at 0.05.

## RESULTS

### Research question one:

What is the relevance of sex education to the objective of senior school curriculum among senior secondary school students?

Table 1 shows that 83.8% perceive that to have opportunity for education at a higher level is a relevant objective to be achieved by sex education while majority of the respondents indicate that sex education can help achieve the objective of catering for the differences in talents and disposition (66.8%); to provide opportunities for students' future role (80.4%); to provide entrepreneur skills (50.4%) and to provide vocational skills (53.8%) respectively. Majority of the respondents perceive the relevance of providing skills for self-reliance (66.0%), provide skills for agricultural

development (49.6%), develop and promote Nigerian languages (45.9%), develop and promote Nigerian culture (56.2%) and finally inspire students with a desire for self-improvement respectively in achieving the objectives of sex education (79.0%).

However, most of the respondents perceive the relevance of inspiring students with the desire for achievement of excellence (84.4%), to foster patriotism and national unity (62.6%), to ensure security in education with emphasis on the common ties in spite of our diversity (76.7%), to raise morally upright and well-adjusted individual (91.8%), to help inculcate values among young people (84.6%), to provide ability to think independently and rationally (85.1%) and to respect the views and feelings of others respectively in actualizing the objectives of sex education (78.8%). Finally, majority of the respondents (72.9%) perceive to appreciate the dignity of labour as a relevant objective of sex education. This table above therefore reveals that majority of the respondents' state that the objectives of senior secondary education can be achieved through sex education, therefore relevant in senior secondary education curriculum.

**TABLE 1:**  
Relevance of sex education to the objectives of senior secondary education

Relevance of Sex Education	Relevant	Undecided	Not relevant
To have opportunity for education at a higher level.	316(83.8%)	11(2.9%)	50(13.3%)
To cater for the differences in talent, and disposition	252(66.8%)	51(13.5%)	74(19.6%)
To provide opportunities for students' future role	303(80.4%)	35(9.3%)	39(10.3%)
To provide entrepreneur skills	190(50.4%)	62(16.4%)	125(33.2%)
To provide vocational skills.	203(53.8%)	66(17.5%)	108(28.6%)
To provide skills for self-reliance	249(66.0%)	60(15.9%)	68(18.0%)
To provide skills for agricultural, industrial and economic development.	187(45.9%)	56(14.9%)	134(35.5%)
To develop and promote Nigerian languages	173(45.9%)	61(16.2%)	143(37.9%)
To develop and promote Nigerian art and culture.	212(56.2%)	41(10.9%)	124(32.9%)
To inspire students with a desire for self improvement	298(79.0%)	42(11.1%)	37(9.8%)
To inspire students with the desire for achievement of excellence.	318(84.4%)	36(9.5%)	23(6.1%)
To foster Patriotism and National Unity	236(62.6%)	56(14.9%)	85(22.5%)
To ensure security in education with emphasis on the common ties in spite of our diversity.	289(76.7%)	31(8.2%)	87(15.1%)
To raise morally upright and well-adjusted individual	346(91.8%)	11(2.9%)	20(5.3%)
To help inculcate values among young people	319(84.6%)	23(6.1%)	35(9.3%)
To provide ability to think independently and rationally	321(85.1%)	20(5.3%)	36(9.5%)
To respect the views and feelings of others	297(78.8%)	37(9.8%)	43(11.4%)
To appreciate the dignity of labour	275(72.9%)	18(4.8%)	84(22.3%)

**Research question two**

What is the relationship between the relevance of sex education to the objectives of National Policy of Education and gender among secondary school students within Egor Local Government Area?

Table 2 reveals that 127 male respondents state that the relevance of the objectives of sex

education while 208 female respondents acknowledge the relevance of the objective of sex education. This study implies that there is a relationship between the relevance of sex education to the objectives of National Policy of Education and gender among secondary school students because both genders acknowledge the relevance.

**TABLE 2**  
**Gender distribution of the relevance of sex education to the objectives of National Policy of Education**

Gender	Relevant	Not relevant
Male	127	14
Female	208	28

**Research question three**

What is the relationship between the relevance of sex education to the objectives of National Policy of Education and age among secondary school students within Egor Local Government Area?

As presented in Table 3, it can be deduced that 160 of the respondents within the age range of 12-14years acknowledge the relevance of sex

education to the objectives of senior secondary education while 156 respondents within the age range of 15-17years, 17 respondents within the age range of 18-20years and 2 respondents within the age range of 21-22years perceive the objectives of sex education as relevant. This study concludes that there is a cordial relationship between the relevance of sex education and the objectives of National Policy of Education and age of respondents.

**TABLE 3**  
**Age distribution of respondents and relevance of sex education**

Age group	Relevant	Not relevant
12-14years	160	13
15-17years	156	26
18-20years	17	2
21-22years	2	1

**Hypothesis one**

There is no significant relationship between the perception of sex education and gender among secondary school students within Egor Local Government Area.

A chi-square value of 0.344, degree of freedom of 1 level of significance of 0.615 which is

greater than the alpha level of 0.05 shows that the null hypothesis is accepted. This shows that there is no significant relationship between the perception of sex education to the objectives of National Policy of Education and gender among secondary school students within Egor Local Government Area.

**BLÆ 4**  
**Relevance of sex education to the objectives of National Policy of Education and gender (Chi Square)**

Variable	Relevant	Not relevant	Total	X <sup>2</sup> -test	Sig.
Male	127	14	141	0.334	0.615
Female	208	28	236		
	335	42	377		

**Hypothesis two**

There is no significant relationship between the relevance of sex education to the objectives of National Policy of Education and age among secondary school students within Egor Local Government Area.

To test for the relationship between the respondent's relevance of sex education to the objectives of National Policy of Education and

age range, a chi square value of 5.61, df of 3 and level of significance of 0.132 are observed. As the level of significance of 0.132 is greater than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. This shows that there is no significant relationship between the relevance of sex education to the objectives of National Policy of Education and age among secondary school students within Egor Local Government Area.

**TABLE 5**  
**Relevance of Sex Education to the Objectives of National Policy of Education (Chi-Square)**

Variable	Relevant	Not relevant	Total	X <sup>2</sup> -test	Sig.
12-14years	160	13	173	5.61	0.132
15-17years	156	26	182		
18-20years	17	2	19		
21-22years	2	1	3		
	335	42	377		

## DISCUSSION

This study ascertains the level of relevance of sex education to the objectives of National Policy of Education in senior secondary schools' education among selected secondary schools students in Egor local government area of Edo state. The result reveals that majority of the respondents acknowledge that sex education is relevant in objectives of senior secondary school curriculum. This is deduced as majority of the students state the relevance of sex education in achieving the following objectives of senior secondary education at higher level; to cater for the differences in talent; to provide entrepreneurship skill; to provide vocational skills; to provide skills for agriculture; to develop and promote Nigerian art and culture; to inspire student with the desire for achievement of excellent and others.

This is in line with study by Eko, Pheshi, Osonwka Uwunedo and Offiong (2013) as they state that majority of participants in their study welcome the idea of sex education in schools. It is corroborated by Akande & Akande (2007) in their study conducted in rural secondary schools in Kwara state. Their study shows that many of the respondents would therefore like a formal programme included in the junior primary school curriculum. Its instruction is directed towards improving critical life & social skills which ensures decision making, critical analysis & systematic judgment abilities as Mangier (2005) states education brings growth and development of individual and society, this also confirm the fact that sex education is important for academic excellent.

This study observes that there is a relationship between the relevance of sex education and the objectives of National Policy of Education and gender among secondary school students because both genders acknowledge the relevance. This shows that gender does not influence the opinion of the respondents as 127 males and 208 females' respondents perceive

the relevance of the objective of sex education on the curriculum of senior secondary school students. This is in line with the study conducted by Adiaha et al (2018) that indicate that adolescent students have positive perception towards sex education although, with female holding more positive perception than male in Gwagwalada Area Council, Federal Capital Territory, Abuja and conclude that sex education provides valuable information about their own body and self-respect. Their study shows that 63.69% of the male and 68.30% of the female have positive perception toward sex education.

This study observes that the relationship between the relevance of sex education to the objectives of National Policy of Education and age of respondents is cordial. The writers report that age group does not influence the opinion of the respondents towards the relevance of sex education. Also, respondents within the age range of 12- 17years perceive the relevance of sex education in achieving the objectives of senior secondary school education. This corroborates the study of Starkman (2002) that states that young people aged 17-19 years learn in sex education and what they do in practice.

The result of the hypothesis tested shows that there is no significant relationship between the perception of sex education to the objectives of National Policy of Education and gender among secondary school students within Egor Local Government Area. The result of the second hypothesis tested reveals that there is no significant relationship between the relevance of sex education on achieving the objectives of senior secondary education curriculum and age among the students in senior secondary school within Egor Local government area.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is concluded in the study that the relevance of sex education to the objectives of National

Policy of Education is not related to their gender. The relevance of sex education to the objectives of National Policy of Education also do not relate to their age. Also, sex education is relevant in secondary school curricula in order to meet their educational objectives. Sex education imparted through school can prove to be a significant and effective method of bettering the youngster's sex-related knowledge, attitude and behaviour. Sex education is also importance because many parents (especially in African) are shy about talking/teaching their children on this subject.

Sex education should be taught in schools to help in proper upbringing of our youths. We are optimistic that if these recommendations are given the right attention, the problem of low academic performance of secondary school students will effectively be eliminated in order to move secondary education in Nigeria forward, it is recommended that; Government should do everything as regards the funding, provision of necessary infrastructure, provision of professionally trained teachers to teach in the secondary schools, organization of workshops, seminars and programmes that will encourage academic excellence among secondary school students.

Apart from the Government, private individuals corporate bodys, non-governmental organisation and international body should be encouraged to come and invest in education, because the world is now a global village instead of our children learning the wrong information from the internet, their attention will be directed to programmes more rewarding and beneficent academically. Students should be guarded on what to watch online sites where lectures relevant to sex education are thought.

The school nurses attached to the school should not only be involved in taking care of the ill or indisposed but should be allowed to teach sex education from their wealth of experiences.

They can also give practical and life changing examples that may positively impact on the children. There should be proper monitoring of the teachers and students by principals and appropriate authorities.

The role of guidance and counselling services in this regard cannot be over looked. Guidance counsellors should be made to function on full time basis as specified in the National Policy on Education. Schools should be fenced for a better control of the students to reduce loitering or truancy. The level of discipline should be beefed up, and children with exceptional academic performance should be celebrated openly. Qualified and discipline teachers with sound moral values preferably married should be made to teach sex education. Parents, teachers and all stakeholders of secondary education should also perform their duty of encouraging, monitoring and motivating the students for a better academic performance.

### **Education Implications**

For educational system, sex education should be taught in schools to help in proper upbringing of our youths, the researcher is optimistic that if this is given the right attention, the problem of low academic performance of secondary school students will effectively be eliminated in order to move secondary education in Nigeria in forward and achieve the objectives of the National Policy on Education for Senior Secondary School.

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