

Impact of HIV/AIDS Education Programmes on Sexual Behaviour of Female Students in Nigerian Schools: Policy Implications for Scientific and Technological Development

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of HIV/AIDS education programmes on sexual behaviors of female students in senior secondary schools in Rivers State of Nigeria. The population for the study comprised of all senior secondary schools female students in Nigeria, which was divided into urban and rural schools. The sample size was 200 female students obtained by using stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a 10-items structured questionnaire titled "Rating Scale for Impact of School HIV/AIDS Programmes on female students sexual behaviors (IHIV/AIDSFSB) which has a 4-point likert type response format. The face and content validity was established by the researcher and two experts in health education. Using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient the research instrument had a reliability coefficient of 0.81. Two research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. Mean and standard deviations were used to answer and analyze the research questions while the hypothesis was tested at 0.05 alpha level using Z-tests statistical analysis. The only Null research hypothesis was accepted. The study found that the school based HIV/AIDS programmes are not adequately implemented in the urban and rural schools and the sexual behaviours of the female students have not positively changed to any significant degree.

Keywords: HIV/AIDS education, sexual behaviour, scientific and technological development.

Introduction

"Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world," and is a basic instrument for eradicating poverty, constructing citizenship and improving people's ability to control their own future." (Global Campaign for Education (GCE) 2004). The importance of education in the socioeconomic development of Nigeria is recognized by the Federal Government of Nigeria when she stated the objectives for establishing the universal Basic Education (UBE) programme as "provision of education at the primary and junior secondary schools shall be free to every child of school age". (FME, 2001). Education plays a pivotal role in shaping the lives of children and young adults. However, schools can be breeding grounds for potentially damaging behaviours that remain with pupils into adulthood. Conversely schools can prove effective in helping young people learn positive and healthy models of behaviour by challenging the harmful gender norms that limit academic achievement and increase the likelihood of HIV infection. There is a general consensus on the actual and likely impacts of HIV/AIDS epidemic on the education sector. Global Campaign for Education (GCE), (2004) reported that around 700,000 annual case of HIV in young adults could be prevented if all children received a complete primary education and that the economic impact of HIV/AIDS could be greatly reduced. Also Onyido (2010) observed that women face various forms of discriminations because they lag behind in education. Consequently, it is difficult for them to

mobilize themselves to confront all the gender related discriminations against them in all facets of life. According to Education for All (EFA) Global monitoring report (2010) Kelly (2006); HIV/AIDS is a systemic problem for the education sector and hence requires a systemic response. The epidemic affects the supply and demand for primary and secondary schooling especially in countries where there is a high prevalence of HIV, Teachers deaths due to AIDS-related illness are expected to increase rapidly over the next 10 to 15 years. HIV and AIDS are significant obstacles to children achieving universal access to primary education by 2015, with a decline in school enrolment as one of the most visible effects of the epidemic. (UNICEF, 2005). Hence, different strategies and programmes have been implemented in the education sector by international organizations and individual countries to curb the spread of HIV, although not all of these have been systematically documented in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

It is obvious that Africa, indeed the world is enveloped in a full HIV/AIDS pandemic. HIV prevalence rates in Africa sub-regions remain by a staggering distance the most advanced in the world. According to epidemiological fact sheets on HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections of UNAIDS (2004);

“The HIV prevalence rate in sub-Saharan Africa is over six times the global estimate. Botswana and Swaziland are plagued by national HIV prevalence rates in excess of 35%. Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe all have epidemics with over 20% prevalence rates, while Zambia, Mozambique and Malawi have prevalence rates over 10%.

According to reports of National Committee on AIDS (NACA), over 40 million people in the world are living with HIV/AIDS and one in every twelve of these lives in Nigeria. The potential social and economic consequences of HIV/AIDS in Nigeria are enormous. While HIV prevalence rates in the sub-Saharan region is reaching unprecedented levels, the building and retaining of a pressure group of social capital and a critical mass is imperative. The generational impact of the epidemic offers a critical void for tertiary education institutions to fill by providing an intelligent and coordinated response to stem the tide of the epidemic through research, innovation and “thinking faster than the epidemic”. Therefore, the problem of this study is to determine the impact of HIV/AIDS Education Programmes on the Sexual behaviours of female students in senior secondary schools in Nigeria and its implications for science and technological development in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out to what extent the many government and Non-governmental school based HIV/AIDS programmes have positively affected the sexual behaviours of female students in senior secondary schools in Nigeria. Specifically, the objective of this study is:

- 1) What school-based HIV/AIDS programmes are on-going in Senior Secondary Schools in Nigeria
- 2) Has these programmes impacted positively on the sexual behaviours of the female students?

Research Questions

From the objectives of this study, the following research questions are developed.

- 1) What school-based HIV/AIDS programmes are on-going in senior secondary schools in Nigeria?
- 2) To what extent has school-based HIV/AIDS programmes affected the sexual behaviour of female students in senior secondary schools in Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

From the research questions developed, one Null hypothesis was formulated to guide this study.

- 1) H_0 : there is no significant impact of school-based HIV/AIDS programmes on female students sexual behaviour.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is the survey research design. The population of this study comprises all female students in senior secondary schools in Nigeria. The sample for this study was obtained using purposive sampling technique to choose Rivers State only because Rivers State is one of the Niger Delta States of Nigeria with a high number of multi National Oil Corporation, large number of emigrants and a high incidence of HIV rate. Then the female students were stratified into urban and rural according to their school location. From each stratum 100 female students were sampled to give a total sample size of 200 female students.

The instrument used to collect data for this study was a 10-item structured. Questionnaire developed by the researchers and named "Rating Scale for Impact of School HIV/AIDS programmes on female students sexual behaviour". (IHIV/AIDSFSB) the questionnaire consists of ten questions structured along the 4-point likert-type rating scale as follows: Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4 points, Agreed (A) = 3 points, Disagreed (D) = 2 points and strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1 point. The questionnaire was assessed by three lecturers, one lecturer in health education and two lecturers in measurement and evaluation for face and content validity the final version of the instrument after validation was used for this study.

The reliability of this research instrument was determined using Pearson product moment correlation method with a different sample group not involved in this research. A reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained. The instrument for data collection was administered by the researchers to the sampled female students and the questionnaires retrieved immediately after completion.

Data Analysis

Data generated from this study was analyzed using mean, standard deviation and z-test. A standard reference mean of 2.50 was adopted for the purpose of decision making on the variables associated with the research questions. The Null hypothesis was tested using z-test at 5% level of significance where the corresponding degree of freedom is at infinity i.e. for sample size greater than 30.

Results and Discussion

The results obtained from testing the research questions and hypothesis reveals the following:

Research Question One (RQ1)

What school-based HIV/AIDS programmes are on-going in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean rating of school based HIV/AIDS programme.

Statements	Urban		Rural			Std. dev.
	N	Mean	Std. dev.	N	Mean	
1. Anti-HIV/AIDS clubs exist in our school curriculum.	100	2.45	0.67	100	2.11	0.57
2. HIV/AIDS lessons are part of our school curriculum	100	2.35	0.68	100	2.26	0.57
3. HIV/AIDS lectures by Non-governmental organizations (NGO) hold regularly in our school	100	2.35	0.68	100	2.10	0.65
4. Govt. Sponsored HIV/AIDS lectures hold regularly in our school	100	2.27	0.66	100	2.07	0.52
5. School-Guidance-counselors hold HIV/AIDS talks regularly.	100	2.44	0.67	100	2.34	0.68

Standard reference mean = 2.50

Research Question Two (RQ2)

To what extent has school based HIV/AIDS programmes affected the sexual behaviour of female students. In Rivers State.

Table 2: Mean Ratings of Sexual behaviour of Female Students

Statements	Urban		Rural			Std. dev.
	N	Mean	Std. dev.	N	Mean	
6. Many female students have decided to delay sex until marriage	100	2.44	0.67	100	2.10	0.56
7. Many female students now insist on their male sex partners using condom.	100	2.44	0.79	100	2.34	0.65
8. Female students have now reduced the urge to have multiple male sex partners.	100	2.37	0.68	100	2.65	0.78
9. Female students now willingly go for HIV test.	100	3.73	0.75	100	2.60	0.81
10. Female students do not allow themselves pressured into having unprotected sex by their male counterparts.	100	2.67	0.88	100	3.26	0.89

Hypothesis Testing

H_0 : There is no significant impact of school HIV/AIDS programmes on the female students sexual behaviour in Rivers State.

Table 3: Z-test on the mean responses of Urban and Rural Female Students on the impact of school HIV/AIDS programmes on their sexual behaviour.

	N	Mean	SD	Z-Value	DF	Z critical	decision
Urban	100	11.30	3.08				
Rural	100	11.13	3.11	0.48	198	1.96	H_0 Accepted

This study made the following findings from the results of the analysis of the data collected through the use of mean, standard deviation and z – test.

1. Urban schools appear to have more on-going school-based HIV/AIDS programmes. In Table 1I, the mean rating for the existence of Anti-HIV/AIDS clubs in urban school is 2.45 while for rural school is 2.11. The mean rating for HIV/AIDS lesson as part of the school curriculum is 2.35 for urban schools and 2.26 for Rural schools. In urban schools, HIV/AIDS lectures by NGOs has a mean rating of 2.86 and 2.10 for rural schools. This means that urban schools attract more attention form NGOs than rural schools.
2. On what extent school HIV/AIDS programmes has affected the sexual behaviours of female students? Female students in urban schools seem to be more conscious of HIV/AIDS infection and appear to modify their sexual behaviour towards avoiding HIV infection. In the urban schools, mean rating for female students deciding to delay sex until marriage is 2.44 and 2.10 for rural female students. Also, the mean rating for female students insisting on their male partners using condoms is 2.65 which is quite a positive development while for rural schools is 2.34. it is also interesting to observe that in urban schools, the mean rating for female students urge to have multiple sex partners is 2.37 while for rural schools is 2.65. Why this positive development in the rural areas? Is it because of environment, upbringing, culture etc? Also it is found that the mean rating for female students willing to go for HIV test is 3.73 for urban schools and 2.60 for rural schools. This is also a positive development perhaps due to the various school based HIV enlightenment campaigns. Finally it was found that female students in urban schools mean rating for resisting the pressure for unprotected sex is 2.67 and 3.26 for rural schools.
3. On the Z – statistic testing of the hypothesis that there is no significant impact of school HIV/AIDS programmes on the female students sexual behaviour, Table 3 shows the urban female students rating of 11.30 with a standard deviation of 3.08 and the rural female students rating of 11.13 and standard deviation of 3.11. the Z – value calculated is 0.48 and Z – critical is 1.96. Therefore the Null hypothesis is accepted because $Z_{cal} < Z_{critical}$. From the findings above, it is not surprising why Ransome – Kuti (2000) maintains that AIDS in Africa is the greatest social and human catastrophe in history. And its grave implications on economic and political stability are already evident. According to WHO (2007) statistics on regional HIV and AIDS shows that sub-Saharan Africa has 20.5 – 23.6 million Adults and children living with HIV. Based on the above information, we conclude that:
 1. In the urban – schools in Rivers State HIV/AIDS lectures by NGOs hold frequently than in rural schools.
 2. Anti - HIV/AIDS clubs exist in urban schools than in rural schools.
 3. Rural schools are neglected in school–based HIV/AIDS programmes.
 4. There is no statistically significant influence of school-based HIV/IDS programmes on female students sexual behaviour in senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Implications for scientific and technological development in Nigeria

The Federal Government of Nigeria, since post independence has recognized the importance of science and technology in the development of Nigeria. This made her to articulate an educational policy in 1981 titled the National policy on education, revised 2004, to guide education, specifically science and technology education in Nigeria. In the Section 4 of this policy document, it is stated among others that, secondary school education is expected to be a preparation for.

1. Higher education, and equip students to live effectively in our modern age of science and technology. Now with the HIV/AIDS scourge in the sub-Saharan Africa, the possibility of Nigeria transforming itself into a scientific and technological giant is yet to be seen.

How can Nigeria raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, when in our secondary schools, female students still engage in unprotected sex, and have multiple sex partners with a high incidence of HIV infection?

How can Nigeria produce a generation of students equipped to live effectively in this age of science and technology, when HIV/AIDS programmes and campaign is not carried out and sustained in our secondary schools. United Nation's Organization stated that HIV/AIDS have the widest-ranging impact on education in Africa with an estimated 33 million people living with the pandemic in 2007.

Therefore, for Nigeria to achieve her millennium development goal and position herself for scientific and technological development, sustained school based HIV/AIDS programmes and campaign must be carried to its peak in Nigerian schools.

Based on the above conclusions, the following recommendations are made.

1. The Federal Ministry of Education staff in-charge of HIV/AIDS should intensify their school-based programmes campaign to every nook and cranny of Nigeria.
2. Non Governmental Organization (NGO) should expand their school HIV/AIDS programmes to the rural schools in Nigeria.
3. All senior secondary schools heads should as a matter of urgency introduce anti- HIV/AIDS clubs and school Guidance- counseling unit to commence HIV/AIDS talks in their school.
4. All senior secondary schools heads should ensure that all students passing through SS1-SS3 take HIV/AIDS lessons as part of the school curriculum.

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