

Reducing the Spread of HIV/AIDS among the Junior Secondary School Students through Instructions in Social Studies

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the need to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS through the teaching of Social Studies to the Junior Secondary Schools Students in Nigeria. Also the student's perception on the influence of the Social Studies instructions they received on HIV/AIDS towards their attitude was investigated. The study was a descriptive study of the survey type. It employed the use of questionnaire to elicit information from the subjects. The population of the study was the junior secondary school students in class three and Social Studies teachers in Ekiti and Ondo States. The samples of the study consist of 200 teachers and 200 junior secondary school students drawn from the two states. Two research questions were raised for the study and two hypotheses were equally generated from the research questions raised. The questionnaire for the teachers had twenty items while that of the students had twenty items all testing the perception of the respondents on the benefits derived from Social Studies instructions and the possibility of reducing the surge as a result of the lessons derived from sex education. These questionnaires were administered to the students and teachers by research assistants who were well trained for the study. The questionnaire was collected and analysed using t- test statistics. The result of the data analysed showed that both the teachers and the students perceived that Social Studies instructions would help them to have insight into human body anatomy and how to avoid contacting the dreaded HIV/AIDS. In addition they learnt how to take care of their health, control their sexual behaviour, and protect themselves from contacting sexually transmitted diseases. The consensus opinion was that Social Studies instructions can help in reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS. It was recommended among others that the Social Studies teachers should teach the subject by relating it to real life situation in order to enable the students use the lessons derived in future.

INTRODUCTION

The HIV/AIDS epidemic in the world has entered a dynamic and volatile phase as many countries have declared war against its reduction or eradication. It appears as the sixth Millennium Development Goals to be achieved by 2015. The goal specifically seeks to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases by 2015. The epidemic has proved to be the most challenging to people around the world.

The needs to maintain low HIV prevalence, reducing HIV spread, achieving HIV diagnosis, treatment and care for the health of HIV/AIDS patients have been the objectives of many nations who want to put an end to the suffering of their citizens through the deadly epidemics called HIV. CDC FACT SHEET (2010) says that as at 2006, 63% of those who died of AIDS were African American youth aged 13 to 24. This implies that too many African American lives were being claimed by AIDS.

DeLay, Staneccki and Emberg (2012) say that the pandemic has not only affected the health sector but it cuts across societies and affects every aspect of human development. The implication is that the teaching of sex education has to be taken as a serious issue by teachers and students. The issue of HIV epidemics is not new to the junior secondary school pupils because various government and organizations create its awareness through various means such as radio and television programmes. The topics appear in the syllabus of the students in the junior secondary school and therefore taught as a topic in Social Studies. AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is a disease which completely destroys the power immunity of the body to withstand even minor infections. As a result a common condition like diarrhea can kill an AIDS victim instantly. HIV (Human Immune Deficiency Virus is found in human body especially in the fluids like blood, semen and vaginal secretions. The virus when in the body, multiplies rapidly even in millions and attacks the white blood cells and of course the entire body defence mechanism) therefore rendering the body exposed to slightest traces of disease in the environment.

The above description of HIV/AIDS shows that it is a serious issue which has to be addressed with all seriousness. The rate at which many young people are infected sends signal to concerned citizens that the young

ones must be guided to understand why they should run away from activities that can make them contact the dreadful epidemics. The young adolescent especially the women (girls) are vulnerable because of the challenges they have to face as women. Some of these challenges according to NTI (2010) are:

- i. Lack of control over their own sexuality and sexual relationships
- ii. Poor reproductive and sexual health
- iii. Coerced sex from violent rape
- iv. Cultural / economic obligations to have sex
- v. Harmful cultural practices from genital mutilation
- vi. Lack of access to prevention education, media campaigns, condoms and reproductive health services before and after they are sexually active.

The above shows why youth education about HIV/AIDS should be intensified especially in the school system. The instruction in the school should be done in such a way that lessons will be conducted in such a way that students will be able to relate what they learnt to real life situation. Lessons learnt in school must be able to guide the activities of the students while in school and long after they have left school. Since this topic appears in the junior secondary school syllabus in Social Studies, it is imperative that teachers must teach it in such a way that students will be able to utilise the lessons derive positively when in school and when they are outside the school.

Ogunbameru (2006) says that students should be exposed to sex education because it is an aspect of life that is a natural phenomenon. It is also an inevitable aspect of one's life. Ogunbameru (2006) also observed that the anatomy of the body, sexual reproduction, sexual transmitted diseases contraception and sexual emotions must be taught as this will help the students later in life. It must be noted that sex education is not a cure for all sexual misbehaviours yet it has numerous advantages. Sex education is very important because it can impact personal well being when balanced with other life needs, it will contribute positively to personal health and happiness. Also when expressed in destructive ways, it can impair health and well being. The study of sex education is one way of increasing the lifestyle of our students. A worrisome situation is the attitude of many people including the teachers to the reality of HIV/AIDS. With all the sensitization, many people seem to be living in oblivion doubting the existence of the dreadful epidemics. It is in this vein that this study is necessary because if teachers have negative perception or attitude towards the existence of HIV/AIDS this will affect the way they teach the topic to the students. Such teachers may not be able to convince the students about the reality of the HIV/AIDS. Therefore, this study investigated the teacher's perception on the influence of Social Studies instructions in minimising the upsurge of HIV/AIDS. It also investigated the perceptions of the junior secondary school students on the lessons derived from the instructions they had on HIV/Aids in Social Studies.

Another worrisome situation is the study of sexuality which differs from country to country. Strong, Devault, Sayad and Yarber (2005) say that the study of sexuality is different from other subjects because human sexuality is surrounded by a vast array of taboos, fears, prejudices and hypocrisy. Per harps this seems to be responsible for the attitude of parents and teachers to the teaching of sex education .It is important to note that sex education has to be taught to students for many reasons. According to Strong, Sayad and Yarbe (2005), some of the reasons are :to gain insight into their sexuality ,to explore personal sexual issues ,to dispel anxiety and doubts ,to resolve traumatic sexual experiences, to learn how to avoid sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy, and to increase their knowledge.

Hughes, Pinel and Severson (2010) in their studies on HIV/ AIDS found that ninety percent of the participants in a sex education workshop confessed that lessons on HIV/AIDS have helped them to change their sexual behaviours. Also these researchers found that there was consistent evidence from the community evaluation questionnaires and the counsellors log books that what the training participants had gained for them was being gained for others.

This study is based on the devastating effect of HIV/AIDS on the health of the youths. It investigated the benefits and influence of Social Studies instructions on teachers' and students' perception on HIV/AIDS.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

- Will there be any difference between the teachers and students perception on the benefits to be derived from the knowledge of HIV/AIDS through Social Studies instructions?
- Will there be any difference in the teachers' and junior secondary school students' perception on the reduction of the spread of HIV /AIDS through Social Studies instructions?
- There will be no significant difference between the teachers' and junior secondary school students' perception on the benefits to be derived on knowledge of HIV/AIDS through Social Studies instruction.

- There will be no significant difference between teachers' and junior secondary school students' perception on the reduction of the spread of HIV/AIDS through instructions in social studies.

Method of Study

The research is a descriptive study which employs the survey strategy. The population of the study is all the junior secondary schools in Ekiti and Ondo States. The samples for the study are 200 Social Studies teachers and 200 junior secondary school students who had courses in HIV/AIDS through instructions in Social Studies. The samples were selected through multistage and purposive sample techniques.

Research Instruments

The research instruments were two sets of questionnaires designed for Social Studies teachers and junior secondary school students who had their instructions in Social Studies. The questionnaires have four levels graded as strongly agree=4 agree=3 strongly disagree 2=disagree =1. Each instrument had twenty questions which elicit information on the perceived influence of Social Studies instructions such as: having control on their sexuality, caring for their reproductive health, escape from violent and coerced sex, understand their cultural values about sex, learn about: prevention of unwanted pregnancy, the body anatomy,, sexually transmitted diseases, use of contraceptive, and how to control sexual emotion. Others are: understand the evil effect of genital mutilation, understand the differences in sexuality from country to country, gain insight into their own sexuality, explore personal sexual issues and dispel anxiety and doubts about how to resolve traumatic sexual experiences. The questionnaires were validated for their contents, face and construct validity.

The reliability of the two instruments were established through test retest method and the data analysed were subjected to Pearson product moment correlation and a correlation coefficient of 0.75 and 0.70 were obtained for the teachers' and students' questionnaire respectively.

Administration of the Instrument

The research Instrument was administered to the Social Studies students and teachers by research assistants who were trained for the study. The questionnaires were collected on the spot after completion by the respondents.

Data Analysis

The data collected was subjected to inferential statistics. Specifically Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The result is as stated in the table below. The hypotheses stated that there will be no significant relationship between teachers perception on the reduction of HIV/AIDS through instruction in social studies.

Results

Table 1: t-test Statistics between teachers students perception on the influence of Social Studies on the reduction of HIV/AIDS

Source of variation	N	Mean	Sd	df	t-cal	t-table	Remarks
Teachers	200	34.74	7.20	199	.439	1.96	Not Significant
Students	200	34.44	6.37				

The table above shows that the t. calculated is .439 while the table value is 1.96. The t-calculated is less than the table value; this means that there is no significant difference in the perception of the teachers and students on the benefits derive on Social Studies instruction with particular reference to HIV/AIDS.

Table 2: t-test statistics on the teachers and students perception on the influence of Social Studies instruction on the reduction of HIV/AIDS through Social Studies instruction

Source of variation	N	Mean	Sd	df	t-cal	t-table	Remarks
Teachers	200	33.96	7.10	199	.292	1.96	Not Significant
Students	200	33.77	6.01				

The table above shows that t .calculated is less than the table value this implies that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of teachers and students in the advantages derived from the Social Studies instruction on HIV/AIDS.

Discussion

The study investigated the need to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS and the advantages to be derived from Social Studies instruction in HIV/AIDS. The first hypothesis tested states that there will be no significant difference in the teachers' and the junior secondary school students' perception on the benefits derived from Social Studies instruction.

The findings from the study shows that both teachers and students agreed that there are many advantages that are derivable from the Social Studies instruction particularly in the area of sex education and HIV/AIDS .Some of the advantages as listed are: control their sexuality, caring for their reproduction health, learn about the body anatomy, learn to avoid sexually transmitted diseases. Others are to avoid sexually transmitted diseases, to explore personal sexual issues, to learn about how to control sexual emotions and the use of contraceptives. These findings corroborated the finding of Strong, Sayad and Yarbe (2005) that some learners claimed to have gained insight into their sexuality, how to explore personal sexual issues ,learn how to avoid sexually transmitted diseases, and unwanted pregnancy.

The study also agrees with the findings of Hughes, Pinel and Severson, (2010) that ninety percent of their participants in workshop in sex education claimed that they had learnt to change their own sexual behaviours by learning how to control their own sexuality and sexual relations. The second hypothesis stated that there will be no significant difference between the teachers and students' perception on the reduction of HIV/Aids through Social Studies instructions.

The findings from the study show that both teachers and students agreed that Social Studies instructions can help to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS among the youths. The respondents agreed that some of the contents of Social Studies instruction will help them to avoid contacting HIV/AIDS or any sexually transmitted diseases. This corroborated the submission of Ogunbameru (2006) that the anatomy of the body, sexually transmitted diseases, contraception and sexual emotions must be taught as they will help the students later in life.

It was discovered from the study that the students claimed that Social Studies instruction helped them to understand their culture and be able to compare it with the culture of people from other parts of the world. This corroborated the observation of Strong, Devault, Sayad and Yarbe (2005) that the study of sexuality is different from country to country because it is surrounded with a vast array of taboos, fears, prejudices and hypocrisy. This study has proved that instruction in Social Studies can be of immense assistance in minimising the spread of HIV/AIDS among the youths.

Conclusion

The study has shown the importance of Social Studies instructions in minimizing the spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases among the youths. The Social Science instruction will have positive influence on the lives of the youths in future when they start to make use of the various lessons learnt in the junior secondary school.

Recommendations

This study has proved that the students can gain a lot of information from learning sex education. It is therefore recommended that the teachers should teach the subject by relating it to real life situation .Also teachers should draw examples from the culture of the students to enhance understanding.

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