

## **Influence of Family Life Education on Sexual Behaviour of in-School Adolescents in Bida Education Zone of Niger State, Nigeria**

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**Abstract:** The study examined the influence of family life education on sexual behaviour of in-school adolescent in Bida education zone of Niger State. Ex-post facto research design was used for the study. Two research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. The population of the study was 46,260 SS II students and the sample for the study was 2,313. Structured family life education and sexual behaviour questionnaire tagged FLESBQ was used as instrument for data collection. The instrument was face validated by three experts. To determine the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach alpha statistic was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument which yielded the value of 0.92. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question while t-test statistic was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that parents to a high extent provided family life education to adolescent students. The findings also revealed that family life education greatly influence in-school adolescents' sexual behaviour. The study recommended that family life education should be included in the curriculum of senior secondary schools in Nigeria.

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**Key words:** Family life education, sexual behaviours, in-school adolescents, instrument, Nigeria

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Family is a social unit composed of two or more people who live together and are related by blood, marriage or adoption (Thio, 1992). According to Akubue and Okolo (2008) family refers to a group of people who interact and communicate with others such as husband, wife and children. Family's style of training or educating their children may to a great extent influence the sexuality of their children. In other words, family life education shapes the sexual behaviour of their children.

Sexual behaviour is a common social issue which is as old as creation. According to Gebhard human sexual behaviour refers to any solitary activity between two persons or in a group that induces sexual arousal. According to Gebhard, there are two determinants of human sexual behaviour namely: the inherited sexual response patterns that have evolved as a means of ensuring reproduction and that part of each individual genetic inheritance. Similarly, Owuamanam (1982) identified five types of sexual behaviours found among pre-adolescent. They include kissing, breast and genital fondling, embracing, holding of arms and sexual intercourse. However, Alzate (1978) and Soyinka had

earlier identified dating, petting, masturbation, oral genital contact and homosexual contact as sexual behaviours in human.

The response to sexual behaviour problems in family has existed informally throughout history with marriage and child rearing practices passed from parents to children from one generation to another. These problems need to be handled with some forms of education known as family life education. According to Adeyemo and Brieger (1994) family life education is a process of imparting both factual knowledge about human development, sexual relationship, preparation for parenthood, pregnancy, contraceptive and sexually transmitted diseases. Furthermore, the authors stated that values, attitudes and perceptions that will enhance health, self concepts and relationships are given through family life education to members of the family in particular and society in general. Adeyemo and Brieger (1994) further defined family life education as a program aimed at developing an understanding of the physical, mental, emotional, social, economic and psychological aspect of interpersonal relationships; the physiological, psychological and cultural foundations of human development, sexuality and reproduction at various

stages of growth and the opportunity for pupils to acquire knowledge which will support the development of responsible personal behaviour, strengthen their own family life now and aid in establishing strong family life for themselves in the future thereby contributing to the enrichment of the community. The family represents the larger society in different style of educating children on various sexual behaviours. Family style of children's upbringing may to a greatly impact on their sexual behaviours. Guilamo *et al.* (2006) asserted that teens whose mothers discussed the social and moral consequences of being sexually active with them are less likely to engage in pre-marital sexual intercourse. The more mothers communicated their teenage children about the social and moral consequences of sexual activity, the less likely teens were to engage in premarital sexual intercourse. Longmore *et al.* (2001) asserted that children whose parents monitor more closely are less likely to be sexually active when they are in their teens. Teens whose parents report strict monitoring of their children's behaviour during pre-adolescence are 30% less likely to be sexually active when compared to teens whose parents reported less strict monitoring during pre-adolescence.

Michael (1995) defined adolescent as a teen between the ages of 13 and 19 year. The Macmillan Dictionary for students defines teenage as a transitional stage of physical and mental human development generally between 13 and 19 year but largely characterized as the beginning of puberty; usually, a period of rapid physical growth and psychological changes, culminating in sexual maturity in boys and girls. Teens learn all the vices of adults including sexual intercourse in this adolescence period if they not are controlled by their parents.

Ford *et al.* (2005) asserted that teens who feel their parents have strong disapproval of their being sexually active are less likely to contract sexually transmitted infections than peers who did not perceive their parent's strong disapproval. Aspy *et al.* (2007) asserted that teens whose parents discuss standard of sexual behaviour with are more likely to abstain and avoid risky behaviours and that youths whose parents discuss what is right and wrong in sexual behaviours were significantly more likely to abstain from risky/wrong sexual behaviour than peers whose parents did not.

Sexual practices vary from culture to culture and from one location to the other. For example, location of children's family home and schools which children attended has been found to contribute to children sexual activeness. Observation has shown that urban and suburban children are more sexually active. Ajuwon *et al.* (2006) reported that students in co-educational school, whose schools were located in urban areas that had boy/girl friends were found to be higher in sexual activities. Thus, the child's behaviour is a reflection of the

type of training his family gives him, though sometimes, children pick up their behaviours outside the home irrespective of the type of family they come from. For instance, 95% of secondary schools in Niger state from the researcher's experience had been de-boarded. This has put parents and teachers in dilemma with regards to sexual behaviour of their children. It has now become very difficult for both school and parents to monitor and control children's sexual behaviour. Parents do not know who the friends of their children are as they follow peers and never go to school after leaving home. Likewise, teachers would not know why a child has not been seen in the school daily. In fact most negative behaviours are copied from peers at secondary school level.

Hanlon asserted that from ages 12-18 year children experience distinct mental and physical changes. This period marks the beginning of girls' menstrual cycle and the boys' maturity in their genitalia. During this time of physical changes teenage children may become more self centered, more comfortable with their body sexually and ready for romantic friendship. Hanlon further emphasized the need for parents, guardians and teachers to educate their adolescent children and wards with family life education principles of abstinence, avoidance of pre-marital sex, dating many boys, avoidance of drinking alcohols, smoking cigarette and other hard drugs that can push a person into forceful sex or rape. This education is crucial because adolescents at this stage exhibit behaviour that include need to pull away from parents and authorities to establish their own self identity and make decisions on their own if they lacked family life education in respect to sexual behaviour in or outside the family environment.

These adolescents require considerable information about their sexuality and risky sexual behaviours. Eruesegbefe (2005) asserted that, there is a high prevalence of sexual activities among secondary school teenage children in Nigeria leading to high rate of teenage pregnancy, school dropout, academic under achievement, abortion and maternal mortality as well as infections with sexually transmitted diseases. Adedipe (2000) asserted that heterosexual activities are among the behavioural problems prevalent in Nigerian secondary schools. This may not be unconnected with children's decision to experiment their sexuality in schools. Adolescents' curiosity and thirst for new experiences on sexuality may push them into experimenting sexual intercourse.

The Federal Ministry of Health (FMH) and National Population Commission (NPC) at different periods reported that young men and women out of their inquisitiveness do experiment sex with non marital partners or have sex with multiple partner, without the use of condom. Sharma *et al.* (2004) emphasized that the children of this generation experiment more, make choices,

take risks and learn by their own experiences rather than by those of others and as a result many end up in confusion and despair that may ultimately result in self-destruction. It is of paramount importance that parents, teachers and elders in the communities should train, teach and lead by examples because children look up to them as their role model. Hence, social learning theory propounded by Albert Bandura emphasized that learning is based on three principles namely: observational learning, imitation and modeling. In other words, children learn new behaviours mainly by observation and imitating their parents, teachers and what others do by modeling. Thus, behaviour is strengthened by reinforcement, so a child who relates to the parents in a good way and is rewarded either by a gift or a comment such as thank you or well done or freedom from punishment is likely to continue behaving in the same way. When a good behaviour is reinforced on regular basis, it tends to be permanent but when a bad behaviour is reinforced on an irregular basis, it tends to persist.

Consequently, adolescents in this area of the study engage in risky sexual behaviours such as kissing, breast and genital fondling, embracing, holding of arms, sexual intercourse, dating, petting, masturbation, oral genital contact and homosexual contact among others. These sexual activities result to teenage pregnancy, contracting of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), HIV and AIDS, school drop-out, poor academic performance, abortion and even death among adolescents in this area of the study. Therefore, there is need for parents, guardians, elders and teachers to educate these adolescents to abstain from pre-marital sexual intercourse and other risky sexual behaviours that will ruin their lives through family life education programme or packages. Based on the foregoing, the researchers are interested in finding out the influence of family life education on sexual behaviours of secondary school adolescents in Bida education zone of Niger State.

**Research questions:** Two research questions guided the study:

- To what extent do parents provide family life education to children their adolescent?
- To what extent does family life education provided by parents influence sexual behaviours of in-school adolescents?

**Research hypothesis:** This null hypothesis guided the study and was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- $H_{01}$ : there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the influence of family life education on sexual behaviours of in-school adolescents

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The design of the study was ex-post facto research design. The study was conducted in secondary schools in Bida education zone of Niger State. The population of the study comprised all SSII students of the 25 public secondary schools in the education zone. There are 46,260 of such students in the state. The sample for the study comprised 2,313 SS II students from 12 schools (co-education) across the zone being 20% of the entire population selected through random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire titled: Influence of Family Life Education on Sexually Behaviour Questionnaire (IFLESBQ). The instrument has two sections A and B. Section A elicited information on the personal data of the respondents, While section B has one cluster with 16 items which focused on sexual behaviours of in-school adolescents. The instrument was a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) 4 points, Agree (A) 3 points, Disagree (D) 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1 point. The decision bench mark was 2.5 and any item with mean of 2.5 and above was accepted as responding positively to the research question while any item that score below 2.5 was rejected.

The instrument was face validated by three experts, two from the Department of Educational Foundations (Sociology of Education) and one from the Department of Science Education (Measurement and Evaluation), all from Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. To determine the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach alpha statistic was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument which yielded the value of 0.92. Direct delivery and retrieved method was used in administering the instrument to the respondents with the services of two research assistants. Data collected was analysed using mean and standard deviation in answering the research question while t-test statistic was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1 showed that all the respondents to a high extent agreed that parents provide family life education to their adolescents' children. The mean scores of the items ranged from 3.00-3.65 and standard deviation 0.54-1.34 with criterion mean of 3.37 and SD of 0.90.

Table 2 revealed that influence of family life education to a high extent influenced the sexual behaviours of in-school adolescents. The mean scores of the items ranged from 1.72-2.48 and standard deviation that ranged from 0.67-1.47 with criterion mean of 2.24 and SD of 1.33. The criterion mean of 2.24 was <2.50 which was an indication that the adolescent students to a low extent indulge in risky sexual behaviours so stated.

Table 1: Mean rating and standard deviation of the extent parents provide family life education to their adolescent children

| Items   | Mean | SD   | Remarks |
|---|------|------|---------|
| My parents advised me not to have sexual intercourse with the opposite sex  | 3.30 | 1.32 | High    |
| My parents warned me not to engage in pre-marital sexual relationships with both opposite or same sex   | 3.48 | 0.63 | High    |
| My parents instructed me to abstain from any kind of sexual relationships or attraction   | 3.65 | 0.59 | High    |
| I am banned from watching pornographic films or materials that may lead one sexual act by my parents  | 3.30 | 1.24 | High    |
| My parents taught me that sexual transmitted infections such as staphylococcus, syphilis and HIV and AIDS are contracted through sexual intercourse with me at home | 3.58 | 0.73 | High    |
| My parents discouraged me from dating many adolescent boys  | 3.00 | 1.34 | High    |
| My parents advised me to avoid smoking cigarette and other hard drugs such as marijuana, cannabis, cocaine that can push one into forceful sexual intercourse       | 3.55 | 0.69 | High    |
| My parents advised to avoid masturbation  | 3.11 | 1.32 | High    |
| My parents always warned me to avoid drinking alcohols that can make one engage in rape or sexual abuse   | 3.48 | 0.63 | High    |
| My parents taught me to say 'No' to any form of sexual advances from the opposite sex   | 3.52 | 1.04 | High    |
| My parents warned me not to commit abortion because it might lead to death  | 3.30 | 1.24 | High    |
| My parents advised me to avoid prostitution   | 3.11 | 1.33 | High    |
| Criterion mean  | 3.37 | 0.90 |         |

Table 2: Mean rating and standard deviation of the influence of family life education on sexual behaviours of in-school adolescents

| Items   | Mean | SD   | Remarks |
|---|------|------|---------|
| Adolescents have sexual intercourse with opposite sex | 2.48 | 1.44 | low     |
| Adolescents are involved breast and genital fondling  | 2.42 | 1.47 | Low     |
| Adolescents kiss each other                           | 2.00 | 1.47 | Low     |
| Adolescents embrace each other in a lovely manner     | 2.48 | 1.47 | Low     |
| Adolescents hold hands with one another deeply        | 2.42 | 1.47 | Low     |
| Adolescents are dating and sleeping with each other   | 2.41 | 1.47 | Low     |
| Adolescents are involved in petting                   | 2.42 | 1.47 | Low     |
| Adolescents practice masturbation                     | 2.26 | 1.45 | Low     |
| Adolescents curdle and suck each other's breast       | 2.04 | 1.37 | Low     |
| Adolescents have oral and genital contact             | 1.97 | 0.79 | Low     |
| Adolescents practice homosexuality                    | 1.72 | 0.67 | Low     |
| Adolescents engage in prostitution                    | 2.26 | 1.45 | Low     |
| Criterion mean  | 2.24 | 1.33 |         |

Table 3: t-test results for significant difference by gender on the influence of FLE on sexual behaviours of adolescents

| Items    | Sex    | N       | Mean | SD   | df      | t value | Sig. | Remark |
|----------|--------|---------|------|------|---------|---------|------|--------|
| Item 1   | Male   | 1504    | 3.36 | 1.13 | 2298.00 | 59.26   | 0.00 | S      |
|          | Female | 796     | 1.00 | 0.00 |         |         |      |        |
| Item 2   | Male   | 1504    | 3.18 | 1.30 | 2298.00 | 47.33   | 0.00 | S      |
|          | Female | 796     | 1.00 | 0.00 |         |         |      |        |
| Item 3   | Male   | 1504    | 3.34 | 1.20 | 2298.00 | 54.94   | 0.00 | S      |
|          | Female | 796     | 1.00 | 0.00 |         |         |      |        |
| Item 4   | Male   | 1504    | 3.27 | 1.20 | 2298.00 | 51.37   | 0.00 | S      |
|          | Female | 796     | 1.00 | 0.00 |         |         |      |        |
| Item 5   | Male   | 1504    | 3.18 | 1.29 | 2298.00 | 47.49   | 0.00 | S      |
|          | Female | 796     | 1.00 | 0.00 |         |         |      |        |
| Item 6   | Male   | 1504    | 3.16 | 1.31 | 2298.00 | 46.55   | 0.00 | S      |
|          | Female | 796     | 1.00 | 0.00 |         |         |      |        |
| Item 7   | Male   | 1504    | 3.63 | 0.95 | 2298.00 | 77.15   | 0.00 | S      |
|          | Female | 796     | 1.02 | 0.13 |         |         |      |        |
| Item 8   | Male   | 1504    | 3.55 | 1.03 | 2298.00 | 69.75   | 0.00 | S      |
|          | Female | 796     | 1.00 | 0.00 |         |         |      |        |
| Item 9   | Male   | 1504    | 3.61 | 0.96 | 2298.00 | 76.73   | 0.00 | S      |
|          | Female | 796     | 1.00 | 0.00 |         |         |      |        |
| Item 10  | Male   | 1504    | 3.52 | 1.07 | 2298.00 | 66.45   | 0.00 | S      |
|          | Female | 796.00  | 1.00 | 0.00 |         |         |      |        |
| Item 11  | Male   | 1504.00 | 3.69 | 0.88 | 2298.00 | 81.91   | 0.00 | S      |
|          | Female | 796.00  | 1.05 | 0.32 |         |         |      |        |
| Item 12  | Male   | 1504.00 | 3.49 | 1.10 | 2298.00 | 64.17   | 0.00 | S      |
|          | Female | 796.00  | 1.00 | 0.00 |         |         |      |        |
| Overa ll | Male   | 1504.00 | 3.41 | 1.03 | 2298.00 | 66.23   | 0.00 | S      |
|          | Female | 796.00  | 1.01 | 0.04 |         |         |      |        |

This implied that family life education provided by parents influenced greatly their sexual behaviours.

**Hypothesis 1:** No significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the influence of family life education on sexual behaviours of adolescents.

The data presented in Table 3 for the t-test analysis revealed the highest and lowest t-cal values of 81.91 and 46.55. The significance value revealed approximately 0.00 which is <0.05 level of significance. Therefore, there was significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the influence of family life

education on sexual behaviour students in all cases. Overall, the t-value was 62.23 and significance value revealed approximately 0.00 which is <0.05 level of significance. Hence the hypothesis was not accepted. Therefore, there is significant difference between the mean rating of male and female students on the influence of family life education on sexual behaviour students.

Research question one revealed that parents to a high extent provided family life education for their adolescent children. This finding agrees with the findings of Abu and Akerele which showed that parents significantly influenced their children's sexual behaviours through the type of training given to them. The findings is also in agreement with Aspy *et al.* (2007) who asserted that teens whose parents discuss standards of sexual behaviours with are more likely to abstain and avoid risky behaviours and that youths whose parents discuss what is right and wrong in sexual behaviours were significantly more likely to abstain from risky/ wrong sexual behaviour than peers whose parents did not.

Research question two revealed that adolescent students to a low extent indulged in risky sexual behaviours as a result of the influence of family life education provided to them by their parents. The findings is agreement with Adeyemo and Brieger (1994) views which stated that family life education is a process of imparting both factual knowledge about human development, sexual relationship, preparation for parenthood, pregnancy, contraceptive and sexually transmitted diseases. Furthermore, the authors stated that values, attitudes and perceptions that will enhance health, self concepts and relationships are given through family life education to members of the family in particular and society in general.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the findings it is obvious that parents play a very significant role in shaping children sexual behaviors. Also that family life education programme has considerable influence on decreasing adolescents' risky sexual behaviours.

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