



Demographic Determinants of Secondary School Students' Level of Awareness of Family Life Education in Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to investigate secondary school students' level of awareness of family life education (FLE) as determined by their location of residence and their religious affiliation. Nigeria. The study was guided by two research questions and their corresponding null hypotheses. The analytic survey research design was used. A sample of 1,630 respondents was selected out of 105,815 Junior Secondary School students in Rivers State. The instrument of data collection was titled the Academic Performance Test. Data obtained from the instrument were analyzed using Mean, z-test and Analysis of Variance. Findings of the study revealed that there is a significant difference between the urban and rural secondary school students' level of awareness about Family Life Education (FLE). Furthermore, the result showed that there is a significant difference between Christian, Muslim and other secondary school students' level of awareness about FLE. Consequently, it was recommended that Rivers State Government should employ the services of professionally qualified resource persons to enlighten rural and urban dwellers on FLE for sustainable development. Religious institutions should collaborate with parents and teachers in the teaching of FLE.

Keywords: family life education, awareness, students, secondary school

INTRODUCTION

Globally, education is seen as a veritable tool for the socio-cultural, economic, political and technological development. This has informed the decision of many nations to link their political ideologies, social investment programmes, national population and economic policies to formal education systems. On a more general basis, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are anchored on education as a potent tool for socio-cultural, economic and technological breakthrough. Corroborating this view, Nwanna-Nzewunwa (2010) asserted that education is a necessary weapon for overcoming poverty, disease and ignorance, with Alam and Nasir (2016) asserting that education has a direct impact on economic involvement, child transience, fertility, and individual health. This suggests that education does not merely enable individuals attain their intellectual capacity to the fullest but also helps them develop emotionally, morally, socially, culturally and physically (Dienye, 2012). In line with the foregoing, one critical aspect of the school curriculum that has regained global interest in the 21st Century, therefore, is Family Life Education (FLE).

In their definition of Family Life Education (FLE), Egotanwa and Odedele (2016) asserted that it is educational process designed to assist people in their physical, social, emotional and moral development as they prepare for the stage of adulthood. It is also explained as a planned process of education that fosters the acquisition of factual information, formation of positive attitudes, beliefs and values as well as development of skills to cope with the biological, psychological, socio-cultural and spiritual aspects of human living (FRN, 2003). The primary focus of FLE is to help the learners develop positive and factual view about themselves, acquire information and skills they need to take care of their health, prevent

HIV/AIDS spread, respect and value themselves and others, and acquire the skills needed to make healthy decisions about their sexual health and behaviour.

Emphasis on FLE has been made across all levels of the educational spectrum. However, greater emphasis has been placed at the secondary school level. At the secondary school level, Family Life Education (FLE) curriculum provides valid and reliable information about population change and resource development, benefits of delayed marriage, child spacing and family planning, gender issues, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), HIV/AIDS, primary health care concepts and so on. The goals of Family Life Education are instrumental to social, economic and environmental sustainability. The United Nations Educational and Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2017) explains that sustainable development cannot be achieved by technological solutions, political regulation or financial instruments alone but through creating public awareness to schools and the society.

With the turn of the new century, and the formulation of global goals such as the SDGs, FLE has taken a new dimension. However, it is not entirely new as its existence predates the emergence of western civilization in Nigeria and other African societies. Adepoju (2005) noted that before the expansion of Western education in Nigeria, the youths were tutored about manhood and womanhood during circumcision or initiation ceremonies, but impartation of knowledge about contraceptive methods such as virginity, herbs, breastfeeding, the ring and abstinence were exclusively reserved for the married.

Specific emphasis on the need for FLE in the Nigerian curriculum can be traced to the turn of the 21st century. Specifically, the emergence of modern Family Life Education in Nigerian primary, secondary and tertiary institutions dates back to September 2002 when the National Council on Education felt the need to broaden the Sexuality Education curriculum as a safeguard to the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy, early marriage, infant mortality, poor maternal health, prostitution, population explosion amongst others.

The policy of introducing FLE into the formal school curriculum is a laudable project and requires commendation. Specifically, teenagers who are often secondary school students are confronted with decisions about their sexuality viz-a-viz changes that naturally occur in their bodies. There is the need to 'catch them young.' Teenagers need reliable information and guidance on Family Life.

Despite the importance of the forgoing, FLE has not enjoyed a universal acceptance and acclaim from all stakeholders. Education stakeholders have divergent perceptions and attitudes towards the teaching and learning of Family Life Education. In some families, open discussions about sex, family planning and other related concepts are forbidden due to cultural or religious beliefs. As a result, there have been heated arguments among stakeholders about who teaches FLE, at what level the subject should be taught, who should learn the subject and so on. Briggs (2017) showed that majority of the students' preferred their mothers to teach them on FLE than teachers; while about 49.7% reported that they have not heard anything like FLE in the school curriculum. Nakpodia (2012), on the other hand, maintains that adolescents cannot approach their parents for guidance concerning sex. Parents tend to shy away from discussions on reproductive life because of its erotic nature.

In this face of this confusion, secondary school students especially in this century do not lack information about issues pertinent to FLE. Especially from social media, secondary school adolescents in different parts of Nigeria have unlimited access to inappropriate social media contents about Family Life. Thus, a handful of them are often left with no option than to seek support from other ill-fated sources like peers and paedophiles. There is therefore the need to assess secondary school students' knowledge of Family Life Education for sustainable development.

Statement of the Problem

For about four decades, Nigeria and some other developing nations have witnessed tremendous surge in HIV/AIDS pandemic, poor maternal health, rape, teenage pregnancy, infant mortality, drug addiction, early marriage and school dropout. This sad reality has forced the proposal and implementation of Family Life Education curriculum across all levels of education. Despite the laudable objectives of this policy formulation, current reality shows that there has been a high rate of HIV/AIDS infections in Nigeria, especially in Rivers State. Recent statistics shows that adolescents between the ages of 13 to 17 years had an HIV/AIDS prevalence rate of 15.2%. This is indicative of the fact that most adolescents are not doing

optimally to protect themselves from infectious disease. Furthermore, it implies that knowledge of, and access to, contraceptives have remained poor among these special group. It also might imply that adolescents are yet to have access to the full scope of the FLE curriculum. The problem of this study therefore is to assess the extent to which location and religious factors determine awareness of family life education for sustainable development among secondary school students in Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate the extent to which location and religious affiliation influences the level of awareness of Family Life Education among secondary school students in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives of this study were:

1. To determine the urban and rural secondary school students' level of awareness about Family Life Education for sustainable development in Rivers State.
2. To ascertain the Christian, Muslim and other secondary school students level of awareness about Family Life Education for sustainable development in Rivers State.

Research Questions

On the basis of the objectives guiding the study, the following research questions were raised:

1. What is the level of awareness of the urban and rural secondary school students about Family Life Education for sustainable development in Rivers State?
2. What is the level of awareness of the Christian, Muslim and other secondary school students about Family Life Education for sustainable development in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The under stated hypotheses were formulated to further guide the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significant difference between the urban and rural secondary school students' level of awareness about Family Life Education for sustainable development in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference between the Christian, Muslim and other secondary school students' level of awareness about Family Life Education for sustainable development in Rivers State.

Literature Review

Family Life Education

To properly situate the concept of FLE within the context of this study, it is first essential that the meaning of family is understood. The family is one of the most important social institutions. It performs numerous vital roles in the socialisation of individuals. It is known as the first school of citizenship. Broadly speaking, family refers to the group comprising parents and children. It may also refer, in some cases, to a group of relatives and their dependants forming one household. All these refer to the compositional aspect of this institution. Another aspect is that of residence of its members. They usually share common residence, at least for some part of their lives. Thirdly, there is the relational aspect of the family. Members have reciprocal rights and duties towards each other. Finally, the family is also an agent of socialisation. All these aspects make this institution different from all other units of social structure (Mack & Young, 2016).

From the understanding of the concept of family life education presented above, the concept of family life education was presented by Egotanwa and Odelele (2016). According to them, FLE is an educational process designed to help people in their physical, social, emotional and moral development as they get ready for adulthood, marriage, and family life. The National Educational Research and Development Center (NERDC, 1993) views Family Life Education as the study of attitudes and skills related to dating, marriage, parenthood and health of a family. In Family Life Education, learners are taught how to handle problems that may emanate in their family bordering on marriage, strained relationships, career, education, finances, ways of carrying out domestic chores, employment, parenthood, ageing, reproductive health etc.

Within the context of this study, FLE is operationalized as the formal process of equipping and empowering family members to develop knowledge and skills that enhance well-being and strengthen interpersonal relationships through an educational, preventive and strengths-based approach.

In River State, Family Life Education was integrated into the secondary school curriculum in 2006. However, the level of implementation of the FLE curriculum at the secondary school level still varies among private, public, urban and rural schools based on observations by these researchers and other scholars including Isiugo-Abaniha, Isiugo-Abanihe, Nwokocha, Omololu, and Udegbe, (2015). According to the authors cited, evidence shows that in Rivers State the teaching and learning of FLE varies among classes and types of schools. It is evident that only JSS 1 students receive FLE instructions in urban public secondary schools. In urban-private and religious secondary schools, it is taught from JSS1 to JSS3 whereas, in rural secondary schools, FLE is taught from SS1-SS2 only.

Specifically according to Ogbodo (2015), the scope and objectives of FLE to students and other individuals include:

1. To impart correct factual knowledge, skills, abilities and understanding regarding sex and reproduction to the individuals according to their age.
2. To develop wholesome positive attitude towards sexual behaviour compatible with the demand of their society.
3. To help individuals and families learn what is known about human growth, development, and behaviour in the family setting throughout the life cycle.
4. To develop the potentials of individuals in their current and future family roles.
5. To impart skills for home making and for successful participation in family life.
6. To inculcate into young couples that each partner in marriage should satisfy the physical and emotional needs of the other and also help in each other's growth and development.
7. To teach partners to accept each other for what they are and not to demand something from each other which neither of them would give to.
8. To guide individuals and families in improving their interpersonal relationships through enhanced communication and furthering their maximum development and improve their quality of life.
9. To learn about coping processes.
10. To develop the ability to perceive and to evaluate actions.
11. To explore new ways of behavior.

School Location and Family Life Education

School location refers to the area in which a school is sited. The urban-rural dichotomy is one of the basic features of secondary schools in Nigeria. The location of schools determines the quantity and quality of human, financial and material resources in the school. In the 21st Century, education is regarded as the fundamental right of every citizen. This suggests that educational opportunities must be extended to all Nigerians irrespective of age, religion, sex, ethnicity or disability. This has necessitated geometric increment in the number of schools and rate of enrolment. As school population continues to increase the influence of school type, sex and location on the educational outcome of students at all levels is generating so much research interests.

In the developing and the developed world, the teaching of adults and children appropriate ways of living as a family remains limited. In traditional and rural communities the process of socialization includes preparing young people and children for the process of living as a family member. In today's urban environment and with the nuclear family much of this capacity is not passed on to individuals and so parents are left on their own to discover ways of being a family unit. While many nations teach circular concepts, few secondary schools teach Family Life Education.

The processes of making decisions within the context of the family is make shift at best and frequently inadequate as there is no proper Family Life Education implementation. The techniques of decision making are not taught. Social interaction within the family is unclear and interaction between the family and the larger community is haphazard. Because of the development of the nuclear family and the loss of interaction with elderly people children never understand the process of growing old and are insulated

from death, Family Life Education is given little or no attention (Landry, 2013). This results in lack of awareness of Family Life Education to students and other persons who are ignorant of it (Hennon, 2001). Adigun and Yusuf (2010) in their study on the relationship between academic performance and school location revealed that, there was no significant difference between academic performance of students in urban and rural schools. Owoeye (2002) on the other hand upholds that rural schools were inferior and lacking in the range of facilities and suffered from lack of continuity in their curriculum. Owoeye therefore concluded that children from urban schools were superior to their rural counterparts.

The distribution of schools in most of sub-Saharan Africa is concentrated in urban areas, and there are large rural areas without schools. In some countries, children who want to go to school have to walk long distance through village paths to get there. In some situations, children walk many hours to and from school, this is not welcoming to those who are young, ill, physically disabled, or girls- exacerbating inequalities. There are two dimensions to this concern: one relates to the length of distance and the energy children have to expend to cover the distance, often with an empty stomach. The other relates to vulnerability while going to or coming from school each day. Parents are unwilling to send their children especially girls to distance schools where danger of being kidnapped, raped, molested and subjected to other forms of abuse looms large (UNESCO, 2009). In rural Ethiopia, girls tend to drop out of school at a significantly higher rate when distance to walk to and from school is long. Location and distance of schools is a compelling factor for the flow of girls to schools in Eritrea. The gender difference in North Eastern Province of Kenya, among others, can be attributed to their remoteness and inaccessibility to schools. In most of sub-Saharan Africa urban areas, girls are harassed both physically and verbally when they use public transport to and from school (Ombati & Ombati, 2012).

Regasa and Taha (2015) maintain that in rural areas, mothers give minimal attention to the education of the girl-child because they expect their daughters to drop out of school, put in more time into home chores and marry early instead of going to school. Teachers usually face great persecution from parents and the society in the course of implementing Family life education curriculum which focuses on family planning methods, elimination of gender and social inequality, promotion of delayed marriage, consequences of small/large family size on individuals, the family and the society, creation of awareness about HIV/AIDS etc.

Religious Beliefs and Family Life Education

African traditional and religious beliefs prohibit open discussion of reproduction or sex related issues. As a result, Gesinde (2010) asserts that education stakeholders in Nigeria – teachers, parents and administrators often send youngsters out of the vicinity when discussing sex and reproduction because of their traditional or religious beliefs. Alam and Nasir (2016) decried that in Pakistan, female education is deprived due to old norms; rituals, classification of status, rural society. According to Higgins and Morley (2014), parents are hesitant to send their children to school because schools foster values that are not in tandem with the values that are important to indigenous, middle-class people.

According to Adepoju (2005), before the expansion of Western education in Nigeria, traditional forms of sexuality education existed in Africa in the kinship systems whereby the youths were tutored about manhood and womanhood during circumcision or initiation ceremonies. Impartation of knowledge about contraceptive methods such as virginity, herbs, breastfeeding, the ring and abstinence were exclusively reserved for the married. Great concerns were placed on venereal diseases but were hardly discussed publicly.

Nowadays, religious schools consciously teach any form of morality or ethics, so the bulk of students learn from example and the media. Parents often feel inadequate to teach ethics further exasperating the problem. Parents' inability to welcome Family Life Education to their children also results to poor awareness of Family Life Education to students. The structures of formal education is left to prepare the child for job and social responsibility but for the most part schools never deal with the problems of being in a family. This is where Family Life Education plays a vital role that prepares students for their future life but the programmes is not taught adequately to students due to lack of teachers and the feelings that the programme is exposing learners to negative and promiscuous behaviours (Mace, 2006).

In most of sub-Saharan Africa countries, access to education continues to be limited because of traditional practices that prevent some children from going or staying in school. For example, in Ghana, as well as in Togo, Benin, and south-western Nigeria, the Trokosi and Voodoo practices (Trokosi is a Ghanaian word meaning "slaves to the Gods") have been found to keep enslaved young virgin girls from enrolling or attending school. The practice requires that young innocent virgin girls are sent into fetish shrines as reparation for misdeeds of their family members. The virgin girls spend their days collecting water, cooking, cleaning, farming, and caring for livestock. They are denied access to education, prohibited from leaving, banished from her family home, and soon to face the sexual advances of their master, the priest. Reports of school going teenage girls in parts of Ghana removed from school by their parents and given up for training as traditional priestess are common (Tanye, 2008). The imposition of strict Islamic Purdha (the Islamic practice of keeping girls and women in seclusion from public and outside) impedes girls or women from venturing out of the home to attend school. In some of the region's rural communities of sub-Saharan Africa, girls' dropout rates accelerate dramatically at the onset of menstruation (Ombati & Ombati, 2012).

METHODS

Design: The research methods adopted for this study is the survey research design. This design was used to collect data from a sample of public secondary school students in Rivers State and used to describe their current level of awareness of Family Life Education. The researchers also compared students' level of awareness of Family Life Education based on their places of residence (urban/rural) and religious affiliation (Christianity, Islam and others).

Sample and Sampling Techniques: The sample for the study constituted 1,630 students drawn using the multistage sampling technique. Two local government areas each were drawn from the three senatorial districts in the state. Taro Yemane's formula was used to determine a sample size of 386 from the population but the researchers decided to increase the sample size to 1,630 which represents 20% of the population. This decision was taken in order to increase the chances of acceptability and generalization of the research findings.

Instrumentation: The instrument of data collection was the Academic Performance Test (APT). The APT contains 25 multiple-choice questions on Family Life Education. It was used to test the respondents' level of awareness of Family Life Education (FLE). Respondents were instructed to provide the correct answers by circling the best options only. Each correct option circled was awarded 4 per cent. 25 correct answers therefore equal 100%. The cut-off mark was 40%. Validity of the instrument was done using the expert panel approach. Here the instrument was given to three experts in the Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt for scrutiny. Adequate corrections were effected by the researchers before distributing the instrument to the respondents. The reliability of the instrument was done using the Kuder-Richardson 21 approach (KR-20). A coefficient of 0.88 was obtained indicating that the instrument possessed suitable level of reliability.

Data Collection and Analysis: The instruments were distributed to the respondents in their various schools. Six research assistants were trained to support the researcher in distributing the research instruments. Data obtained were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while the hypotheses were tested using independent samples t-test and Analysis of Variance where appropriate.

RESULT

Table 1: Mean, standard deviation, and mean Difference of level of awareness of the urban and rural secondary school students about Family Life Education for sustainable development

Location	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference
Rural	730	24.61	10.74	40.71
Urban	900	65.32	17.76	

Analysis of data in Table 1 indicate that the mean score of the urban secondary school students (\bar{x} =65.32) is higher than the mean score of their counterparts in rural secondary schools in Rivers state (\bar{x} =24.61) with regards to their performance in the academic performance test. The Mean difference is 40.71. The implication of these scores is that the level of awareness of Family Life Education (FLE) is higher among the urban secondary school students than those in rural secondary schools.

Table 2: Mean, standard deviation, and mean Difference of level of awareness of the Christians, Muslims and Other secondary school students about Family Life Education for sustainable development

Religion	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference
Muslim	212	24.07	10.67	
Christian	1233	48.33	24.91	
Other	185	65.19	19.78	

Analysis of data in Table 2 yields the mean scores of 24.07, 48.33 and 65.19. It implies that secondary school students’ religious background determines their level of awareness of FLE. The other secondary school students (Traditionalists, Eckists etc) have higher level of awareness of FLE (\bar{x} =65.19) followed by the Christians (\bar{x} =48.33) and lastly the Muslims (\bar{x} =24.07) respectively.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the urban and rural secondary school students’ level of awareness about Family Life Education for sustainable development in Rivers State

Table 3: z-test analysis of the urban and rural secondary school students’ level of awareness about Family Life Education for sustainable development

Location	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	z-cal	z-cri	p-value	Remark
Rural	730	24.61	10.74	1628	54.387	1.960	0.001	Ho rejected
Urban	900	65.32	17.56					

* $p < 0.05$ significant at the 0.05 level

Table 3 showed that with the degree of freedom 1628 at 0.05 level of significance, the t-calculated value of 54.387 is greater than the t-critical value of 1.96 and p-value of 0.001 greater than 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is significant difference between the urban and rural secondary school students’ level of awareness about Family Life Education for sustainable development in Rivers State.

Table 4: ANOVA analysis of the Christian, Moslem and other secondary school students' level of awareness about Family Life Education for sustainable development

Religion	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value	Remark
Between Groups	174821.895	2	87410.948	165.246	0.001	Ho rejected
Within Groups	860639.251	1627	528.973			
Total	1035461.147	1629				

* $P < 0.05$ significant at the 0.05 level

Table 4.13 showed that with the degree of freedom $F(2, 1627) = 165.246$ at 0.05 level of significance, the p-value of 0.001 is less than 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is significant difference between the Christian, Moslem and other secondary school students' level of awareness about Family Life Education for sustainable development in Rivers State.

Table 5: Post Hoc analysis using Scheffe of the Christian, Muslem and other secondary school students' level of awareness about Family Life Education for sustainable development

(I) Religion	(J) Religion	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Muslim	Christian	-24.25528*	1.71002	.000	-28.4448	-20.0657
	Other	-41.11843*	2.31397	.000	-46.7877	-35.4492
Christian	Muslim	24.25528*	1.71002	.000	20.0657	28.4448
	Other	-16.86316*	1.81337	.000	-21.3059	-12.4204
Other	Muslim	41.11843*	2.31397	.000	35.4492	46.7877
	Christian	16.86316*	1.81337	.000	12.4204	21.3059

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 5 showed that there was statistically difference between the Christian, Muslim and other secondary school students' level of awareness about Family Life Education for sustainable development in Rivers State as determined by one-way ANOVA $F(2, 1627) = 165.246$ and $p < 0.05$. A scheffe post hoc test revealed that the level of awareness about the about Family Life Education for sustainable development in Rivers State was significant after taking Muslim (24.07 ± 10.67 , $p = 0.001$) and compared with Christian (48.33 ± 24.91 , $p = 0.001$) and other (65.19 ± 19.78 , $p = 0.001$).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

School location and secondary school students' level of awareness of Family Life Education for sustainable development in Rivers State

Research question one sought to determine urban and rural secondary school students' level of awareness of Family Life Education for sustainable development in Rivers State. The result in Table 1 showed that the urban secondary school students' level of awareness about Family Life Education is higher than that of the rural secondary school students. In addition to that, Table 3 confirmed that there is a significant difference between the urban and rural secondary school students' level of awareness about FLE. This finding is in line with the views of Landry (2013), Adigun and Yusuf (2010), and Owoeye (2002) who variously posit that Family Life Education is given little or no attention in rural areas. It also corroborates the result of Olutola's (2017) investigation on school location and gender as predictors of students' performance in WASSCE multiple choice test in Biology which revealed that a significant difference between students' performance based on school location.

Religious background and secondary school students' level of awareness of Family Life Education for sustainable development in Rivers State

Research question three sought to identify the effect of students' religious background on their level of awareness about FLE for sustainable development in Rivers State. Thus, Table 2 and 4 showed that there is a significant difference between the Christian, Muslim and other secondary school students' level of awareness of Family Life Education in Rivers State. It is shown that Other secondary school students have higher level of awareness of Family Life Education than the Christian and Muslims.

In line with this, Gesinde (2010) asserts that education stakeholders in Nigeria – teachers, parents and administrators often send youngsters out of the vicinity when discussing sex and reproduction because of their traditional or religious beliefs. In addition, Alam and Nasir (2016) posited that in Pakistan, female education is deprived due to old norms; rituals, classification of status and rural societies. The finding is also in line with Adepeju, Olukoya, Oyedeki and Johnson's (2012) study on the factors affecting teachers' attitudes and practice of Family Life Education in Nigeria whereby (71.5%) teachers said it was not culturally acceptable or necessary to teach the subject in secondary schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Rivers State Government should as a matter of urgency employ the services of highly qualified resource persons to enlighten the urban and rural dwellers on FLE for sustainable development.
2. Religious institutions should collaborate with parents and teachers in the teaching of FLE. Education is a social venture.
3. Principals should extend their supervisory functions to the effective, inclusive teaching and learning of FLE for sustainable development in Rivers State.

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