DETERMINANTS OF INTERNET-BASED RESOURCES FOR SEX EDUCATION AMONG IN-SCHOOL AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN KOGI STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study determined and compared the prevalence of use of internet for sex education among in-school and out-of-school adolescents. It determined and compared the topics of interest on sex education, assessed and compared the determinants of internet use for sex education between in-school and out-of-school adolescents in Okene, Kogi State. These were with a view to providing information on internet-based resources for sex education among adolescents.

The study employed a comparative cross-sectional design. This study was carried out among 600 adolescents (300 in-school and 300 out-of-school adolescents) aged 10-19 years in Okene Local Government Area (LGA) Kogi State. Multistage sampling technique was used in selecting the respondents. A pretested semi structured interviewer administered questionnaire was used to collect information from the respondents. The data were analysed using SPSS version 20. The data were subjected to univariate, bivariate and multivariate analyses. The level of significance for the study was set at p-value < 0.05.

The mean age for in-school adolescents was 14.52± 2.17 years, while the mean age for out-of-school adolescents was 17.19± 1.54 years. Forty-one percent of the in-school adolescents and 59.2% of the out-of-school adolescents used the internet for sex education. Among respondents who use internet, there was significant association between schooling status (in-school or out-of-school) and some sex education topics such as; pregnancy and childbirth (p= 0.024), Sexual activities (p=0.004), relationships and social issues (p=0.015), sexual identity (p=0.051), sex abuse (p=0.006), sexual pleasure (p=0.033), teen sexuality and virginity (p=0.004) and reproductive health foods and nutrition (p=0.001). The most searched sex education topic among in-school adolescents was sexual activities (73.5%) while sexual abuse (75.8%) was the most...
searched sex education topic among out-of-school adolescents. The factors associated with the respondents use of internet-based resources for sex education were age, religious strictness of parents, period of internet use, usefulness of online information, curiosity, anonymity, privacy, fear of STIs, religiosity at home, persuasion/embarrassment from friends, information on radio, information from tv, unavailability of information from patents/relatives, less information from teachers, easy access to internet, concern for personal health, personal experience of adolescents and experience of others (all with p< 0.05). The determinants of use of internet-based resources for sex education among the out-of-school adolescents were curiosity (OR= 29.202, p= 0.000), religiosity (OR= 4.602, p= 0.043) and less information from teachers (OR= 18.378, p= 0.007) while age (OR= 2.546, p= 0.005), curiosity (OR= 51.129, p= 0.000), religiosity (OR=24.772, p=0.003) and less information from teachers (OR= 19.521, p= 0.007) were the determinants of use of internet for sex education among the in-school adolescents with age as the distinguishing determinant.

This study concluded that internet use for sex education was prevalent while sex education topics of interest and the determinants of internet use vary among in-school and out-of-school adolescents.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The Internet is the largest computer network in the world, connecting more than a billion computer users. The internet is self-publishing and often used for communication, buying and selling (e-commerce) and searching for information (Indian Hills Community College, n.d.). The internet is also defined as a global communication medium, a tool for disseminating information and a platform for cooperation and communication among people and their devices, regardless of their geographical location (Leiner et al., 1999). The internet is also referred to as ‘The Net or The Web’. Young individuals are well known nowadays for their quick and ardent incorporation of the internet and its related portable devices like tablets and smart phones (S. Jones & Fox, 2009; Lenhart et al, 2010; Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010). Unlike their parents who do not have a firm grasp on the use of the internet, adolescents recognize the internet as part of their daily life and because of its dynamic capacity, the internet has a more up to date information compared to books (Arulogun, Ogbu, & Dipeolu, 2016).

Sex education (SE) is sometimes referred to as Sexuality Education or Sexual Health Education or Sexual and Reproductive Health Education (SRH). It is a sex-centred instructional measure. It can be described as a collection of guidelines on different elements of sex and reproduction be it in psychology, physiology, or sociology (Jeanette De La Mare, 2011). It illuminates individuals on sexual orientation, values of intimacy, decision making, dating, friendships, sexually transmitted diseases, its control and other related aspects (Jeanette De La Mare, 2011) which can help in preventing exploitation, abuse, unplanned sex, unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, HIV/AIDS (Seifu, Fantahun, & Worku, 2006).
Adolescents are young individuals between of ages 10-19 years who are transitioning from children into adults. They are at a stage of life where they develop or undergo physiological, psychological, social, cognitive and economical changes (Agbede, Kio, & Ajetunmobi, 2016; Aji et al., 2013; Esere, 2008; Onongha, 2016). This development occurs during puberty and lasts till they attain adulthood. Physiological development precedes psychological development (Isiugo-abanihe, Olajide, Nwokocha, Fayehun, & Akingbade, 2015). Increase in sexual urge, changes in emotional responses and thoughts are the major characteristics of this stage of development which makes them curious, exploratory and a vulnerable group of people (Agbede et al., 2016; Isiugo-abanihe et al., 2015). This is the stage where they begin to form their adult identity and if not checked, can lead to issues with sexual and reproductive health in adulthood (Isiugo-abanihe et al., 2015).

Adolescents need adequate guidance and information resources to steer through this essential phase of their physical, emotional and mental growth in order to imbibe good sexual habits and ideas. (Sharmila, 2015). Many schools do not have guidance and counseling units where students can go to obtain information on sex related matters. Teachers and parents also are not comfortable discussing sex, sexuality and sexual health openly leaving adolescent students with inadequate information on sexuality (Ewenike & Nworgu, 2013; Mturi, 2003; Simon & Daneback, 2013). This has caused adolescents to look for answers on their own, turning to peers, media, internet and other sources with questionable quality or accuracy of information and this situation increases the chances of adolescents indulging in risky sexual behaviours and experimentations (Esere, 2008).

Studies have observed that adolescents regularly seek sexual health information online. A study conducted by the Kaiser family foundation on U.S. adolescents found that 39% of the youngsters
obtained data about birth control and protection from the net (Kaiser & Foundation, 2004). Buhi, Daley, Fuhrmann, and Smith (2010) discovered that a high proportion (76.5%) of 1st-year university students had searched online for sexual health information. Other studies done in Nigeria, Uganda and Ghana reported similar results to the ones done in the United States. Ybarra, M. L., Kiwanuka, J., Emenyonu, N. and Bangsberg (2006) collected data from a sample of all African teenage students in Uganda, reported that 35% of them had checked for HIV/AIDS facts on the web, whilst 20% had checked for conventional sexual health facts on the web. About 34.3% of teenagers in Ghana, were found to have sourced for sexual health information online (Borzekowski, Fobil, & Asante, 2006). In Nigeria, Nwagwu (2007) observed that 45% of female adolescents (in-school and out-of-school) in Imo state, used the internet to obtain information on reproductive health.

Determinants of use of internet for sex education are factors or elements that are associated with the use of internet for sex education. These factors include curiosity, embarrassment from peers, interactions on the net, different opinions presented on the internet, the urge to know if their behaviour is normal compared to their peers and the society, privacy and freedom the internet guarantees, fear of the future, relevant information on the internet and the ease of using the internet (Borzekowski et al., 2006; Ojih, Agara, & Onoja, 2016; Simon & Daneback, 2013).

Available evidence indicates that the internet could become an alternate provider of health information (Borzekowski et al., 2006; Nwagwu, 2007). The anonymity experienced online has also made the internet a distinct and more accepted platform to seek advice on delicate issues, especially those of sexual and reproductive health (Poorisat & Chib, 2014). The low-price and