

Social Studies Teachers' Teaching of Sex Education: Effect of Cultural Belief

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated Social Studies teachers teaching of sex education: effect of cultural belief. The study engaged the descriptive research design. The study sample comprised of 100 Social Studies teachers. The instrument for the study was the questionnaire. The instrument had a reliability value of 0.87. The data gathered were analysed statistically using z-test. The study discovered that cultural belief has an effect on the teaching of sex education; teachers' gender had no influence on Social Studies teachers teaching of sex education; school location had no influence on Social Studies teachers teaching of sex education. It was recommended that government should provide a blueprint on the teaching of sex education in the country; conferences and seminars on the teaching of sex education to secondary school students should be organised for members of the public/community by the government.

Keywords: Social Studies; Cultural belief; Teaching; Sex education; Secondary schools.

INTRODUCTION

Sex education is an education concerning problems of human sexuality namely human sexual structure, sexual reproduction and intercourse, procreative well-being, psychological relations, the right to reproduction, abstinence from illicit sexual act, birth control, contraception, sexually transmitted diseases, and other facets of man's sexual behaviour. In the opinion of Orji & Anikweze (1998), teaching related sex and sexual issues include the teaching of the human sexual organs and their functions, human reproduction, gender equality, cleanliness during menstrual periods, and vulnerabilities of unwholesome sexual acts. Sex education introduction in Nigeria schools' curriculum has been met with vehement demonstrations and disapproval by parents and the public who because of their traditional belief felt sex education is a way of acquainting school children to early sexual relationship and sexual intercourse and subsequent pregnancies. Teachers of sex education, Social Studies teachers inclusive, feel uncomfortable to efficient and effectively teach it due to the simple reason that it is against the culture of the people to talk and discuss sex and sensitive organs of the human person openly (Ogwu, 2001). In nearly every Nigeria society, due to

cultural belief, pre-marital sexual relationship is a forbidden, open discussion are bottled-up or suppressed, this no doubt affects the instruction or effective teaching of sex education (Adunola, 2005). Sex education is understood and seen as a taboo to be talked about even by teachers because of cultural standard, norms and tradition. This is due to the societal perception that the teaching of sexual issues is unethical. Thus, instruction in sex education would make the child too familiar with sexual issues and be exposed too early to sexual intercourse and sexual relationship. Sex education was received with mixed feelings when it was introduced in schools in 2002. Its introduction in schools was not well received by the people in northern Nigeria. It thus, created raging controversy particularly in Northern Nigeria (Akande & Akande, 2007).

Sex education is an education that is value based. Thus, it is a value full education. However, due to cultural, religious and ethnical diversities, its acceptance as a tool for answers in mostly in controversial areas of sexuality remains challenging (Akande & Akande, 2007). Nigerian culture share disapproval of non-marital sex and taboos surrounding sexuality (Okazaki, 2002) hence, affecting sex education teaching in schools.

Statement of the Problem

World over including Nigeria, the issue of sex is a sensitive one. Thus, in many societies, outlook, feelings, sentiments and rules suppress public discussion of sex and sexual behaviour (UNESCO 2009). Among adolescents or young people, it is a taboo, forbidden and insensitive to openly discuss because of the cultural beliefs, norms and values of the people.

In spite of the vital importance and clear reasons for the need of sex education for adolescents, sex education teaching to students at the secondary school level has faced challenges and it is a disputed issue in nearly every society and cultures. In nearly all Nigeria societies and cultures, providing sex education for adolescents who are unmarried is seen or considered as a taboo; and as such not culturally or customarily accepted (Akande & Akande, 2007). Therefore, cultural belief, norms and values of most Nigeria society affect negatively sex education teaching in secondary schools.

The problem is that most Social Studies teachers do not teach sex education as it should be taught as result of their cultural belief, which prohibits them from discussing sexuality in public. Most Social Studies teachers are not willing to answer questions on sex issues and sexuality. Some parents are also clanged or adhered to their customary or traditional belief, ethno-religious practices that they contemplate sex education immoral (Balogun, 2011). This study is to examine the effect of cultural belief among Social Studies teachers on sex education in secondary schools in Delta South senatorial district.

Hypotheses

- There is no significant effect of cultural belief among Social Studies on the teaching of sex education in secondary schools.
- Male and Female Social Studies teachers will not differ significantly in their opinion on the effect of cultural belief on the teaching of sex education in secondary schools.
- Urban and rural Social Studies teachers will not differ significantly in their views on the effect of cultural belief on the teaching of sex education in secondary schools.

Theoretical Framework

This study is premised on the theoretical framework on the Health Belief Model (HBM). This theory was propounded in the 1950's by social

psychologists Hochbaum, Resenstock & Kegels. Health Belief Model (HBM) is a psychological theory that tries to clarify and forecast health behaviours. For the fact that there are recognised intergroup differences; several of the prevailing theories and models have revealed that individuals from a certain group share definite beliefs, values, principles and experiences. Main diversities inside groups may be because of dynamics like the level of education, gender, location (urban or rural). These dynamics customarily affects the individual's beliefs about health issues like illness, practice and health seeking behaviours.

The elementary components of the HBM originated from a deep-rooted body of psychological and behavioural theory whose numerous models postulate that behaviour hinge on principally on two variables: (1) the worth a person placed on a specific goal; and (2) the assessment by the individual of the possibility that a particular exploit will accomplish his stated and determined goal. When these parameters were conceptualized in the framework of health-related habit or action, the correlation was: (1) the wish to keep away from disease and health issues or problems (or if sick, to get well); and (2) the fact that a particular health behaviour will prevent (or improve) health problems illness (that is, the individual's valuation of the risk of disease or health problems, and of the probability of having the ability, through personal action, to lessen that danger or risk).

The Health Belief theory is centred on the idea of all round health and defines what people do from traditional angle to protect, maintain, keep and regain health. The theory observed health as a difficult interconnected event or incident in a three dimensions' fold. Thus, the stability of parts of the body of the individual - your body, spirit and mind. The form or body includes all physical dimensions like gender, age and health, the mind includes a cognitive process such as beliefs, emotional state, self-image and defences, while nonphysical facets include both negative and positive cultured spiritual practices, guarding forces and supernatural or native forces. These aspects are in frequent change and fluctuation over time, yet each is totally related to the framework of the individual. The perspective includes the individual's family, environment and community.

Values and Beliefs as Components of Culture

One major element of a society's way of life culture involves the systems of values and beliefs which are typical of that society. Belief/value systems overlap a greatly with these other components of cultural systems because belief and values play such a general role in culture.

Cultural values affect nearly every discovered behaviour; the metaphorical design template consists of a significant degree of belief/value systems. Thus, these systems are a fundamental element of the larger cultural systems through which they exist. This involves stories, or common myths or misguided beliefs, whose explanation be able to give people understanding regarding how they ought to feel, think, and behave. The intricate polytheistic traditions of the historical Greek and Roman cultures are good examples of just how belief structure or system can affect the lifestyle of society's members and the function and role they possibly play in providing significance to people's activities.

One of the most outstanding systems of social and ethnical belief tends to be those connected with official religions; however, any structure of belief in which the interpretation of tales or stories influences people's behavior something of superstitions, for example- can be a living, contributing factor or component of a given society's culture.

Concept of Sex Education

The term sex education has been given several definitions and explanation, by many writers and individuals passing on the individual opinion and biases about the topic. Sex Education is implying an age-fitting, culturally and societal relevant attitude to teaching about sexual characteristics and interactions by providing scientifically correct, realistic, non-judgmental information (UNESCO, 2009).

Adunola (2005) perceived sex education solely as education in the machining of sexual act. He also described sex education as a sinister campaign to create an increasing and dangerous obsession with sex in the minds of the adolescents. Egbuna (1999) argued that sex education is not simple physiology of the system, nor is it the process of telling the youth the facts of life and cautioning them about the possible unpleasant consequence of premarital experimentation. It is not giving information about reproduction; describing the disease transmitted sexually and warning the

embarrassment of illegitimate pregnancy and the shame of being discovered rather, sex education is the creation of satisfying interpersonal relationships rather than simply the exercise of sex and it would involve the whole population and the total life span, going far beyond genital sex expression, love and affection. Oladepo & Akintayo (1991) view sex education as a process of acquiring sex knowledge, positive attitude towards sexual acts, male and female relationship and the role of parents.

Here sex education connotes a deliberate course of education that inculcate the attainment of realistic and genuine facts, the development of progressive attitudes or outlook, values and belief as well as and the advance of skills to handle, spiritual or religious, social, psychosomatic, cultural and biological features of human sexuality. It is also centred around building the skills of the youths or adolescents to enable them to make informed choices regarding their manners, attitude, self-confident and being knowledgeable about taking action on the abovementioned choices.

Social Studies Teachers Cultural Belief, Religion and the Teaching of Sex Education

Interactively complex sets of biological, psychological and socio-cultural issues affect the human sexual behaviour. The way and how we feel about our worth, the way we think and our body image are significant factors in our sexuality (Ikpe, 2004). Most of the time we evaluate our appearances and behaviour with what our culture command or prescribe, for example the idea of what is attractive and beautiful with regard to height, weight, hairstyle, skin quality and colour are all socio-cultural ideas (Adepoju, 2005). Society and culture go hand in hand, society can simply be defined as a group or set of people living in an area regenerating its number through reproduction and sharing the same culture as in knowledge habits, belief and moral law and custom.

Treffer (1995) stated that society and culture control both the biological and psychological components of sexuality in the sense that people acquire and assemble meanings, skills and value from other persons around them. Foucault (2006) stated that indication of how to think, talk, act or comport ourselves begins during the early period of socializing among family members and progress through the circle and network of friends and schools. In this way

cultural and social issues consistently affect our thought and action.

Adunola (2005) opined that in Nigerian cultural heterogeneity, multiculturalism ethics, social status and other traditions perpetuate rules and norms that affect the perception of parent, teachers and others, and therefore, serve as catalysis against the successful implementation of sex education in the country. For Laumann (1994), cultural belief applies strong influence or bearing on sexual knowledge. Adolescents need to be introduced to various topics of sex education. They should have a fair idea of the processes of human reproduction and considerable information concerning other aspects of human sexual behaviours, they should also have correct genuine information with regard to venereal diseases.

Invariably religion continues to masquerade as a formidable challenge to the successful and effective implementation of sex education in Nigeria. While Christianity is understood to be less rigid and greatly flexible to societal change, Islam is very unyielding and not friendly to any issue whose subject is in disagreement with its ideas (Adepoju, 2005). The notion of boys intermixing with girls, or man mixing with women, partial nude dressing and assertiveness of the female folks is extremely frowned or glared at by Islam (Laumann, 1994).

Christianity and Islam are of the view that sex education is not important to the Nigerian society (Adunola, 2005). The mere mention of the word "sex" evoke sentiment with regard to teaching the youths in secondary schools. This is because religions generally and African cultures regard such word "sex" as taboo and as such they shy or back away from mentioning them. However, subjects like Biology, Health Science or Health Education are more acceptable and palatable to most traditional background. Okeke (2001) reported that parents often say they don't want to discuss sexuality with their teens for they are afraid that in-depth discussion will appear a license to take pleasure in sexual behaviour. So if parents have that fear, what more of the situation in a classroom with peers and different persons with different socio-cultural, ethnic/tribal and religious background?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Okazaki (2000) investigated cultural effect on Asian Americans sexuality. The study discovered that culture had no effect on Asian Americans sexuality. It also discovered that

gender and location influenced Asian Americans' views on the sexuality of Asian Americans. Oshi, Nakalemia & Oshi (2005) investigated social and cultural dimensions of sex education (HIV/AIDS) in Nigeria secondary schools. Results of study disclosed that students were not at variance in their views on social and cultural dimensions of sex education (HIV/AIDS) in Nigeria secondary schools. Also, students' gender and school location was not significant. Mbugua (2007) carried out an investigation on factors hindering educated mothers from giving their daughters meaningful and important sex education in Kenya. The study discovered that cultural belief was one of the factors that hinder educated mothers in Kenya from giving their daughters meaningful sex-education. School location was not significant in the study.

Mbonile & Kayombo (2008) carried out a study on parents of adolescents' acceptance of introduction of reproductive health and sex education in schools at Kinondoni Municipal in Tanzania. In a study of 100 parents, the study established no difference in parents of adolescents' acceptance of introduction of reproductive health and sex education in schools the acceptability of parents of adolescents of the introduction of reproductive health and sex education in schools. More so, location and gender was not significant. Smerecnik, Schaalma, Gerju, Meijer & Poelman (2010) investigated Muslim adolescents' opinion of sex education. 1004 adolescents were selected through the stratified random sampling technique from 103 secondary schools of Mysore city (India) and Tehran city (Iran). Their responses were collected using the questionnaire. Results demonstrated that there was significant differences in their opinion of sex education. And differences was present between them based on gender. Also in overall, the type of school was not a factor, which can affect adolescents view on the effects of cultural belief on the teaching of sex education. Jalali, Nahidi, Amir & Alavi (2010) investigated teachers and parents' opinion on the right method and time for female reproductive health education. A thousand teachers and parents were randomly chosen for the study. The result of the investigation showed that parents and teachers did not differ in their opinion on the effect of cultural belief on the right method and time for female reproductive health education. Parents and teachers differed significantly in their

opinion by gender. Location variable was not significant.

METHOD

Research Design

The study employed the descriptive survey research design. The descriptive survey research design, according to Egbule (2009) is one in which information is gathered from a comparatively huge number of respondents reflected to be the representatives of the whole population of a group. A descriptive survey design by and large interprets and describes what is and by so doing finds out the conditions of the current developments.

Population of the Study

The population of this study included all Social Studies teachers in public secondary schools in Delta-South senatorial zone of Delta state. The population involved 308 Social Studies teachers from one hundred and four (104) public secondary schools in Delta-South Senatorial zone. There are three senatorial zones in Delta State, namely: Delta central, Delta North and Delta South. Delta South senatorial zone was carefully chosen for this study due to its heterogeneous nature among the three senatorial zones.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The study utilized a sample of one hundred Social Studies teachers from the population, male and female Social studies teachers (42 males and 58 females) from 50 public secondary schools in Delta-South senatorial zone of Delta State. Sampling was done in stages, employing multi-stage random sampling at three stages and stratified sampling techniques.

Research Instrument

The research instrument chosen for the study was the questionnaire tagged "Effect of Cultural Belief on the Teaching of Sex Education Questionnaire" (ECBTSEQ). The questionnaire was a 20-items questionnaire that contains the effect of cultural belief on the teaching of sex education. The research instrument was of two parts, A and B. The first part comprised of personal data, which seek demographic information of teachers. Part B comprised of twenty (20) items and contained statements to which respondents have to indicate their opinion. The variables in the study are the effect of cultural belief and teaching of sex education. The items in the questionnaire were measured in

the following ways: Strongly Agree (SA) 4, Agree (A) 3, Disagree (D) 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1.

Reliability of the Instrument

To determine the reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire was trial tested on thirty (50) Social Studies teachers and schools not selected for the study. The reliability estimate was computed using Cronbach Alpha Statistics which analysis gave a value of 0.63. This value was therefore considered high enough to permit the conclusion that the instrument was reliable to validate the use of the instrument for the study

Method of Data Collection

The direct delivery and retrieval technique was applied through the services of research assistants in administering the instrument to the respondents in schools. The research assistants were also trained to approach the respondents with courtesy and respect so as to secure their attention and cooperation in the administration and collection of the questionnaire. They were allocated specific Schools to cover.

Data Analysis

The null hypotheses were tested by means of z-test. Simple tables and z-test of significance were adopted in the presentation and analysis of the data generated for the study.

The data collected were analysed using t-test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses.

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant effect of cultural belief on the teaching of sex education among Social Studies teachers'.

Table1. Analysis of z-test on the Effect of Cultural belief on the Teaching of Sex Education among Social Studies Teachers'.

Variables	N	X	SD	df	z.cal	zCrit
Cultural Belief	100	2.53	1.17			
Sex Education	100	2.24	1.12	98	2.19	1.96

The result in Table 1 shows that the z-calculated of 2.19 is higher than the z-critical of 1.96, meaning that the null hypothesis tested is rejected. Consequently, there was a significant effect of cultural belief on the teaching of sex education among Social Studies teachers' in secondary schools. This indicates that there is a significant effect of cultural belief on the teaching of sex education among Social Studies

teachers' in secondary schools. The implication of this result is that cultural belief is a blockade or an obstacle to the effective and efficient teaching of sex education to students or adolescents in secondary school, thus, cultural belief has generally negative effect on the effective teaching of sex education. Hence the hypothesis of no significant effect of cultural belief on the teaching of sex education among Social Studies teachers' in secondary school was rejected.

Hypothesis 2

Male and female Social Studies teachers will not differ significantly on the effect of cultural belief on the teaching of sex education.

Table 2. Analysis of z-test on male and female Social Studies Teachers views on the effect of cultural belief on the teaching of sex education in secondary schools.

Group	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	z. Cal.	z.Crit
Male	42	2.82	1.01	98	0.19	1.96
Female	58	2.84	0.85			

Results in Table 2 revealed that the calculated z value (0.19) is less than z table value (1.96). This implies that the null hypothesis is not rejected since the calculate z-value (0.19) is less than the z table value (1.96). Thus, significant difference did not exist between male and female Social Studies teachers on the effect of cultural belief on the teaching of sex education in secondary schools

Hypothesis 3

Urban and rural Social Studies teachers will not differ significantly on the effect of cultural belief on the teaching of sex education in secondary schools.

Table3. Analysis of z-test on the Urban and Rural Social Studies Teachers opinion on the Effect of Cultural Belief on the Teaching of Sex Education in Secondary Schools.

Group	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	z.cal.	z-crit
Urban	62	2.61	1.07	98	0.57	1.96
Rural	38	2.54	1.04			

Table 3 shows the testing of Social Studies teachers on the influence of cultural belief on the teaching of sex education in secondary schools by location for significance. The results revealed that Social Studies teachers have uniform views on the effect of cultural belief on the teaching of sex education in secondary schools. This indicated that the hypothesis is accepted, since the calculated z-value (0.57) is less than the value table (1.96). Therefore, it was

concluded that significant difference did not exist between urban and rural schools Social Studies teachers on the effect of cultural belief on the teaching of sex education.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Considering the result of hypothesis one, the result revealed a strong effect of cultural belief among Social Studies teachers on sex education in secondary schools in Delta South senatorial zone. Thus, Social Studies teachers are in agreement that culture beliefs do not encourage the teaching of sex education. This is because providing sex education for adolescents who are unmarried is seen as a taboo; and so not culturally or customarily accepted. Therefore, the society felt that teaching sex education to adolescent add up to encouraging immorality. This finding is in line with the findings of the report studies carried out by some scholars like Mbugua (2007) and Jalali, Nahidi, Amir & Alavi (2010) findings that sex education was introduced in schools because parents have negated to make available to their wards the facts they need about sex, which will help the adolescent to fit well in the society. They asserted that in several traditional societies of the world including Nigeria, open conversation about sexual issues was a taboo especially for the young. It was hardly ever talked about and that parents feel that sex education will promote promiscuous sexual activity in the youth. Hence, it effects on the teaching of sex education to students in Nigeria.

The result of hypothesis two indicates that no significant difference occurred between male and female Social Studies teachers' views on the effect of cultural belief on the teaching of sex education. The finding of this study agree with the research findings of Oshi, Nakalema & Oshi (2005), Mbonile & Kayombo (2008) and Ayuba (2011) when they stated that religion and cultural beliefs forbid students' knowledge, information and facts of sex related issues or subject before marriage. They thus, reported no significant difference in the effect of cultural belief on the teaching of sex (male and female) education in secondary schools by gender. These could be credited to the fact that both sexes of Social Studies teachers have same cultural and religious beliefs and have knowledge; are aware and familiar with the tradition and custom of the people or society they live and belong.

However, the finding of the study is in contrast with the study of Walker (2004), Eze, A.O.

(2006) and Ogunjimi (2009) who in their study found significant difference by gender. They opined that both male and female teachers having gone through their various training and experiences, are swayed by their exposure to different organs or media for information, teachings and enlightenment of the need for the teaching of sex education in schools. Thus, they varied in their views on the effect of cultural beliefs on the teaching of sex education in secondary schools.

The result of hypothesis 3 shows no significant difference between Social Studies teachers who located in urban schools and those who do their teaching in rural schools in their views on the effect of cultural belief in the teaching of sex education to secondary school students. The reason for this result may be that Social Studies teachers notwithstanding their location are affected by cultural beliefs in the teaching of sex education in schools. The findings here support Mbugua (2007), Mbonile & Kayombo (2008), Jalali, Nahidi, Amir & Alavi (2010) and Smerecnik, Schaalma, Gerju, Meijer & Poelman (2010) who reported that the type of school was not a factor, which can affect teachers' opinion on the effect of cultural belief on the teaching of sex education. This is not unexpected, because Social Studies teachers' who are in both urban and rural schools are aware and familiar with the stands of culture and the Nigeria society as regard exposing adolescents to sexual topics or matters.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrated that cultural belief has effect on Social Studies teachers on the teaching of secondary school students sex education and that it act as an obstacle to effective instruction on sex education. It was also observed that Social Studies teachers' gender and location did not influence their views on the effect of cultural belief on the teaching of sex education in secondary schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following were recommended:

- The government should make available a blue print on the teaching of sex education in schools.
- Conferences and seminars on the teaching of sex education to secondary school students should be organized for members of the community by the government. This will offer means for the people to seek and

get an explanation of areas of sex education that conflict with their religious and traditional belief.

- Parents should be re-educated on how to handle sexuality education at home and what is required at each stage of a child's development.
- Religious leaders and parents should consent to the teaching of sex education in schools.
- The government should meet and dialogue with religious bodies to enlighten religious leaders so to obtain their consent for the teaching of sex education.

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Citation: Clifford E. Ogheneakoke (Ph.D.), Sunday Obro (Ph.D.). "Social Studies Teachers' Teaching of Sex Education: Effect of Cultural Belief". (2018). *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies*, 5(8), pp.62-69.

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