**IMPLICATION OF POOR AWARENESS OF SEX EDUCATION ON TEENAGERS IN UDENU LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, ENUGU STATE,** **NIGERIA**

**ABSTRACT**

**Aims**: The purpose of this work is to study the implication of poor sex education on teenagers in Udenu local government area of Enugu state. **Study design:** The researcher adopted a descriptive survey research design. **Place and duration of study:** The study was conducted in five randomly selected secondary schools in Udenu local government area of Enugu state, Nigeria, between July 2024 and February, 2025. **Methodology:** Thesample consisted of 290 students and 10 teachers from randomly selected schools. Data were collected using a questionnaire. The researchers access knowledge/opinion regarding sex education through the questionnaire. Four-point Likert scale rating of strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), agree (A) and strongly agree (SA) with values of 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively was used for the research. **Results:** the research shows that there is a mixed knowledge on the teaching of sex education in secondary schools in Udenu local government area of Enugu state. Furthermore, the finding also shows that resistance to implementation of sex education in the curriculum due to societal taboos, religious belief, limited support from parents, leading to reduced acceptance and effectiveness of programs, inconsistent policies and curriculum making unequal access to sex education and insufficient materials or funding, hindering comprehensive education are some of the challenges to adoption and teaching of sex education in schools. teenagers need to be equipped with adequate knowledge of sex education if they are to negotiate sexual relationship safely and responsibly. The finding also showed that early marriage, teenage pregnancy, contacting of sexually transmitted infection are the implications of lack of knowledge of sex education on the teenagers, the effect of which they suffer at a later part of their life. **Conclusion:** the research suggested that in order to solve this problem of poor awareness of sex education on teenagers, the government, teachers, and parents should ensure that sex education is given to the students, right from their family to school and the society at large.

Keywords: sex education, awareness, teenagers, knowledge, sexuality, Udenu

1. **INTRODUCTION**

The word “Education” has been viewed by different scholars, philosophers, psychologist, educationist and other recognized personnel in the field of education based on personal orientation. According to Okoorosaye-Orubite (2019), “Education is any programme of learning that is conducted formally or informally with the objective of making the receivers of such a programme useful to their environment”. Adegoke, (2003), saw the term education as training the physical, mental and moral power of a human being to render him fit for the duties of life. Generally, education is seen as what happened to human being from the day, they were born to the day they die (Yakubu, 2001).On the other hand, the word sex can be defined as the structure or component in an animal’s body that differentiates between male and female, masculine and famine, man and woman and differences in each group (Onuigbo, 2000).

“Sex education plays a crucial role in the development and well-being of secondary school students. It equips them with the necessary knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about their sexual health, relationships, and overall well-being” (Samuel, 2023). “This comprehensive and evidence-based education empowers students to navigate the complexities of sexuality, understand consent, prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs), avoid unintended pregnancies, and foster healthy relationships. Sex education programs provide students with accurate information regarding contraceptives, STIs, and safer sex practices. This knowledge enables them to make responsible decisions and engage in healthy sexual behavior when they become sexually active” (Haberland & Rogow, 2015). A study conducted by Kirby et al. (2017) found that comprehensive sex education programs significantly reduce the number of unintended pregnancies and teenage birth rates. By teaching adolescents about contraception methods and responsible sexual behavior, sex education helps young individuals avoid the potential negative consequences of early and unintended pregnancies.

A report by Omeje, (2016) has it that whenever teenagers stay together, they hardly discuss any other matter within sixty minutes without talking about sex. According to World Health Organisation (2017), “women below 20 years of age comprise almost one-tenth of all births. This puts the majority of teenagers at risk of pregnancy and childbirth (Kassa et al., 2018). There is a rapid spread of modern communication and easy access to sites that are pornographic, which can change the sexual views of adolescents” (Joe-Akunne 2020). “Both male and female adolescents face considerable reproductive risks (Shiffman et al., 2018). Thus, the need for formal and appropriate sexuality education to help young ones make informed decisions regarding their sexual relationships” (WHO, 2018).

Poor sex education, sexual activity among teenagers in Nigeria is assuming a revolutionary trend, resulting in unwanted pregnancy, illegal abortion, infant teenager mortality, dumping of unwanted babies and sexually transmitted infections which after five to fourteen days of infection, the signs and symptoms appear, Nnamonu and Ezugwu (2024), so elevating awareness of this pressing issue of sex education is paramount. (Nnamonu, et al., 2024). Abortion accounts for over half of the emergency gynecological admission in hospitals in developing countries and places, a considerable drain on limited medical resources. In five years, review of women treated for illegal abortion at Nigerian hospital, 90% of the patients were unmarried teenagers (Udom, 2017). In the context of a high and increasing incidence of unwanted pregnancies and legalization of abortion among teenagers, with the implications, which includes poor awareness of sex education on the part of teenagers, we need to think of alternative means of reducing the menace like mass literacy on sex education especially through the primary and secondary school curriculum. According to *Odoh, et al*, (2017), teenager or adolescence is the developmental stage between childhood and adulthood; it generally refers to a period ranging from age 12-13 through age 19-21. UNESCO (2018) reported that “34 % of young people worldwide know accurately about the prevention and transmission of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). And out of every three girls, two are clueless about what to expect when they begin menstruating. A study conducted by” (Shiffman et al., 2018) Showed that “the Nigerian government approved the sexuality education policy in 1999 due to pressure from domestic non-governmental organisation and international donors, the implementation of this policy has differed across the states in Nigeria”.

In Udenu local government area today, there is need for counseling unit in most of our educational institutions and the earliest introduction of sex education in secondary schools is eminent. Most teacher shy away from elaborating on reproductive contents of their courses. Only in tertiary institution do some lecturers boldly teach courses offered in human reproduction like in some aspect of embryology, medicine, biology, microbiology and health education.

**2. MATERIAL AND METHODS**

* 1. **Area of the Study**

The research was purposively conducted in Enugu state, because the researchers reside within the location in Nigeria. Focusing on Saint Patrick’s model comprehensive secondary school Obollo, Community secondary school Ezimo Uno, Girls secondary school Imilike uno, Community secondary school Obollo afor, Community secondary school Umundu. These are five randomly selected secondary schools in Udenu local government area of the state because of proximity. Udenu is one of the most beautiful local governments in Enugu state, [Nigeria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigeria). The population of Udenu, according to the national population commission, 2006 is 178,687, and has a teenager population of 43,375.

**Research Design, The Population of The Study, Sample and Sampling Techniques**

This research adopted a descriptive survey design and the reason for the choice was because the study is aimed at collecting data from teachers and students considered representative of a population in assessing the implication of poor awareness of sex education among teenagers. The population of the study comprised of seven thousand eight hundred and fifty-seven (7857-total population of all teachers and students in secondary schools in Udenu local government area). Saint Patrick’s model comprehensive secondary school Obollo has a total number of three hundred and seventy-two biology teachers and students (372), while Community secondary school Ezimo Uno has three hundred and fifteen (315), perhaps, Girls secondary school Imilike uno has two hundred and eighty-eight teachers and students(288), Community secondary school Obollo afor has one hundred and one(101), however, Community secondary school Umundu has one hundred and twenty-five biology teachers and students. The five randomly selected secondary schools have a total of 1201 biology teachers and students. The researchers choose biology teacher and students because they have encountered topics such as reproduction, sanitation, personal hygiene and sexually transmitted infections in their previous classes. A sample size of 300 was derived using taro yamens formula:

$$n=\frac{N}{1 +N(e)2}$$

Where:

n = Sample size -?

N = Population of the study – 1201

e = Level of significance – 0.05;

1 = Theoretical constant – 1.

Substituting the values in the formula:

$=\frac{1201}{1 +1201(0.05)2}$

n = 1201

 1+1201(0.0025)

n = 1201

 1+3.0025

n = 1201

 4.0025

n = 300.06

n is approximately 300. (10 teachers and 290 students)

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire. Questionnaire items were constructed to afford an answer to the research questions formulated to guide the study. The questionnaire consists of three sections. Section A sought information on the teaching of sex education in secondary schools in Udenu local government area of Enugu state. Section B sought information on the challenges to adoption and teaching of sex education in secondary schools in Udenu local government area of Enugu state, section c sought information on the implication of inadequate sex education on students in Udenu local government area of Enugu state. Four-point scale rating of strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), agree (A) and strongly agree (SA) with values of 1, 2, 3, and 4.

**2.3 Validity of the instrument**

The research instrument was subjected to face validation by giving it to an expert from Measurement and Evaluation and two others from Biology Education, all in the Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu. They were asked to validate the instrument concerning the appropriateness of language used in terms of clarity of statement and adequacy of items of the instrument. The experts also checked whether the instrument is capable of answering the questions. Based on the experts, corrections, comments, observations, suggestions, and amendments were made to the instruments before a final copy was produced for the study.

**2.4 Method of Data Analysis**

The data collected from the respondents were keyed into a Microsoft Excel sheet, and analyses of mean and standard deviation were carried out. A four-point scale of Strong Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Agree (A), and Strong Agree (SA). The scaling statement and the nominal values are SD= 1; D= 2; A= 3; SA= 4. Therefore, mean = 4+3+2+1 divided by 4 = 2.50. Therefore, 2.50 was the cut-off point for deciding on each item. Any item whose weighted mean was 2.50 and above was considered as agreement while any item that was less than 2.50 was regarded as disagreement.

**3. Results**

The presentation and analysis of data obtained from the Administration of the instrument (questionnaire) of the study. The data were organized into three tables in relevance to the three research questions.

**3.1 Teaching of sex education in secondary schools**

Table 1 revealed the availability of sex education in secondary school in Udenu local government area of Enugu state. School assembly sensitization on sex education, prioritize school seminar to educate students on sexuality, Teacher’s participation in educating students on sexuality were the item state that received a mean score above average of 2.50 agreed. The respondents disagreed with the following item statement, Publications and periodical are made on Sex education at Udenu local government Schools, use media houses like television and radio Stations to create awareness on sex education as they got a mean score of 2.45 and 2.22 respectively. Similarly, the standard deviations of all items are relatively high (˃1) which implies that the individual responses deviated from the mean.

3.2 **Challenges to adoption and teaching of sex education in secondary schools**

Table 2 shows responses on the questionwhat are the challenges to adoption and teaching of sex education in secondary schools in Udenu local government area of Enugu state.The respondents Agreed with the following. Resistance to implementation due to societal taboos and religious belief. (2.69), Limited support from parents, leading to Reduced acceptance and effectiveness of programs. (2.58), Inconsistent policies and curriculum making Unequal access to sex education (2.68), Insufficient materials or funding, hindering Comprehensive education (2.58) as the item statements are above cutoff mark of 2.50. whereas, they Disagreed with the item statement, Teachers are unprepared, resulting in poor Delivery and potential misinformation. (2.25). Also, the standard deviations of all items are relatively high (˃ 1) which implies that the individual responses deviated from the mean.

**Table 1: Teaching of sex education in secondary schools in Udenu LGA of Enugu state.**

S/N ITEMS STATEMENT SA A D SD N EFX X STD REMARK

1. Publications and periodical are

made on Sex education at Udenu

local government Schools. 69 78 72 81 300 735 2.45 2.19 Disagree

1. School assembly sensitizations on

sex education. 84 63 75 78 300 753 2.51 2.26 Agree

1. Use media houses like television

and radio Stations to create awareness

on sex education 45 96 39 120 300 666 2.22 1.99 Disagree

1. prioritize school seminar to educate

students on sexuality 105 75 60 60 300 825 2.75 2.47 Agree

1. Teacher’s participation in educating

students On sexuality 60 114 90 36 300 798 2.66 2.30 Agree

Total 12.59

average mean 2.52 Agreed

**Table 2. The challenges to adoption and teaching of sex education in secondary schools**

S/N ITEMS STATEMENT SA A D SD N EFX X STD REMARK

1. Resistance to implementation

due to societal taboos and

religious belief. 99 69 72 60 300 807 2.69 2.41 Agree

1. Limited support from parents,

leading to Reduced acceptance

and effectiveness of programs. 75 84 81 60 300 774 2.58 2.28 Agree

1. Teachers are unprepared,

resulting in poor Delivery and

potential misinformation. 45 45 150 60 300 675 2.25 1.92 Disagree

1. Inconsistent policies and

curriculum making Unequal

access to sex education. 108 72 36 84 300 804 2.68 2.45 Agree

1. Insufficient materials or

funding, hindering

Comprehensive education. 84 66 90 60 300 774 2.58 2.30 Agree

Total 12.78

Average mean 2.56 Agreed

**3.3 The implication of inadequate sex education on students.**

Table three revealed that the respondents demonstrated full knowledge implication of poor sex education on teenager at Udenu local government area of Enugu state with all four responses being above 2.50 cut off and two of the responses being below. Most of the respondents agreed that they are knowledgeable about sex education, sex has no reduction in life span of teenager, unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infection such as gonorrhea, and unprotected sexual intercourse prevalence are some of the implication sex educations which ought to be taught in secondary schools at Udenu local government area.

Similarly, the standard deviations of all items are relatively high (˃1) which implies that the individual responses deviated from the mean.

**Table 3: The implication of inadequate sex education on teenager in Udenu LGA**

S/N ITEMS STATEMENT SA A D SD N EFX X STD REMARK

1. sex has reduction in life

span of students 108 72 36 84 300 804 2.68 2.45 Agree

1. unwanted pregnancies 126 30 54 90 300 792 2.64 2.45 Agree
2. sexually transmitted

infection such as

gonorrhea 105 75 60 60 300 825 2.75 2.47 Agree

1. unprotected sexual
2. intercourse prevalence 60 90 90 60 300 750 2.50 2.19 Agree

 Total 10.57

 Average mean 2.64

Key

SA - Strongly agree

A - Agree

D - Disagree

SD – Strongly disagree

STD- Standard deviation

**4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The result of the research findings showed that the students of Udenu local government area are faced with the implication of poor sex education awareness on teenagers. The data in table one explains if sex education is taught in secondary schools in Udenu local government area of Enugu state. Out of the five selected secondary schools studied in Udenu local government area, it was found out that there is mixed knowledge on the teaching of sex education in secondary schools at Udenu local government area of Enugu state. this is in agreement with the study of Kumar et al, (2017) on Perception of adolescents towards sex education and Ayalew et al, study (2019 on Knowledge and attitude towards sexual and [reproductive health](https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/biochemistry-genetics-and-molecular-biology/reproductive-health) rights and associated factors among Adet college students, Northwest Ethiopia. The findings also shows that majority of the respondents had good knowledge of sex education, this finding is contrary to the study conducted by Ajibade et al (2013), where adolescents were found to have inadequate knowledge about sex education as they do not really understand the meaning of sex education, some reasoned that it is a means of corrupting the youths, while some indicated that it is a process of teaching young people bad things.

The research revealed the challenges to adoption and teaching of sex education in secondary schools in Udenu local government area of Enugu state. Resistance to implementation due to societal taboos and religious belief, Limited support from parents, leading to reduced acceptance and effectiveness of programs, Inconsistent policies and curriculum making unequal access to sex education and Insufficient materials or funding, hindering comprehensive education, and this ﬁnding is in tandem with previous studies by Romero-Estudillo et al (2014), Adedini et al, (2021) and Musa, A. (2020). Sule et al (2015) while studying Socio-cultural challenges to sexual health education for female teenagers, concluded that religion and cultural issues are the major challenges of sex education, however, the emerging challenges are manageable in some extent. Considering the sensitivity of sex education in religious and cultural context, sex education could be promoted tactfully and through overcoming the cultural taboos and barriers as major obstacles.

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The study further showed the implication of poor sex education on teenager in Udenu local government area of Enugu state. Additionally, our investigation of multiple implications, offers validation of general patterns in line with Lindberg and Orr, (2011). knowledgeability about sex education, sex has no reduction in life span of teenager, unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infection like gonorrhea. sex abuse and unprotected sexual intercourse prevalence are some of the implication sex educations which ought to be taught in secondary schools.

**The revealed that** Sex education is very important among secondary school students in Nigeria**. However,** Poor sex education breeds sexual abuse and exploitation among students in Nigeria**.** Sex education should be encouraged among secondary school students in Nigeria **perhaps** the qualification and teaching experience of teachers help enhance students’ performance and remedy the poor awareness of sex education amongst teenagers in schools at Udenu local government area of Enugu state and Nigeria in general.

Teenagers are Faced with the challenges of understanding and becoming comfortable with the physical changes of puberty Christopher Kraus (2008). According to the study, the majority of youngsters don't know enough about sex education. For them to develop positive attitudes and beliefs regarding sex, they must be given proper and right knowledge about it. By doing this, antisocial behaviors like teen pregnancy and the spread of STDs will be stopped in our society. Teenagers also acknowledged that sex education works, but the majority of them don't know enough about it. It's important for young people to learn about sexually transmitted diseases and their reproductive systems. Given the exposure our children receive at school, the media, and from their peers, it is crucial to influence their sex education. Parent therefore, play a vital role in this area, family is the first agent of socialization through which a child grows, Durojaiye (2005) observed that “in most African homes, parents are not fully equipped to answer questions on sexual matters usefully. Even those who try to, passes faulty information to their children. The whole subject thus becomes surrounded by secrecy and the children how become too embarrassed to discuss these matters with their parent. Parent are in the appropriate position to provide information about sex to their children. There is also need for adolescent to make proper use of the information given to them about sex”.

**4.2 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study of the implication of poor awareness of sex education on teenagers in Udenu local government area, Enugu state, the researcher recommends that there is urgent need to:

1. Provide a regular training and development programmes for educators to enhance their technical skills and familiarity with the implication of poor aware of sex education.
2. Provide comprehensive sex education program in schools in Udenu local government area that covers topics such as anatomy, reproductive health, contraception, sexually transmitted infection prevention, consent and earthly relationships.
3. Involve parents by encouraging them to have open and honest conversation with their co teens about sex and relationships. Parent play a crucial role in providing additional support and guidance beyond what is taught in school.
4. Access resources by ensuring that teenagers have access to reliable and accurate resources on sexual health. This can include website, hotlines and community organisation that provide information, and support.
5. Educate peers by implementing peer lead education programmes where older teenagers who have received comprehensive sex education can educate and support their peers. These can help create a safe and comfortable space for teenagers to ask questions and seek advice.
6. Train healthcare providers to received adequate training on how to provide comprehensive and non-judgmental sexual health information to teenager and these will help to ensure that teenagers receive accurate information and support when needed.
7. Promote consent and healthy relationship by emphasizing the important of consent, boundaries, and healthy relationships in health education programmes.
8. Teach teenagers about the signs of unhealthy relationship and how to seek help if they are in an abusive situation.
9. Continually support by providing ongoing support and resources to teenagers as they navigate their sexual health and these can include follow-up sessions, access to counselling services and information on where to seek help if needed.

**4.3 Implications of the study**

There is need for educational programmes adapting transformational learning and strategies by post primary school management board, Enugu state (PPSMB) such as developing students friendly and continuous information regarding sex education as part of health promotion strategies and the needs of holistic approach, parents and community active participation, teachers continuous training, curriculum development and cooperation is important to impart knowledge and foster good practices in the prevention and controlling poor awareness of sex education amongst teenagers, not only in schools but trigger good practice among the students and the community in general.

**Disclaimer (artificial intelligence)**

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

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