



Nature And Challenges Of Teaching And Learning Of Family Life Education In Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to investigate the nature of, and challenges against, the effective teaching and learning of Family Life Education (FLE) among secondary school students in Rivers State. 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 a 15-item Likert scale semi-structured questionnaire. 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 type of information given to the male and female secondary school students about Family Life for sustainable development in Rivers State. Furthermore, the result showed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the male and secondary school students on the challenges to effective teaching and learning of Family Life Education (FLE) for sustainable development in Rivers State. Consequently, it was recommended that there should be a standing committee composing of various stakeholders in the educational and religious sectors aimed at a periodic review of the curriculum of Family Life Education to meet the dynamic needs of students in Rivers State.

INTRODUCTION

Education is generally seen as a tool for the empowerment of the individual as well as the society in which he lives. It is therefore in this direction that Nwanna-Nzewunwa (2010) contends that education is a necessary weapon for overcoming poverty, disease and ignorance. Providing specific aspects that education is impactful, Alam and Nasir (2016) included 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). Education therefore equips members of a society with necessary skills for combating immediate and future, local and global social problems, while different aspects of education has attracted the interest of local and global stakeholders, the focus of this study is on family life education.

Family Life Education (FLE) has attracted the attention of various stakeholders especially 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 etc. The information provided through the curriculum of FLE holds special significance for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals according to the Nations Educational and Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2017). It is therefore worthy of note that the effective teaching and learning of Family Life Education in Rivers State and Nigeria will expedite actions towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals specially those anchored

on the eradication of poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education and gender equality.

The universality of Family Life Education has not made created an equal level of acceptance among education stakeholders, especially students who are the major beneficiaries. For instance, in Briggs' (2017) study on post-primary school teachers' viewpoint on reproductive health and contraceptive practices among secondary school girls in Port Harcourt, a significant proportion of the respondents chose mothers rather than teachers as the most appropriate Family Life educators. Similarly, 49.7% of the respondents in Briggs' study reported that there was nothing like Family Life or Sexuality Education 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.

With this confused mentality, most students, especially those at the secondary school level are confronted with a plethora of questions begging for answers. In their quest for getting answers, there end up getting answers that led to further harm. This has resulted in a high level of teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, school dropout, and human trafficking with the attendant consequences on the individual and the society. It has therefore become necessary to identify the nature of information students are exposed to within the school environment and the challenges militating against the effective teaching and learning of Family Life Education among secondary school students in Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the nature and challenges of the teaching and learning of Family Life Education at the secondary school level in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives of the study included:

1. To determine the type of information given to the male and female secondary school students about Family Life for sustainable development in Rivers State.
2. To identify the challenges to the effective teaching and learning of Family Life Education (FLE) among secondary school students for sustainable development in Rivers State.

Research Questions

From the overarching objectives stated above, the following research questions were developed to guide the study

1. What type of information is given to the male and female secondary school students about Family Life for sustainable development in Rivers State?
2. What are the challenges to the effective teaching and learning of Family Life Education (FLE) in secondary schools for sustainable development in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance to further aid in the guiding of this study:

1. There is no significant difference between the type of information given to the male and female secondary school students about Family Life for sustainable development in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the male and female secondary school students on the challenges to effective teaching and learning of Family Life Education (FLE) for sustainable development in Rivers State.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Operationally viewed, Family Life Education (FLE) is the practice 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. The skills and knowledge needed for healthy family functioning are widely known through effective communication skills, adequate Knowledge of human development, good decision-making skills, positive self-concept, healthy interpersonal relationships

Family life education, according to Adeboye (2015), prepares family members to work towards achieving wellness, development and sustainability. It is sometimes likened to the medium through which a family

is planned. No wonder, Bob (2000), quoting Benjamin Franklin, states that he who fails to plan, plans to fail. Family Life Education is not entirely new in Nigeria and Africa as a whole. The family and its importance has been the subject of much attention throughout history. Adepaju (2005) pointed out that before the introduction of formal education in Nigeria, the youths were tutored about manhood and womanhood during circumcision or initiation ceremonies. However, 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 to mitigate contemporary social problems that are rooted in the family structure. This was promptly integrated into the secondary school curriculum in Rivers State in 2006 (Isiugo-Abaniha, Isiugo-Abanihe, Nwokocha, Omololu, & Udegbe, 2015). The level of implementation of the FLE curriculum at the secondary school level still varies among private, public, urban and rural schools as shown in Table 1 below

Table 1: Classes receiving FLE instruction in the different types of schools in Nigeria

Zones	State	Classes where FLE is taught			
		Urban public	Urban private	Religious	Rural
FCT	Abuja	ALL	-	-	-
	Bauchi	JSS1 & SS1	JSS1-JSS3	SS1-SS3	SS1-SS3
North-East	Adamawa	SS1-SS3	SS1-SS3	JSS1 & SS1	SS1-SS3
	Gombe	ALL	JSS1 & SS1	JSS1-SS2	SS2
North-West	Jigawa	SS1-SS2	ALL	SS1-SS2	-
	Kaduna	JSS1-JSS3	-	-	JSS1-JSS3
North-Central	Kwara	JSS2	JSS2-JSS2	JSS1-JSS3	JSS1-JSS3
	Niger	SS1-SS3	ALL	SS1-SS2	JSS2-JSS3
	Plateau	JSS1-JSS3	JSS1-JSS3	JSS1-JSS3	JSS1-JSS3
South-East	Enugu	JSS1-JSS3	JSS1-SS2	JSS1-JSS3	JSS1-JSS3
	Ebonyi	ALL	JSS1-JSS3	JSS1-JSS3	JSS1-JSS3
	Imo	JSS1-JSS3	SS1-JSS2	ALL	ALL
South-West	Lagos	SS1-SS3	JSS1-JSS3	JSS2-JSS3	ALL
	Ekiti	ALL	-	ALL	ALL
	Oyo	JSS1-SS3	JSS1-JSS3	ALL	ALL
South-South	Akwa-Ibom	ALL	ALL	ALL	SS1-SS3
	Rivers	JSS1	JSS1-JSS3	JSS1-JSS3	SS1-SS2
	Edo	JSS1	JSS2-JSS3	JSS2	JSS1-JSS3

Source: Isiugo-Abaniha, Isiugo-Abanihe, Nwokocha, Omololu, & Udegbe, (2015:63).

Objectives of Family Life Education

Due to the broad spectrum of Family Life Education, and local variations in what it should contain, there have been various postulations on the objectives of Family Life Education. However, the United Nations (2015) provided a generic set of objectives for Family Life Education as enumerated below:

1. To develop knowledge regarding the concept of family, its roles and functions. Every individual both young and old should have proper knowledge and understanding of the concept of family, its roles and function. The knowledge helps individual to recognise the various tasks that need to be undertaken for the well-being and maintenance of the family.
2. Family life education aims at developing the ability to deal with family relationship and responsibility. Family life education helps in establishing and maintaining satisfying relationships with members of the family, with friends and with others whom they come into contact with in the context of family life.
3. Family life education aims at developing life skills to cope with different situations. Family life education develops the knowledge, values and skills, necessary for adult life, marriage, parenthood, participation in the social life of the community. It also helps in communicating effectively with others and in making wise decisions about all matters related to family life, personal relationships and various memberships of the community.

4. Family life education aims at helping in understanding and coping with changes in one's own life and changes in the society. It helps an individual to understand and cope with changes in the adolescent life and with the society in which they live; for example, the breaking down of traditional social structures, the changing roles of men and women, marriage practices etc.
5. Family life education aims at developing knowledge about physiological processes of one's own body. It also creates an awareness regarding proper age of marriage, sex and proper time for reproduction, the consequences of adolescent pregnancies and parenting and of alternatives to pregnancies and contraception.
6. It develops realisation of the role of family in promotion of civil society and duties towards the community, nation and humanity.

Empirical Review of Literature

The nature and challenges of family life education in the Nigerian educational sector has received considerable attention among scholars and other researchers. Some examples are worthy of consideration as presented below.

Akor, Akpihi, Ali, Sule, Suleiman and Sule (2015) carried out a study on secondary school students' sources of information on sex, sexuality and reproductive health in Kogi State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey design was used for the study. A total of 1,960 secondary school students were drawn by stratified random sampling from 40 schools within Kogi State, Nigeria. Three research questions were generated for the study. Data collected using a researchers' structured questionnaire were subjected to statistics of frequency counts and percentage. The results revealed that students have sexual problems, misuse of sex, high teenage pregnancies and abortion and inadequate information on sex. In the study, only 111 out of 1,960 respondents chose teachers as their major source of information, 691 (33.26%) and 667(34.03%) said they gather information about reproduction and sexuality from peer group and the social media respectively. These indices indicate a low level of awareness of Family life education among youngsters in the study area.

Isiugo-Abanihe, Isiugo-Abanihe, Omololu, Nwokocha, and Udegbe, (2015) examined the implementation of Family Life and HIV/AIDS Education in Nigerian Schools. Focus Group Discussions and In-depth Interviews were conducted among secondary school students and teachers to examine the scope, delivery and challenges of FLHE implementation within states and across geopolitical zones in Nigeria. The study was anchored on Structural Functionalism, Rational Choice and Differential Association theories. It was revealed in the study that FLHE is taught at the Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary levels with variations among States. The main mode of FLHE delivery is classroom instruction; other modes include assembly talk and sensitization by organizations. However, the interviews and focus group discussions with students yielded discriminatory outcomes.

In Rivers State, Nigeria, students in rural secondary schools reported that they are given sexuality education only when they have somebody to educate them on it. Corp members seldom visit their schools to educate them on HIV/AIDS and how to avoid it and life planning generally on the assembly ground during morning devotion. In Imo State, the situation was not different. A student in a public secondary school disclosed that they receive instructions on sexuality education on the assembly ground but the teachers normally preach Christ with little or no emphasis on sexuality and other related issues. It is only when they have visitors like corps members who take permission from the school authority before the issues are presented.. In an urban public secondary school in Gombe State, Nigeria students reported that assembly holds once a week in the school. Thus, the principal only talks about SE and FLHE once in a while. In a rural secondary school in Kwara state, the students disclosed that it is only corps members that usually come to tell them something about Family Life Education. Meanwhile, students in urban secondary schools in Jigawa stated that no other organizations come to tell them about life apart NYSC members.

A review of the studies above showed that while considerable effort has been expended to ascertain the nature and challenges of family life education, no study to the best of these researchers' knowledge has empirically ascertained the nature of Family Life Education received by students in Rivers State, as well

as some militating factors preventing the effective delivery of family life education. It was to fill this gap in the literature that informed the conduct of this study.

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 the nature of Family Life Education they are taught and the challenges militating against their effective learning. The researchers also compared students' based on their identified gender.

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 a 15-item structured question on the type of information received in Family Life Education class, as well as the challenges militating against the effective teaching and learning of FLE. The instrument was constructed based on a modified 4-point Likert Scale of Very High Extent, High Extent, Low Extent and Very Low Extent scored 4, 3, 2, and 1 point(s) respectively. 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 Cronbach Alpha Approach. A coefficient of 0.73 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.

Research Question One: *What type of information is given to the male and female secondary school students about Family Life for sustainable development in Rivers State?*

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation on the type of information given to the male and female secondary school students about Family Life for sustainable development

S/N	ITEMS	Male N = 858		Female N =772		\bar{x}_1, \bar{x}_2	Remarks
		\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD		
1	Family planning	2.76	0.97	3.30	1.00	3.03	Accept
2	Spread of HIV/AIDS	2.58	1.12	3.06	0.88	2.82	Accept
3	Population growth and consequences	3.07	0.87	2.23	1.27	2.65	Accept
4	Responsible parenthood	2.14	1.25	2.76	1.06	2.45	Reject
5	Consequences of sexual immorality	2.88	0.86	2.82	0.74	2.85	Accept
6	Problems of gender inequality	2.69	0.77	2.80	0.90	2.74	Accept
7	Consequences of early marriage	2.82	1.04	3.21	0.94	3.01	Accept
8	Sources of population	2.73	1.11	2.86	1.11	2.79	Accept
9	Types and functions of the family	3.15	0.78	3.23	0.72	3.19	Accept
10	Infant/maternal health	1.94	1.20	2.82	1.06	2.38	Reject
	Grand Mean	2.68	1.00	2.91	0.97	2.79	Accept

Analysis of data presented in Table 2 confirms that differences exist in the type of information given to the male and female secondary school students about Family Life Education (FLE). The computation of data in Items 1-10 of the questionnaire revealed that the female students have a grand mean of 2.91 while the male students have a grand mean of 2.68. On the whole, it is revealed that the female students receive instructions on family planning more frequently than the male students as shown in Item 1 ($\bar{x} = 3.30$). On the other hand, analysis of responses to Item 3 ($\bar{x} = 3.07$) proves that the male students are given instructions on population growth and its consequences more frequently than the female secondary school students in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: *What are the challenges to the effective teaching and learning of Family Life Education (FLE) in secondary schools for sustainable development in Rivers State?*

Table 3: Mean, standard deviation of the challenges to the effective teaching and learning of Family Life Education (FLE) in secondary schools for sustainable development

S/N	ITEMS	Male		Female		$\bar{x}_1\bar{x}_2$	Remarks
		\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD		
21	Poverty	2.92	0.97	3.16	0.77	3.04	Accept
22	Method of teaching	2.55	1.10	2.58	1.14	2.56	Accept
23	Quality of teachers	2.78	1.08	3.14	0.79	2.96	Accept
24	Insecurity	2.29	1.23	1.87	1.19	2.08	Reject
25	Cultural/religious beliefs	2.80	0.89	2.94	0.88	2.87	Accept
Grand mean		2.67	1.05	2.74	0.95	2.70	Accept

Analyses of Data in Table 3 showed that the Mean scores of 3.04, 2.56, 2.96, 2.08 and 2.89 were gotten from the responses to Items 21 to 24. These figures showed poverty, method of teaching quality of teachers and cultural/religious beliefs negatively affect the effective teaching and learning of Family Life Education. However responses to Item 25 implied that insecurity hampers the effective teaching FLE to a low extent.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the type of information given to the male and female secondary school students about Family Life for sustainable development in Rivers State

Table 4: z-test analysis of the type of information given to the male and female secondary school students about Family Life for sustainable development

Gender	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	z-cal	z-cri	P-value	Remark
Male	858	2.68	0.36	1628	12.913	1.960	0.001	Ho rejected
Female	772	2.91	0.37					

* $P < 0.05$ significant at the 0.05 level

Table 4 showed that with the degree of freedom 1628 at 0.05 level of significance, the t-calculated value of 12.913 is greater than the t-critical value 1.96 and 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 type of information given to the male and female secondary school students about Family Life for sustainable development in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the male and secondary school students on the challenges to effective teaching and learning of Family Life Education (FLE) for sustainable development in Rivers State.

Table 5: z-test analysis of the mean ratings of the male and secondary school students on the challenges to effective teaching and learning of Family Life Education (FLE) for sustainable development

Gender	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	P-value	z-cal	z-cri	Remark
Male	858	2.67	0.43	1628	0.001	3.380	1.960	Ho rejected
Female	772	2.73	0.41					

* $P < 0.05$ significant at the 0.05 level

Table 4.17 showed that with the degree of freedom 1628 at 0.05 level of significance, the t-calculated value of 3.380 is greater than the t-critical value 1.96 and p-value of 0.001 is less than 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the male and secondary school students on the challenges to effective teaching and learning of Family Life Education (FLE) for sustainable development in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION

Type of information given to secondary school students about Family Life for sustainable development in Rivers State

Research question one investigated the type of information given to the male and female secondary school students in Family Life Education for sustainable development in Rivers State. Table 4 confirmed that there is a significant difference between the types of information given to the male and female secondary school students in Rivers State. Okusanya and Isabu (2010) reported poor knowledge of young people about HIV/AIDS infection and observed disparity based on gender and location. Knowledge was worse in young females, rural dwellers and in Northern Nigeria.

Challenges to effective teaching and learning of Family Life Education (FLE) for sustainable development in Rivers State

Table 5 confirmed that there is a significant difference between the mean ratings of the male and female secondary school students on the challenges to the effective teaching and learning of FLE for sustainable development in Rivers State. In Table 3, it was deduced that poverty, method of teaching FLE, the quality of teachers, religious and cultural beliefs mitigate the effective teaching and learning of FLE but cultural and religious beliefs affect it to a low extent. In a similar vein, Ololube (2012) and Akinsolu (2010) lament that in spite of the provision in the National Policy on Education there is acute shortage of professionally qualified teachers, thus unqualified and untrained people are recruited into teaching. Davidson (2014) holds the view that poverty and lack of teachers have really limited the level of awareness of Family Life Education among students as intended by the government.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Rivers State Ministry of Education should ensure that the integrative approach to the teaching of FLE in Rivers State is replaced with the subject-based approach.
2. The Rivers State Government should as a matter of urgency employ professionals to teach FLE in primary and secondary schools in Rivers State. Such teachers should as well be given ample opportunities for in-service training as to improve their knowledge of the subject as well.
3. There should be a standing committee composing of various stakeholders in the educational and religious sectors aimed at a periodic review of the curriculum of Family Life Education to meet the dynamic needs of students in Rivers State.

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