

**PERCEPTION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF SEX EDUCATION AMONG  
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EGOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA**

**Vivian Aisosa UWUIGBE  
EDU1904643**

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN.**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUMMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF  
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## CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned, certify that this project was carried out by Vivian Aisosa  
UWUIGBE in the Department of Health, Safety and Environmental Education, Faculty  
of Education, University of Benin, Benin City.

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Dr Mrs C.N. Atedhor  
Project supervisor

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Date

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Dr E. O. Igudia  
Project coordinator

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Date

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Dr. S.O. Olikabor  
Head of Department

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Date

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to God Almighty for Wisdom, Knowledge and Understanding. He has been the source of strength throughout this program and on His wings only have I soared.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude, indebtedness and joy to God Almighty for the gift of life.

This project is a product of grace compiled with personal development and is also the collective impact of some mentors, my supervisor, my HOD, my lecturers and friends.

My sincere gratitude goes to my project supervisor, Dr. Mrs C.N. Atedhor for her guidance and constructive criticism towards the accomplishment of this project.

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Lastly, I want to thank my friends and course mates, for their advice and guidance, and also for putting me through my hard course during my stay in the University of Benin, May God bless you.

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## ABSTRACTS

This study assessed perception and effectiveness of sex education among secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design.

The population of the study consists of four thousand five hundred and sixty SSI to SSIII students in the Senior Secondary Schools in Egor Local Government Area. The multistage sampling technique was employed to select 154 students from 5 schools in Egor Local Government Area. The research instrument used in the study was a four point likert scale and dichotomous questionnaire developed by the researcher, the instrument was validated by the researchers supervisor, the reliability of the instrument was determined by using the test re-test method and the reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained. The questionnaire was administered and retrieved by the researcher, out of the 154 administered questionnaire only 130 were valid and complete for the analysis, the data collected was collated and analyzed using descriptive statistics.

The findings of the study revealed that ; there is a high perception of sex education among secondary school students. Students have high level of awareness of the benefits of sex education and there is a high level of effectiveness of sex education in secondary schools Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made: Schools should continue to integrate comprehensive sex education into their curricula, ensuring that it covers all necessary topics to further enhance students' understanding and awareness, regular training and workshops for teachers on delivering sex education effectively should be conducted, focusing on up-to-date information and teaching methodologies and parents should be encouraged to participate in sex education programs and discussions to reinforce the information provided at school and to create a supportive environment at home.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background of Study**

Sexuality is a central aspect of being human throughout life and encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behavior, practices and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, ethical, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors (World Health Organization, (WHO) 2016). Collins (2018), argued that sexuality education encompasses education about all aspects of sexuality including information about family planning, reproduction, body image, sexual orientation, sexual pleasure, values, decision making, communication, dating, relationships, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) including how to avoid them and birth control methods.

Sex education is defined as teaching about human sexuality, including intimate relationships, human sexual anatomy, sexual reproduction, STIs, sexual activity, sexual orientation, gender identity, abstinence, contraception, and reproductive rights and responsibilities (Aral, 2021). Developmentally appropriate and evidence-based education about human sexuality and sexual reproduction over time provided by pediatricians,

schools, other professionals and parents is important to help children and adolescents make informed, positive, and safe choices about healthy relationships, responsible sexual activity and their reproductive health. Sexuality education has been shown to help to prevent and reduce the risks of adolescent pregnancy, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and STIs for children and adolescents.

Sex education is a lifelong process of acquiring information and forming attitude, beliefs and values (Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, 2019) it encompasses sex development, sexual and reproductive health, interpersonal relationship, affection, intimacy, body image and gender roles. From the moment of birth, children learn about love, touch and relationship. Infants and toddlers learn about sex when their parent talk to them, dress them, show affection, and teach them the names of the parts of their body. As children grow into adolescence, they continue to receive message about sexual behavior, attitude, and values from their family in an informal way. sexuality is also learned from other sources such as friends, television, music, books, advertisement and internet which are all forms of informal way of learning.

Formal sex education is mostly acquired through, the school-based sexuality education. It is often comprehensive and as such provide certain guidelines in form of objectives to be achieved at the end of the programme. The school –based sex education provides accurate information about human sexuality, it provides opportunity for people to develop and understand their values, attitude and insight about sexuality, help young

people to develop relationship and interpersonal skills among others. These scope and others such as human development, relationship, decision making, abstinence, contraception, and disease prevention are what makes school-based sexuality education differ from other forms of sexuality education (Phile, 2017).

Phile (2017) feels that sex education should commence as soon as the child begin to talk. For instance, it is not unusual to see a child of 2 to 4 years asking his or her parents why mummy is having a baby. However, it has been observed that some teacher's attitude towards sex education has not been very supportive. While some lack necessary skills for imparting the knowledge, some others out rightly become very passive towards its implementation. This is supported by the position of which states that teachers who teach sexuality education are either passive or they present the subject matter of sex education within a wider context that it loses its focus at the end of the day (WHO, 2016).

Though the content for junior secondary level on sex education may not be same for senior secondary school level because of their level of development and maturation. To this end, the study wants to seek the opinion of students on sexuality education, and determine if they will like sexuality education to be a core subject either at junior level or senior secondary

### **Statement of the problem**

According to Demographic and Health Survey (Demographic Health Survey 2013), 38% of girls and 19.3% of boys aged 15-19 years are sexually active. Contraceptive prevalence rate among young women 15-19 years old was 13% (General Social Survey 2013). There is little information on the extent to which Nigeria adolescents suffer from STIs, especially HIV, abortion and unwanted pregnancies. Incidences of inappropriate sexual behaviors continue to be on the increase among secondary school adolescent students. Sexuality education which should be a tool that will help students to cope with the challenges that face them in this regard seems not to be properly implemented. Despite the efforts made by school administrators and tutors to educate students on sex education, there has not been any significant evidence as to the knowledge levels of students on sex and sexual practices coupled with the practices of safe sex amongst them. This study therefore is intended to bring to fore the perception and effectiveness of sex education among secondary school students in Egor local government area

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the perception of secondary school students on the teaching of sex education?
2. Are secondary school students in Egor local government area aware of the benefits of sex education?

3. What is the level of effectiveness of sex education as perceived by secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to explore the perception and effectiveness of sex education among secondary school students in Egor local government area.

Specifically, the Study aim to:

1. Find out the perception of secondary schools' students on the teaching of sex education
2. Find out if secondary school students in Egor local government area are aware of the benefits of sex education.
3. Determine the level of effectiveness of sex education on secondary school.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study will primarily serve as a baseline survey for further research on sexual education and health. This study is also imperative for adolescent boys and girls as it will aid them to have access to sexual health information, make informed decision that will guarantee them a reputable future and acquire life skills to deal with sexuality and relationships in a satisfactory and responsible manner.

Religious organizations, policy makers, educators, parents and community/opinion leaders will find recommendations from this study useful as it will guide them in formulating effective policies in favor of sex education in schools, intensify campaigns on the need to include sex education in school curriculums, debunk any myths and misconceptions concerning sex education in schools in African societies and facilitate equitable access to sexual and reproductive health education.

### **Scope and Delimitation of the Study**

This study intends to cover the perception and effectiveness of sex education among secondary school students however it is delimited to secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Influence:** Ability to have effect on someone or something.

**Orientation:** A person's basic attitude, beliefs, or feelings in relation to a particular subject or issue.

**Sex Education:** An instruction on issues relating to human sexuality, including emotional relations and responsibilities, human sexual anatomy, sexual activity, sexual reproduction, age of consent, reproductive health, reproductive rights, safe.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

The review of related literature will be discussed under the following sub-headings;

- Concept of Sex Education
- Sexual behavior of Secondary school students
- Secondary school students Attitude Towards Sex Education
- Knowledge of Secondary school students on Sex Education
- Education on Safe Sex Practice
- Challenges Students face in Assessing Sex Education
- Summary of Reviewed Related literature

#### **Concept of Sex Education**

Sex education can be defined as the study of the characteristics of beings, both male and female, and these characteristics contribute to an individual's sexuality (Burt, 2019). According to Leepson (2022), sex education encompasses instruction in the physiological, psychological, and sociological aspects of sexual response and reproduction. This indicates that sexuality education addresses the overall well-being of an individual and their interactions with others. Given the challenges adolescents face today, such as teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), rape, and incest, sexuality education has been incorporated into school curriculums in various countries worldwide (UNESCO, 2019).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has advocated for a comprehensive approach to sexuality education in schools globally. This holistic approach is necessary to instill a proper understanding of one's sexuality and relationships with others (UNESCO, 2019). However, some forms of sexuality education are biased, providing learners with limited knowledge deemed appropriate based on physical, cultural, or religious factors (UNFPA, 2021). Despite these variations, the importance of sexual and reproductive health is universally acknowledged.

Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) covers several key components: relationships, values, attitudes, skills, culture, society, human rights, human development, sexual behavior, and sexual and reproductive health (UNESCO, 2019). These foundational elements shape sexuality education programs worldwide, including in Nigeria.

Sex education imparts knowledge about sexual behavior, equipping individuals with information, attitudes, and beliefs about sex. It is especially crucial for secondary school students, raising awareness about sex-related issues without promoting early initiation of intercourse. Instead, it can delay first intercourse and foster a deeper understanding of sexuality (Kirby, 2007; World Health Organization, 2010). It involves developing young people's skills to make informed choices about their behavior. According to Nwabizu (2016), sex education is widely recognized as a right for young people, helping them protect themselves against abuse, exploitation, unintended pregnancies, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

Sex and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) education are delivered through written curricula in school settings as interventions to reduce adolescent sexual risk behaviors and the transmission of infectious diseases (CDC, 2014). However, not all youth attend school or remain in school until they initiate sex, highlighting the need to reach out-of-school youth (UNICEF, 2021). Curriculum and group-based sex and HIV education programs can be introduced in various settings, including youth-serving agencies, housing projects, faith communities, community centers, and juvenile detention centers (Kirby et al., 2006). These programs, which have been shown to reduce sexual risk-taking behavior, should be implemented in both school and community settings with minimal modifications (Fonner et al., 2014).

Ongwu (2020) emphasized the importance of taking sexuality education seriously, given our increasingly interconnected world. Events in one part of the world can influence behaviors elsewhere, necessitating well-informed populations with appropriate behaviors to navigate life (Ongwu, 2020). Peer group influence on sex-related issues and discussions can significantly impact students in schools, underscoring the need for comprehensive sexuality education (Bearinger et al., 2007).

Sexuality education is a critical component of adolescent development, providing essential knowledge and skills to navigate sexual health and relationships. Comprehensive programs that address physiological, psychological, and sociological aspects are crucial for promoting healthy behaviors and preventing negative outcomes.

The integration of such education in both school and community settings, tailored to local contexts, ensures broader reach and effectiveness.

### **Types of Sex Education**

- a. Abstinence centered Education
- b. Abstinence plus Education
- c. Comprehensive sex Education
- d. Lesbian, Gay, Transgender and Bisexual sex Education.

### **Abstinence-Centered Education**

Abstinence-centered education, also known as abstinence-only-until-marriage (AOUM) or sexual risk avoidance (SRA) programs, is a form of sex education that strictly promotes abstinence as the sole acceptable behavior before marriage. These programs emphasize the benefits of abstinence, such as avoiding sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unintended pregnancies, and often frame abstinence as the only morally acceptable choice (Alford, 2018). A defining characteristic of abstinence-centered education is its restrictive approach to sex education content, typically omitting discussions on controversial topics such as abortion, masturbation, and sexual orientation (Santelli et al., 2017).

One of the central tenets of abstinence-centered education is its opposition to abortion, with these programs often advocating for adoption as an alternative for unintended pregnancies (Kohler et al., 2008). This perspective aligns with certain cultural and religious beliefs that value sexual purity and view premarital sex as morally wrong (Denny & Young, 2006). The curriculum in these programs usually avoids comprehensive discussions on contraception, instead focusing on the potential failures and risks associated with contraceptive methods (Underhill et al., 2007). The goal is to reinforce the message that abstinence is the only fail-safe method of preventing STIs and unintended pregnancies.

Critics of abstinence-centered education argue that it provides incomplete information, leaving young people unprepared for sexual activity when they eventually choose to engage in it (Santelli et al., 2017). Studies have shown that while these programs may temporarily delay the initiation of sexual activity, they do not significantly reduce rates of STIs or unintended pregnancies in the long term (Kohler et al., 2008). Moreover, by not addressing the full spectrum of sexual health issues, including safe sex practices and consent, abstinence-centered education may contribute to misinformation and stigmatization of sexual behaviors and identities (Santelli et al., 2017).

In addition to the content limitations, the effectiveness of abstinence-centered education is often debated. Research indicates that comprehensive sex education, which includes information about contraception and safe sex practices, is more effective at reducing

adolescent pregnancy and STI rates than abstinence-only programs (Kirby, 2008). Nevertheless, abstinence-centered education continues to receive support from certain policymakers and communities who believe it aligns with their moral and cultural values (Denny & Young, 2006).

### **Abstinence-Plus Education**

Abstinence-plus education represents a middle ground between abstinence-centered education and comprehensive sex education. While it shares similarities with abstinence-centered programs by promoting abstinence as the preferred behavior, it also acknowledges that some adolescents may choose to become sexually active (Kirby, 2007). This type of program includes information on sexually transmitted infections (STIs), contraception, and the risks associated with sexual activity, thereby providing a more balanced approach to sex education (Kirby, 2007).

Abstinence-plus education aims to equip young people with the knowledge and skills needed to make informed decisions about their sexual health. It emphasizes the importance of abstinence while also teaching about the use of condoms and other contraceptives to reduce the risk of STIs and unintended pregnancies (Frost et al., 2008). This dual approach is intended to appeal to a broader audience, including those who support abstinence as well as those who advocate for more comprehensive sexual health education (Kirby, 2007).

The inclusion of information on contraception and STI prevention sets abstinence-plus education apart from abstinence-centered programs. By providing accurate and practical information, these programs aim to reduce the negative outcomes associated with sexual activity among adolescents (Frost et al., 2008). For example, students learn about the effectiveness of various contraceptive methods, how to properly use condoms, and the importance of regular STI testing (Kirby, 2007).

Research supports the efficacy of abstinence-plus education in reducing risky sexual behaviors and promoting safer sex practices among adolescents (Kirby, 2007). Studies have shown that these programs can lead to delayed initiation of sexual activity, reduced number of sexual partners, and increased use of contraception among sexually active youth (Kirby, 2008). By addressing both abstinence and safe sex, abstinence-plus education provides a more comprehensive and realistic approach to adolescent sexual health (Frost et al., 2008).

Despite its benefits, abstinence-plus education is not without its challenges. Some critics argue that it may send mixed messages to young people by promoting abstinence while also teaching about contraception (Santelli et al., 2006). Additionally, the success of these programs often depends on the quality of the curriculum and the training of educators (Kirby, 2007). Nevertheless, abstinence-plus education remains a popular and effective approach to sex education that balances the promotion of abstinence with the need for comprehensive sexual health information (Frost et al., 2008).

## **Comprehensive Sex Education**

Comprehensive sex education (CSE) offers a holistic approach to sexual health, providing students with extensive information on various aspects of sexuality, including abstinence, contraception, and sexual orientation. Unlike abstinence-centered or abstinence-plus education, comprehensive sex education emphasizes the importance of informed decision-making and personal responsibility (Collins et al., 2009). These programs aim to equip young people with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to make healthy choices about their sexual and reproductive health (Kirby, 2008).

A key feature of comprehensive sex education is its inclusion of accurate and factual information on topics such as contraception, STIs, abortion, masturbation, and sexual orientation (Collins et al., 2009). By providing this information, CSE programs help students understand the physical, emotional, and social aspects of sexual health, empowering them to make informed decisions (Kirby, 2008). Additionally, CSE encourages critical thinking and self-reflection, helping young people explore their own values, goals, and options related to sexuality (Santelli et al., 2006).

Comprehensive sex education also emphasizes the importance of consent and healthy relationships. Students learn about the dynamics of respectful relationships, effective communication skills, and strategies for setting and respecting boundaries (Santelli et al., 2006). This focus on relationship skills is crucial for preventing sexual violence and promoting positive interpersonal interactions (Kirby, 2008).

Research consistently supports the effectiveness of comprehensive sex education in reducing risky sexual behaviors and improving sexual health outcomes among adolescents (Kirby, 2008). Studies have shown that CSE programs can lead to delayed initiation of sexual activity, increased use of contraception, and reduced rates of STIs and unintended pregnancies (Fonner et al., 2014). Furthermore, CSE has been associated with improved knowledge and attitudes about sexual health, contributing to healthier behaviors and decision-making (Collins et al., 2009).

Despite its proven benefits, comprehensive sex education faces significant challenges. Some critics argue that CSE promotes sexual activity among young people by providing detailed information about sex (Santelli et al., 2006). However, research indicates that CSE does not increase sexual activity but instead helps young people make safer and more informed choices (Kirby, 2008). Additionally, the implementation of CSE programs can be hindered by political, cultural, and religious opposition, which may limit the availability and quality of these programs in certain regions (Santelli et al., 2006).

## **Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, and Bisexual (LGTB) Sex Education**

Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, and Bisexual (LGTB) sex education is one of the most controversial yet essential components of modern sex education. This type of education focuses on teaching young adults about the realities of lesbian, gay, transgender, and bisexual identities and relationships, presenting them as normal and valid variations of human sexuality (GLSEN, 2019). LGTB sex education aims to reduce discrimination and stigma against LGTB individuals and promote understanding and acceptance within the broader community (UNESCO, 2016)

## **Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, and Bisexual (LGTB) Sex Education**

Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, and Bisexual (LGTB) sex education is a vital yet often contentious aspect of contemporary sex education programs. This approach focuses on providing young adults with accurate, inclusive, and affirming information about LGTB identities and relationships. It aims to normalize diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, promoting a more inclusive and accepting society (GLSEN, 2019). LGTB sex education seeks to reduce discrimination and stigma against LGTB individuals, fostering understanding and acceptance within schools and the broader community (UNESCO, 2016).

One of the core objectives of LGTB sex education is to address the specific health and well-being needs of LGTB youth. This includes discussing topics such as safe sex

practices for same-sex couples, the importance of regular STI testing, and the unique challenges that LGTB individuals may face in accessing healthcare (Saewyc, 2011). By providing this information, LGTB sex education helps to mitigate health disparities and promote the overall well-being of LGTB youth (CDC, 2014).

LGBTB sex education also plays a crucial role in combating bullying and harassment in schools. Research shows that LGTB students are more likely to experience bullying and violence compared to their heterosexual peers (Kosciw et al., 2018). Inclusive sex education programs that address and affirm LGTB identities can create a safer and more supportive school environment, reducing instances of bullying and improving mental health outcomes for LGTB students (Kosciw et al., 2018).

In addition to health and safety, LGTB sex education emphasizes the importance of understanding and respecting diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. Students learn about the history and contributions of LGTB individuals, the significance of Pride, and the challenges faced by the LGTB community in the fight for equality (GLSEN, 2019). This broader educational context helps to foster empathy and acceptance, preparing students to be more inclusive and respectful members of society (UNESCO, 2016).

Despite its importance, LGTB sex education faces significant challenges and opposition. In many regions, cultural, religious, and political factors create barriers to implementing

inclusive sex education programs (UNESCO, 2016). Some critics argue that discussing LGTB topics in schools is inappropriate or that it promotes homosexuality (Herek, 2000). However, research consistently shows that inclusive sex education does not influence sexual orientation but rather provides essential support and information for all students, including those who are LGTB (Fonner et al., 2014).

In countries like the United States, Belgium, and Sweden, where LGTB sex education is more widely endorsed, there are notable benefits. For instance, students in these countries report higher levels of understanding and acceptance of LGTB individuals, as well as lower rates of bullying and mental health issues among LGTB youth (Kosciw et al., 2018). These positive outcomes highlight the importance of comprehensive and inclusive sex education programs that address the needs of all students, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity (GLSEN, 2019).

Implementing LGTB sex education requires careful planning and sensitivity. Educators need appropriate training to effectively deliver inclusive content and to handle discussions about sexual orientation and gender identity with sensitivity and respect (Snapp et al., 2015). Additionally, schools should involve LGTB organizations and experts in the development of curricula to ensure that the information provided is accurate, up-to-date, and reflective of the diverse experiences of LGTB individuals (Snapp et al., 2015).

In conclusion, LGTB sex education is an essential component of a comprehensive sex education program. It addresses the unique health and well-being needs of LGTB youth, promotes understanding and acceptance, and creates safer and more inclusive school environments. Despite facing significant challenges, the implementation of LGTB-inclusive sex education is crucial for fostering a more equitable and supportive society. By providing accurate and affirming information about diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, LGTB sex education helps to ensure that all students receive the support and education they need to thrive (GLSEN, 2019; UNESCO, 2016).

### **Meaning of Sexual Orientation**

Sexual orientation is an enduring pattern of romantic or sexual attraction to persons of opposite or same sex. According to American Psychological Association (2008) sexual orientation refers to an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic, and sexual attraction to men, women, or both sexes. Sexual orientation also refers to a person's sense of identity based on those attractions, related behaviors, and membership in a community of others who share those attractions.

### **Classification of Sexual Orientation**

- a. Heterosexuality
- b. Homosexuality
- c. Bisexuality

**Heterosexuality:** This is a romantic attraction or sexual behaviors between persons of opposite sex or gender. As a sexual orientation, heterosexuality is an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic and sexual attractions to persons of the opposite sex it also refers to a person's sense of identity based on those attractions, related behaviors and membership in a community of others who share these attractions. Heterosexuality is also referred to as Sexual intercourse which is also known as coitus or copulation. Miller (2006) noted that sexual intercourse is the behavior used most often to report the status of secondary school students's sexual behavior. The latest figures show that more than one half of high school seniors have had coitus at least once. Approximately of young secondary school studentss had sex prior to age 13 (Stan 2019).

**Bisexuality:** This is a romantic attraction, sexual attraction or sexual behaviors toward both males and females, or romantic or sexual attraction to people of any sex or gender identity. The American psychological Association states that Sexual orientation falls along a continuum. In other words, someone does not have to be exclusively homosexuals or heterosexuals but feels varying degrees of both. (American Psychological Association, 2018).

### **The Need for Sex Education in Secondary Schools**

Sex education in the schools would prevent social vices such as unwanted pregnancies, spread of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), students drop out of schools and prevalence of Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired

Immunodeficiency Syndrome being on the increase because of lack of awareness. Several studies related to adolescent's sexual behaviors suggest that sex education becomes an alternative to reduce the high rate of sexual activities among adolescents. Storm and Jane (2017) stated that the rightful authority to provide sex education is both parents and teachers. Parents possess an emotional power to set particular rules during parental care. Therefore, it is their responsibility to provide their children with sex education as they grow up.

Young people are very interested in the oral and cultural framework that binds sex and sexuality. They often welcome opportunities to talk about issues where people have strong views, like abortion, sex before marriage, lesbianism and gay issues and contraception and birth control. It is important to remember that talking in a balanced way about differences in opinion does not promote one set of view over another, or mean that one agrees with a particular view. Part of exploring and understanding cultural, religion and oral view is being able to agree with people provided they have attitudes and beliefs of their own about sex and sexuality and it is important not to let these influence negatively. For example, even if a person believes that young people should not have sex until they are married, this does not imply withholding important information about safer sex and contraception. Sex education fail when educators impose narrow moralistic view about sex and sexuality on young people. Rather than trying to deter or frighten young people away from having sex, effective sex education should include work on attitudes and beliefs coupled with skill development, that enable young people to choose whether

or not to have sexual relationship taking into account the potential risk of any sexual activity. Effective sex education also provides young people with an opportunity to explore resources on sex and sexuality, to understand why people have sex, and to think about how it involves emotional respect for one self. Young people should have the chance to explore gender differences and how ethnicity and sexuality can influence people's feelings and opinion (Collins 2018).

International Planned Parenthood foundation (2018) noted that youngsters usually derive information on sex and from friends, books, media adverts, television, magazines and the internet. The problem is that these sources may or may not really provide them with correct information. As such, sex education will help in transferring authentic information and in the process also correct any misinformation that they may have apart from adding to their already existing knowledge on sex education imparted through schools can prove to be a significant and effective method of bettering the youngster's sex related knowledge, attitude and behavior. Sex education in schools is important because many parents are shy about talking or teaching their children on this subject. Educating children on sex related issues also require one to know how to approach the subject, what information to impart and what to hold back. All these can be carefully handled by a trained sex educator. It is a fact that more and more teens these days are engaging in premarital sex. This will help them make better informed decisions about their personal sexual activities. Sex education reduces sexual risk e.g. Rape, sexual

transmitted infections, injury and death and use of sex toys etc. It also reduces indecency in the society.

Sex education is critical in preparing young people for a safe, successful, and satisfying life in a world where HIV/AIDS, STIs, unwanted pregnancies, gender-based violence (GBV), and gender inequality continue to pose significant threats to their well-being (UNFPA, 2018). Sex education also provides people with the knowledge, skills, and motivation they need to make informed decisions about their sex and sexuality. Many young people enter adulthood with contradicting, negative, and confusing messages about sexuality, which are sometimes worsened by adults' embarrassment and silence, including parents and instructors (UNFPA, 2018).

### **Sexual Behaviour of Secondary school students**

Since men and women are inbuilt with sexual feelings, a pattern can be observed with regards to their sexual behavior. Secondary school students are known to explore their sexuality during these years due to the physical changes that occurred in them. Nigeria is a populous nation of over 170 million people and having a high population of secondary school students. According to Adepoju (2015), a high percentage of Nigerian secondary school students are sexually active. In his study, 25% of girls interviewed revealed that their first sexual intercourse was by coercion and rape. 80% of unsafe abortion complications recorded in hospitals in Nigeria was from teenagers (Adepoju, 2015). Despite the problems that betide the Nigerian young people, sexual and

reproductive health issues were not considered serious until recent times due to the prevailing circumstances of rape, incest, premarital sex, sexually transmitted disease infections, sexual violence and unwanted pregnancies. The Nigerian media are filled with sensational stories of sexual and reproductive health infringement of young people. In an article of The Sun newspaper entitled Nigeria Children Endangered, various rape cases were reported showing the increased abuse of children in Nigeria. Some of the acts of rape were carried out by young people. There is also an increased glamorization of sex by the media in recent years without stating the risk involved in careless sexual intercourse. This is corroborated by Action Health Incorporation publications of factors influencing sexual activity of young people which includes earlier sexual maturation, peer group and adult's pressure, socio-economic problems, sex glamorization by mass media, permissive attitude of boy sexual activities (male promiscuity), high value on child bearing by the society, early and late marriage. This has led to the increased rate of sexual involvement by youths who are most times not prepared for it. Sex matters are still treated as a secret matter despite the daunting realities of it being practiced by young people from whom it is kept. No wonder a state like Benue had the highest HIV infection rate among young people in previous years. Homosexuals, bisexuals, heterosexuals, etc. can be found among the Nigerian young people who tend to explore their sexual composition at this stage of their lives.

### **Student's perception of sex education**

Adolescence is a crucial developmental stage characterized by significant physical, emotional, and psychological changes. During this period, young people often face numerous challenges and uncertainties regarding their sexual and reproductive health. Despite the importance of this stage, adolescents typically have limited knowledge about sexual and reproductive health, including the natural processes of puberty, sexual health, pregnancy, and reproduction (Santelli et al., 2017). This gap in knowledge highlights the critical need for comprehensive sex education, which should be an integral part of the learning process from childhood and continue into adulthood.

Secondary school students are at a pivotal age where they begin to explore and understand their sexuality. They need accurate information and practical skills to protect themselves from risks such as HIV, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and unintended pregnancies. Comprehensive sex education provides a structured and informed approach to equip students with the knowledge they need to make safe and informed decisions (UNESCO, 2018).

The primary goal of sex education is to impart accurate information about sexual and reproductive health. Many adolescents are unaware of the basic facts about puberty, menstrual cycles, conception, and contraception. A study by the World Health Organization (2010) found that adolescents often rely on peers, media, and the internet for information about sex, which can lead to misconceptions and risky behaviors.

Comprehensive sex education addresses these knowledge gaps by providing scientifically accurate and age-appropriate information (Fonner et al., 2014).

Sex education also demystifies the natural processes of puberty and sexual development. Adolescents learn about the physical changes that occur during puberty, the emotional fluctuations they may experience, and the importance of maintaining sexual health. By understanding these processes, students are better prepared to manage their development and make informed decisions (Bearinger et al., 2007).

One of the critical components of sex education is teaching students how to protect themselves from HIV, STDs, and unintended pregnancies. According to Kirby (2008), comprehensive sex education programs that include information about contraception and safe sex practices are more effective in reducing risky sexual behaviors compared to abstinence-only programs. These programs educate students about the various methods of contraception, how to use them correctly, and the importance of regular health check-ups and STI testing.

Education on HIV and STDs is particularly vital. Many adolescents underestimate the risks of unprotected sex and the severity of sexually transmitted infections. Comprehensive sex education highlights the modes of transmission, symptoms, and prevention methods for HIV and other STDs, empowering students to take proactive steps in protecting their health (CDC, 2014).

Beyond knowledge, sex education fosters positive attitudes towards sex and relationships. It encourages mutual respect, trust, negotiation, and enjoyment in relationships. By promoting these values, sex education helps students develop healthy and respectful relationships. According to Collins (2018), effective sex education includes discussions on consent, communication skills, and emotional readiness for sexual activity. These discussions help students understand the importance of mutual respect and consent in any sexual relationship.

Moreover, sex education teaches negotiation skills, enabling young people to communicate their boundaries and desires effectively. This is particularly important in preventing situations of coercion or unwanted sexual activity. Students learn how to negotiate condom use, discuss sexual health openly with partners, and seek support when needed (Santelli et al., 2006).

Sex education should not be a one-time lesson but a lifelong learning process that evolves as individuals grow and their needs change. Starting from early childhood, education about body parts, privacy, and respect lays the foundation for more complex discussions during adolescence and adulthood. As students progress through different stages of their lives, sex education should adapt to address their changing needs and circumstances (UNFPA, 2018).

In the early years, sex education might focus on basic anatomy, personal boundaries, and respect for others. As students reach adolescence, the curriculum can expand to include topics such as puberty, sexual orientation, gender identity, and healthy relationships. In adulthood, sex education can address issues related to sexual health maintenance, family planning, and navigating sexual relationships in different life stages (UNESCO, 2018).

The effectiveness of sex education largely depends on how it is perceived and accepted by students. Research indicates that students generally welcome sex education and find it beneficial. A study by Kirby et al. (2005) found that students who received comprehensive sex education reported feeling more informed and better prepared to make decisions about their sexual health. They appreciated the opportunity to discuss and learn about sex in a safe and supportive environment.

Students also value the role of educators who are knowledgeable, approachable, and non-judgmental. The quality of the relationship between students and educators can significantly impact the effectiveness of sex education. Teachers who create an open and respectful classroom atmosphere encourage students to engage more actively and honestly in discussions about sex and relationships (UNESCO, 2018).

However, the perception of sex education can be influenced by cultural, religious, and societal attitudes. In some communities, sex education may face resistance due to beliefs that it encourages promiscuity or conflicts with cultural values. Addressing these

concerns requires a culturally sensitive approach that respects community values while emphasizing the health and well-being of young people (Santelli et al., 2017).

Sex education is a vital component of the educational curriculum for secondary school students. It provides essential knowledge about sexual and reproductive health, equipping young people with the skills to protect themselves from HIV, STDs, and unintended pregnancies. Comprehensive sex education fosters positive attitudes and skills, promoting healthy and respectful relationships. It is a lifelong learning process that should evolve with the changing needs of individuals. Despite cultural and societal challenges, the benefits of sex education are well-documented, and its implementation is crucial for the overall well-being of adolescents (UNESCO, 2018; UNFPA, 2018).

### **Knowledge of Secondary school students on Sex Education**

Understanding the level of knowledge secondary school students possess regarding sex education is critical for designing effective educational programs. Research has shown that while the overall awareness of sexual and reproductive health among adolescents is average, significant gaps remain. These gaps highlight the need for comprehensive sex education to equip young people with the information they need to make informed decisions about their sexual health (Kirby, 2007).

Studies indicate that although many secondary school students have some awareness of sexual and reproductive health, their knowledge is often inadequate. This insufficiency is

particularly evident when it comes to specific details about STDs, HIV, contraception, and the consequences of unprotected sex. For instance, a study by UNESCO (2018) found that while students were aware of HIV and STDs, their understanding of how these diseases are transmitted and prevented was limited. This suggests that while basic awareness exists, there is a critical need for more detailed and practical information.

Interestingly, knowledge about sexual health tends to increase with grade level. Older students, who have had more exposure to sex education, typically demonstrate a better understanding of sexual health issues compared to their younger peers (UNFPA, 2018). However, this incremental increase in knowledge is often insufficient, as many students still lack comprehensive understanding even as they approach the end of their secondary education.

There is also a notable gender disparity in the knowledge levels of secondary school students regarding sex education. Research indicates that boys generally have less knowledge about sexual and reproductive health compared to girls. A study by Santelli et al. (2017) found that girls were more likely to be informed about menstruation, contraception, and pregnancy prevention. This disparity may be due to societal norms and expectations that place a greater emphasis on educating girls about these issues, while boys are often left with inadequate information.

To address this disparity, it is essential to ensure that sex education programs are inclusive and provide equal emphasis on educating both boys and girls. Boys need to be equally informed about sexual health to make responsible decisions and support their partners in maintaining healthy sexual practices.

The need for comprehensive sex education is underscored by the numerous benefits it provides. Effective sex education can prevent STDs, HIV, unplanned pregnancies, and sexual offenses by equipping students with the knowledge and skills to engage in safe sexual behaviors (Kirby, 2008). By understanding the risks associated with sexual activity and learning about preventive measures, students are better prepared to protect their health and well-being.

Moreover, sex education helps in shaping positive attitudes and perceptions towards sexual health. Despite the gaps in knowledge, many students have shown a positive attitude towards sex education, recognizing its importance in their lives (Collins, 2018). This positive reception is crucial for the success of sex education programs, as students who value the information are more likely to engage with and apply what they learn.

Parents play a vital role in their children's sexual education. However, research shows that parents are among the least popular sources of information on sexual health topics (UNESCO, 2018). Many parents feel uncomfortable discussing these subjects with their

children or lack the necessary knowledge to provide accurate information. Consequently, there is a significant reliance on teachers and schools to fill this educational gap.

Schools are the primary source of sex education for many students. Teachers are often the most trusted and accessible providers of information on sexual and reproductive health. A study by the International Planned Parenthood Federation (2018) highlights the crucial role that schools play in delivering comprehensive sex education. Teachers can provide structured, scientifically accurate information and create a safe environment for students to ask questions and engage in discussions about sexual health.

To enhance the effectiveness of sex education, it is important for schools to adopt comprehensive curricula that cover a wide range of topics, including anatomy, puberty, contraception, STDs, HIV, consent, and healthy relationships. Additionally, training teachers to deliver sex education confidently and competently is essential. Teachers need to be well-prepared to address students' questions and concerns with sensitivity and accuracy (Fonner et al., 2014).

While schools are crucial in providing sex education, parental involvement is also essential. Parents can reinforce what is taught in schools and provide additional support and guidance. Encouraging open and honest communication between parents and children about sexual health can help dispel myths and provide adolescents with a more comprehensive understanding of the subject.

However, to be effective, parents themselves need to be well-informed. Providing parents with resources and training on how to talk to their children about sex can help bridge the communication gap. Studies suggest that when parents are involved in their children's sex education, it leads to better health outcomes for the adolescents (Kirby, 2008).

Comprehensive sex education has been shown to have a positive impact on students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. A review by Fonner et al. (2014) found that comprehensive programs are associated with delayed initiation of sexual activity, reduced number of sexual partners, and increased use of contraception. These programs not only provide information but also focus on developing skills such as communication, decision-making, and negotiation, which are essential for maintaining sexual health.

Moreover, comprehensive sex education addresses the social and emotional aspects of sexual health. It helps students understand the importance of consent, respect, and healthy relationships. By fostering a positive and respectful attitude towards sex and relationships, sex education contributes to the overall well-being of adolescents (Collins, 2018).

The knowledge of secondary school students on sex education is average but inadequate in many areas. While students generally have a positive attitude towards sex education, there are significant gaps in their knowledge, particularly among boys. Comprehensive

sex education is essential to address these gaps and provide students with the information and skills they need to make informed decisions about their sexual health.

Schools play a crucial role in delivering sex education, with teachers being the primary source of information for many students. However, parental involvement is also important to reinforce what is taught in schools. By providing accurate and comprehensive information, sex education can prevent STDs, HIV, unplanned pregnancies, and sexual offenses, and promote positive attitudes and healthy relationships among adolescents (Kirby, 2008; UNESCO, 2018; Fonner et al., 2014).

### **Education on Safe Sex Practice**

Safe sex is sexual activity using methods or devices to reduce the risk of transmitting or acquiring sexually transmitted infections, especially Human Immunodeficiency Virus. Safe sex is also sometimes referred to as safer sex or protected sex to indicate that some safe sex practices do not eliminate Sexually Transmitted Infection risks. They must also know how to communicate this knowledge frankly and effectively with patients to help them reduce their Human Immunodeficiency Virus risk. Safer sex is not limited to just fewer sexual partners and condom use. Safer sex choices include total abstinence (not likely to be widely accepted), penetrative sex with a condom,

and alternatives to penetrative sex. Human Immunodeficiency Virus is transmitted through body fluids and products, especially blood, semen, and vaginal secretions. Human Immunodeficiency Virus is transmitted through portals of entry (e.g., breaks in the skin). Since the mouth has defenses against Human Immunodeficiency Virus, it is not clear whether bleeding gums are a portal of entry. For example, gonorrhea is easily transmitted via oral sex. Think twice before beginning sexual relations with a new partner. First, discuss past partners, history of Sexually Transmitted Infections, and drug use. Use condoms every time you have sex. Choose a male condom made of latex or polyurethane--not natural materials. Only use polyurethane if you are allergic to latex. Female condoms are made of polyurethane.

Although studies say that nonoxynol-9 spermicide kills Human Immunodeficiency Virus in lab testing, it has not been determined whether spermicides, used alone or with condoms, provide protection against Human Immunodeficiency Virus . There are data that shows nonoxynol-9 may increase the risk of Human Immunodeficiency Virus transmission, however the Center for Disease Control recommends that latex condoms with or without spermicides should be used to help prevent sexual transmission of Human Immunodeficiency Virus. Engaging in oral sex should be avoided. Avoid drinking alcohol or using drugs as this increases the chance that you will participate in high-risk sex. Have regular tests, pelvic examination and periodic tests for Sexually Transmitted Infections.

Be aware of your partner's body. Look for signs of a sore, blister, rash, or discharge. Check your body frequently for signs of a sore, blister, rash, or discharge. Consider sexual activities other than vaginal, oral, or anal sex. These are techniques that do not involve the exchange of body fluids or contact between mucous membranes.

### **Challenges Students Face in Assessing Sex Education**

Challenges faced by students with regard to sex education. One of the problems is lack of resources, including failure to invite professionals such as nurses, who may be in a better position to clarify certain matters than teachers. Another issue is the fact that schools and students do not take this subject seriously. This has negative implications to the programme. It has been reported that some teachers are not comfortable to discuss sexual matters for cultural and religious reasons. Some believe it would make the students indulge in immoral activities. Some participants indicated that it was against their Christian values to discuss sexual matters openly. This issue has also been linked to the resistance by parents and community and is more of a rural problem than among urban-dwellers. It was reported that some parents would go to schools to complain if they found out that their children had been exposed to sexual matters. Some families are against them because of their Christianity. You get a parent the next day asking you why are you teaching this? Most of these challenges had to do with the behaviour of the students. It was reported that students became extremely excited when exposed to sexual matters. When you talk about sex, they do not listen, they all just get excited, they do not

get focused on the main issues the sex topic was talking about. Teachers also revealed that some students were either uncomfortable or shy when sexual matters were discussed in class.

### **Summary of Related Literature Reviewed**

This chapter has reviewed literature related to this study. This chapter carefully reviewed the concept of Sex Education as well as the influence of Sexual Orientation, attitude and safe sex practice towards sex education. Sex Education prevent Students to indulge in pre-marital affairs and having unwanted pregnancies. In the literature review, Sexual Orientation was seen as a program to orientate students the dangers of early Sexual activities. Four types of sex Education can be highlighted from the literature. These are Abstinence centered Education Abstinence plus Education, Comprehensive sex Education and Lesbian, Gay, Transgender and Bisexual Sex Education Sex Education.

Also, the role of Parents having unique position when it comes to sex education because parents are the earliest socialization agents in children's life. The religious views having the Islamic and Christian views regarding the orientation on sexual matters. Adolescent Attitude Towards sex education and knowledge of sex education on adolescent when it was discovered boys had less knowledge about sex than girls. Students were faced with challenges in Assessing sex Education as most parents were not comfortable with the fact that their children are exposed to sexual matters at their age. Sexuality and Sexual Orientation was discussed in this reviewed literature related and

classification of sexual orientation into three parts as Heterosexuality which involves sex activity between two persons of opposite sex gender, Homosexuality involving Sexual activity between two persons of same sex gender and Bisexuality involving romantic or sexual attraction to people of any sex or gender identity. Oral sex Also known as fellatio (peno – oral), Cunnilingus (Oro – Vaginal), and Oro – anal (rimming). Introital Penetration Also known as Vaginal Sex. Digital sex Also known as fingering. Anal sex Fisting this is where the fist is used to penetrate the introitus or the Anus.

Some coitus such as anal sex, fisting and rimming are very dangerous even when done with the right person, variables such as early maturation, substance use, having a history of sexual abuse, and having friends who view illicit sexual behaviors as acceptable are linked to the in appropriate or pre-marital initiation of sexual intercourse. Having educational plans, good grades, high religiosity, family support, and parental supervision and advice are linked to the delay of sexual intercourse

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter describes the research method used in this study, and was discussed under the following sub-headings:

- Research Design
- Population of study
- Sample and Sampling Techniques
- Research instrument
- Validity of the instrument
- Reliability of the instrument
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

#### **Research Design**

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. Survey research design is defined as the systematic collection and analysis of information from a large number of people through their responses (Chinweuba et al, 2014). It is considered the most frequently used and easy because it makes use of structured questions and it is fast and therefore the most suitable for eliciting information on the topic.

## Population of Study

The population of the study consisted of four thousand five hundred and sixty (4560) students from the 14 public senior secondary schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. (Edo State Ministry of Education, Student Enrolment Record, 2023)

| SN  | NAME OF SCHOOL                           | SSI         | SSII        | SSIII      | Total       |
|-----|--|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| 1.  | Asoro Secondary School                   | 97          | 168         | 61         | 271         |
| 2.  | Edo boys high School                     | 87          | 139         | 68         | 294         |
| 3.  | Egor Secondary School                    | 120         | 132         | 65         | 317         |
| 4.  | Eweka Secondary School                   | 118         | 142         | 63         | 323         |
| 5.  | Evbuotubu Secondary School               | 106         | 190         | 60         | 356         |
| 6.  | Evabereke Secondary School               | 105         | 131         | 76         | 412         |
| 7.  | Federal Government Girls College         | 104         | 107         | 59         | 270         |
| 8.  | Government Science and Technical College | 94          | 178         | 78         | 350         |
| 9.  | Iyoba Girls College                      | 101         | 160         | 71         | 332         |
| 10. | Okhokhugbo Senior Secondary School       | 98          | 167         | 78         | 343         |
| 11. | Ohonre Secondary School                  | 93          | 167         | 69         | 329         |
| 12. | Use Senior Secondary School              | 118         | 149         | 69         | 336         |
| 13. | Uselu Secondary School                   | 110         | 140         | 87         | 337         |
| 14. | Uwelu Secondary School                   | 103         | 171         | 61         | 335         |
|     | <b>Total</b>                             | <b>1454</b> | <b>2141</b> | <b>965</b> | <b>4560</b> |

Source: State Universal Education Board

## Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size for this study was 154 students selected using the multi stage sampling technique. The first stage involved arranging the schools in

alphabetical order and the first and every other third school were selected using the systematic sampling technique, this gave a total of five schools .

In the next stage, proportionate sampling technique was used to pick 50% of the students in each of the schools selected. Finally, simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents for the study.

### **Research Instrument**

The instrument that was used for data collection in this study was a structured questionnaire titled Perception and Effectiveness of Sex Education among Secondary School Students Questionnaire (PESESSQ), The questionnaire contains two sections. Section A identify the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents in the study; section B contain Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Disagreed and Strongly Disagreed questions on the first and last part while the second part contained dichotomous question of Yes or No on the perception and effectiveness of sex education among secondary school students in Egor local government area.

### **Validity of the Instrument**

The instrument was submitted to the project supervisor and two other experts in health education for face and content validation of the questionnaire. Their observations,

modifications and suggestions were effected in the implementation of the final copies of the questionnaire.

### **Reliability of the Instrument**

The test re-test method was used to test the reliability of the instrument. To ensure the reliability of the instrument; the questionnaire was administered to 20 secondary school students in Egor Local government area who were not captured in the sample of the study to elicit information to test for reliability of the instrument, the same instrument was administered to the same students after two-week interval. The result from the test was analyzed using Pearson Product moment correlation coefficient to obtain a coefficient value of 0.76 which was considered to be adequate to ensure reliability of the instrument

### **Method of Data Collection**

Copies of the questionnaires were administered and collected by the researcher and two other assistants. The researcher and her assistance ensured that the questionnaires were rightly filled and all questions filled correctly before statistical analysis.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed using frequency counts, mean, standard deviation and simple percentages for the research questions raised.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents the results from the analysis and discusses the findings from the results.

#### **Research Question 1: What is the perception of secondary school students on the teaching of sex education?**

**Table 1: Perception of Secondary School Students on the Teaching of Sex Education**

| S/N                 | Item  | SA            | A             | D             | SD            | Mean       | Remark      |
|---------------------|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------|-------------|
| 1                   | The teaching of sex education in schools is important for students' overall well-being  | 70<br>(44.07) | 40<br>(32.20) | 12<br>(15.25) | 8<br>(8.47)   | 4.07       | Agreed      |
| 2.                  | Sex education should be included as a mandatory subject in the secondary school curriculum                                    | 30<br>(30.51) | 60<br>(36.44) | 28<br>(16.95) | 12<br>(16.10) | 3.74       | Agreed      |
| 3.                  | I feel comfortable discussing topics related to sex education in the classroom.   | 30<br>(35.59) | 60<br>(43.22) | 13<br>(9.32)  | 29<br>(11.86) | 3.97       | Agreed      |
| 4.                  | Sex education in schools helps students make informed decisions about their sexual health.                                    | 20<br>(29.66) | 60<br>(41.53) | 20<br>(13.56) | 30<br>(15.25) | 3.77       | Agreed      |
| 5                   | The teaching of sex education should cover topics such as consent, contraception, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). | 70<br>(44.07) | 40<br>(32.20) | 12<br>(15.25) | 8<br>(8.47)   | 4.07       | Agreed      |
| <b>Cluster Mean</b> |   |               |               |               |               | <b>3.9</b> | <b>High</b> |

Source: Field Survey, 2024

**Criteria Mean = 2.5**

Based on table 2, the mean of 4.07 indicates that teaching sex education in schools is important for students, the mean of 3.74 indicates that sex education should be included as a mandatory subject, the mean of 3.97 indicates that respondents feel comfortable discussing topic related to sex education, the mean of 3.77 indicates that sex education in

schools helps students make informed decisions and the mean of 4.07 indicates that teaching of sex education should cover topics such as contraception and STI. The cluster mean across all items is 3.9, indicating a high perception of sex education among secondary school students. This average score suggests that students view sex education as a crucial and beneficial part of their curriculum, which contributes positively to their well-being and decision-making abilities regarding sexual health.

**Research Question 2: Are secondary school students in Egor local government area aware of the benefits of sex education?**

**Table 2: Students Awareness of Sex Education**

| S/N                 | Item   | Yes            | No            | Mean       | Remark      |
|---------------------|--|----------------|---------------|------------|-------------|
| 6                   | Sex education helps adolescents make informed decisions about their sexual health.                         | 110<br>(84.6%) | 20<br>(15.4%) | 2.5        | Agreed      |
| 7                   | Being aware of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and their prevention is important for teenagers.     | 120<br>(92.3%) | 10<br>(7.7%)  | 2.6        | Agreed      |
| 8                   | Sex education can reduce teenage pregnancies.  | 90<br>(69.2%)  | 40<br>(30.8%) | 2.3        | Agreed      |
| 9.                  | Understanding boundaries in relationships is a crucial aspect of sex education.                            | 120<br>(92.3%) | 10<br>(7.7%)  | 2.6        | Agreed      |
| 10                  | Access to accurate information about reproductive health empowers adolescents to make responsible choices. | 100<br>(76.9%) | 30<br>(23.1%) | 2.4        | Agreed      |
| <b>Cluster Mean</b> |  |                |               | <b>2.5</b> | <b>High</b> |

**Source: Field Survey, 2024**

**Criteria mean=1.5**

Based on table 2, the mean of 2.5 indicates that sex education help adolescents make informed decisions about their sexual health. The mean of 2.6 indicates that sex education can reduce teenage pregnancies, the mean of 2.3 indicates that undastanding

boundries in relationships is a crucial aspect of sex education. The mean of 2.4 indicates that access to accurate information about reproductive health empowers adolescents to make responsible choices. The cluster mean of 2.5 indicates strongly that students have high level of awareness of the benefits of sex education.

**Research Question 3: What is the level of effectiveness of sex education on secondary school?**

**Table 3: Level of Effectiveness of Sex Education**

| S/N                 | Item  | SA            | A             | D             | SD           | Mean (x)    | Remark      |
|---------------------|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| 11                  | The sex education curriculum in secondary schools adequately covers relevant topics related to sexual health.                                 | 29<br>(35.59) | 76<br>(40.68) | 10<br>(8.00)  | 15<br>(8.47) | 3.89        | Agreed      |
| 12                  | Sex education programs in secondary schools effectively address issues relating to contraception, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). | 25<br>(34.75) | 75<br>(38.14) | 20<br>(12.71) | 10<br>(8.47) | 3.87        | Agreed      |
| 13.                 | The teaching methods used in sex education classes engage students and encourage open discussion about sensitive topics.                      | 90<br>(44.07) | 20<br>(34.75) | 12<br>(11.02) | 8<br>(5.93)  | 4.08        | Agreed      |
| 14                  | Sex education in secondary schools provides students with accurate and up-to-date information about reproductive health.                      | 20<br>(29.66) | 70<br>(43.22) | 25<br>(12.71) | 5<br>(8.47)  | 3.82        | Agreed      |
| 15                  | Students feel comfortable discussing sexual health topics with their teachers or other trusted adults as a result of sex education classes.   | 29<br>(35.59) | 76<br>(40.68) | 10<br>(8.00)  | 15<br>(8.47) | 3.89        | Agreed      |
| <b>Cluster Mean</b> |   |               |               |               |              | <b>3.91</b> | <b>High</b> |

**Source: Field Survey, 2024**

Based on table 3, the cluster mean of 3.89 indicates that sex education curriculum in secondary schools adequately covers relevant topic related to sexual health, the mean of 3.87 indicates that the sex education programs in secondary schools effectively address

issues relating to contraception, and sexually transmitted infections, the mean of 4.08 indicates that sex education in secondary schools provides students with accurate and up to date information about reproductive health. The mean of 3.89 indicates that students felt comfortable discussing sexual health topics with their teachers or other trusted adults. The cluster mean across all items is 3.91, indicating a high level of effectiveness of sex education in secondary schools. This average score suggests that students perceive sex education as being effective in covering relevant topics, addressing important issues, engaging students, providing accurate information, and creating a comfortable environment for discussions.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The study found that secondary school students hold a high perception of the teaching of sex education, as evidenced by a cluster mean of 3.9. Students agreed that sex education is crucial for their overall well-being, should be included as a mandatory subject, and helps them make informed decisions about their sexual health. Additionally, students felt comfortable discussing sex education topics in the classroom and supported the inclusion of topics such as consent, contraception, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

These findings are consistent with the work of Kirby (2002), who found that comprehensive sex education programs are perceived positively by students. Kirby emphasized that such programs are effective because they provide essential knowledge and skills that help students make informed decisions about their sexual health.

According to Kirby, comprehensive sex education includes information about human development, relationships, decision-making, abstinence, contraception, and disease prevention. This holistic approach ensures that students are well-equipped to navigate the complexities of sexual health.

Similarly, a study by UNESCO (2009) reported that students appreciated the inclusion of sex education in the curriculum, recognizing its role in promoting sexual health and well-being. UNESCO highlighted that comprehensive sex education helps reduce sexual risk behaviors, delays the initiation of sexual activity, and increases the use of condoms and other contraceptive methods. This global perspective reinforces the importance of including sex education in school curricula to ensure students receive accurate and relevant information that can protect their health.

The findings indicated that students in Egor Local Government Area are well aware of the benefits of sex education, with a cluster mean of 2.5. Students acknowledged that sex education helps in making informed decisions about sexual health, understanding the importance of STI awareness and prevention, reducing teenage pregnancies, understanding boundaries in relationships, and empowering them with accurate information about reproductive health.

This high level of awareness aligns with the findings of Santelli et al. (2006), who reported that students who receive comprehensive sex education are more likely to

understand the benefits and importance of sexual health education. Santelli's research found that such education is associated with positive outcomes, including delayed sexual initiation, reduced number of sexual partners, and increased use of contraception. The study emphasized that comprehensive sex education provides young people with the knowledge and skills necessary to make healthy decisions.

Moreover, the study by Kohler, Manhart, and Lafferty (2008) found that students who are aware of the benefits of sex education are more likely to practice safe sex and exhibit lower rates of unintended pregnancies and STIs. Their research highlighted that comprehensive sex education leads to improved sexual health outcomes by encouraging responsible behavior and providing accurate information about contraception and disease prevention.

The study concluded that sex education is perceived as highly effective among secondary school students, with a cluster mean of 3.91. Students agreed that the sex education curriculum adequately covers relevant topics, effectively addresses issues related to contraception and STIs, engages students through effective teaching methods, provides accurate and up-to-date information, and creates a comfortable environment for discussing sexual health topics.

These findings support the research of Lindberg and Maddow-Zimet (2012), who found that effective sex education programs are those that engage students, cover

comprehensive topics, and provide accurate information. Their study concluded that programs that are interactive and encourage open discussions are more effective in achieving positive sexual health outcomes. This aligns with the current study's finding that students feel comfortable discussing sex education topics in the classroom.

The study by Kirby, Laris, and Roller (2007) also highlighted that sex education programs that are interactive and encourage open discussions are more effective in achieving positive sexual health outcomes. Their research identified key characteristics of effective programs, including a focus on clear health goals, addressing values and group norms, providing accurate information, and including activities that help students personalize information. This approach helps students internalize the information and apply it to their own lives, leading to better health outcomes.

Bearinger et al. (2007) found that adolescent health programs, including sex education, are most effective when they address the unique needs of adolescents and are culturally relevant. Their research emphasized the importance of comprehensive approaches that include both information and skill-building components. This aligns with the current study's findings that students appreciate a comprehensive curriculum that covers a wide range of topics related to sexual health.

Kantor and Levitz (2017) highlighted the role of policy in shaping sex education programs. Their research suggested that supportive policies at the state and local levels

can enhance the effectiveness of sex education by ensuring that programs are comprehensive, medically accurate, and inclusive. This reinforces the importance of advocating for policies that support comprehensive sex education to ensure all students have access to high-quality programs.

Martinez-Prather and Vandiver (2014) focused on the implementation of sex education in schools and found that teacher training and support are critical for the success of sex education programs. Their study argued that well-trained teachers are more confident and effective in delivering sex education content. This is consistent with the current study's finding that effective teaching methods are crucial for engaging students and providing accurate information.

Schalet et al. (2014) discussed the importance of addressing socio-emotional aspects of sexual health education. Their research suggested that sex education programs should not only provide information but also support the development of healthy relationships and emotional well-being. This holistic approach is reflected in the current study's findings that students support the inclusion of topics such as consent and boundaries in relationships, which are crucial for their overall well-being.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

This study assessed perception and effectiveness of sex education among secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consists of four thousand five hundred and sixty SSI to SSIII students in the Senior Secondary Schools in Egor Local Government Area. The multistage sampling technique was employed to select 154 students from 5 schools in Egor Local Government Area. The research instrument used in the study was a four point likert scale and dichotomous questionnaire developed by the researcher, the instrument was validated by the researchers supervisor, the reliability of the instrument was determined by test re-test method and the reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained. The questionnaire was administered and retrieved by the researcher, out of the 154 administered questionnaire only 130 were valid and complete for the analysis, the data collected was collated and analyzed using descriptive statistics.

The findings of the study were as follow;

- There is a high perception of sex education among secondary school students
- Students have high level of awareness of the benefits of sex education.
- There is a high level of effectiveness of sex education in secondary schools

## **Conclusion**

The study evaluated the perception and effectiveness of sex education among secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area. Utilizing a descriptive survey research design, the findings revealed a high perception and awareness of sex education among students, as well as its effectiveness in secondary schools. The high reliability and validity of the research instrument ensured the accuracy of these findings, emphasizing the significant role of sex education in promoting students' understanding and responsible behavior regarding sexual health.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Schools should continue to integrate comprehensive sex education into their curricula, ensuring that it covers all necessary topics to further enhance students' understanding and awareness.
2. Regular training and workshops for teachers on delivering sex education effectively should be conducted, focusing on up-to-date information and teaching methodologies.

3. Parents should be encouraged to participate in sex education programs and discussions to reinforce the information provided at school and to create a supportive environment at home.

### **Suggestions for Further Study**

To build on the findings of this study, further research could explore:

1. A longitudinal study to assess the long-term impact of sex education on students' behavior and attitudes towards sexual health.
2. A comparative study between different regions or countries to understand the effectiveness of various sex education approaches.
3. Research on the perceptions of teachers and parents regarding sex education and how their attitudes influence the effectiveness of the programs.

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**APPENDIX**  
**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY**  
**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**ON**  
**PERCEPTION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF SEX EDUCATION AMONG**  
**SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EGOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA**

**Dear Respondents**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to elicit information on the above-mentioned topic. Your cooperation in providing honest and sincere response to all the questions will be appreciated as they will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thanks for your co-operation

Instruction, please tick (appropriately in the boxes provided

**SECTION A**

**Demographic Data**

Gender : Male ( ), Female ( )

Age: 12-15 ( ) 16 -19 ( ) 20-23( ) 24 and above ( )

**Section B**

**Instruction: Please tick [√] the most appropriate option for each item.**

**Key: SA – Strongly Agree, A – Agree, D – Disagree, SD – Strongly disagree**

| S/N        | ITEM  | SA | A | D | SD |
|------------|---|----|---|---|----|
| <b>RQ1</b> | <b>What is the perception of secondary school students on the teaching of sex education?</b>                                  |    |   |   |    |
| <b>1</b>   | The teaching of sex education in schools is important for students' overall well-being  |    |   |   |    |
| <b>2</b>   | Sex education should be included as a mandatory subject in the secondary school curriculum                                    |    |   |   |    |
| <b>3</b>   | I feel comfortable discussing topics related to sex education in the classroom.   |    |   |   |    |
| <b>4</b>   | Sex education in schools helps students make informed decisions about their sexual health.                                    |    |   |   |    |
| <b>5</b>   | The teaching of sex education should cover topics such as consent, contraception, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). |    |   |   |    |

| <b>RQ2</b> | <b>Are secondary school students in Egor local government area aware of the benefits of sex education?</b> | <b>Yes</b> | <b>NO</b> |
|------------|--|------------|-----------|
| <b>6</b>   | Sex education helps adolescents make informed decisions about their sexual health.                         |            |           |
| <b>7</b>   | Being aware of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and their prevention is important for teenagers.     |            |           |
| <b>8</b>   | Sex education can reduce teenage pregnancies.  |            |           |
| <b>9</b>   | Understanding boundaries in relationships is a crucial aspect of sex education.                            |            |           |
| <b>10</b>  | Access to accurate information about reproductive health empowers adolescents to make responsible choices. |            |           |

| <b>Q3</b> | <b>What is the level of effectiveness of sex education on secondary school?</b>   | <b>SA</b> | <b>A</b> | <b>D</b> | <b>SD</b> |
|-----------|---|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| <b>11</b> | The sex education curriculum in secondary schools adequately covers relevant topics related to sexual health.                                 |           |          |          |           |
| <b>12</b> | Sex education programs in secondary schools effectively address issues relating to contraception, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). |           |          |          |           |
| <b>13</b> | The teaching methods used in sex education classes engage students and encourage open discussion about sensitive topics.                      |           |          |          |           |
| <b>14</b> | Sex education in secondary schools provides students with accurate and up-to-date information about reproductive health.                      |           |          |          |           |
| <b>15</b> | Students feel comfortable discussing sexual health topics with their teachers or other trusted adults as a result of sex education classes.   |           |          |          |           |