



THE USE OF INTERNET IN SEX EDUCATION AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY IN UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated use of internet in sex education among undergraduate students: a case study in university of Port Harcourt. A sample of 300 undergraduate students was used for the study from 12 departments using sample size of 300 was drawn using two sampling techniques: cluster sampling technique and simple random sampling technique. Three research questions were answered. The instrument for the study was a questionnaire tagged "Use of Internet in Sex Education (UISE)". The data collected were analyzed with mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions one and two while percentage is used to answer research question three. From the analysis, it was found out that there is effectiveness in using internet for sex education among undergraduate students. The findings revealed that there is availability of internet for sex education among undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt. Finally, respondents agreed that social media is the best suited channel for sex education among undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt. Based on the findings, it was recommended that Internet sex education should be introduced at all level of the educational systems in Nigeria, this will to a large extent expose undergraduate students to the dangers associated with certain dangerous sexual behaviour which is occasioned by exposure to the social media.

KEY WORDS: *Use of Internet, Sex education, effectiveness, availability and undergraduate*

INTRODUCTION

As the world becomes more interconnected than ever before, young people over the world are seeking and requesting credible and accessible information on sexuality and reproductive health. They want to have their many questions and concerns about sexuality addressed. They need information not only about physiology and a better understanding of the norms that society has set for sexual behaviour, but they also need to acquire the skills necessary to develop healthy relationships and engage in responsible decision-making about sex, especially during adolescence when their emotional development accelerates (Pascal, 2017).

Traditionally, sex educations were taught in the classroom according to the will of teacher and little attention was paid to the eagerness, curiosity and capability of the students. Discussing sex with teachers, parents, or even friends is considered embarrassing, shameful, controversial, or sensitive (Kendall, 2012; Moran, 2017). Benson & Whitworth (2016) pointed out that this technique of teaching is a one way flow of information in which the teacher often talks at length and personal questions and concerns of students about sexuality are not addressed because they consider it sensitive and private. In this unconventional era, ICTs offer different techniques available that have impact on teaching and learning than traditional pedagogy.

In contrast, the threshold for adolescents to search for answers to these questions and answers they are seeking is lowered by the anonymous nature of the Internet, it's easy, quick availability, and its low cost. Hence, online sex education and e-learning atmosphere is rapidly being exploited by institutions, instructors and students, and therefore ought to be created centered on their desires. Multimedia content founded on e-learning generally is considered effective in sex education process (Folarin, 2016). The Internet is perceived as a more private and anonymous place to search for information on sensitive topics. The confidentiality of the Internet may also be particularly attractive for these adolescents, who may not be comfortable discussing sexual health topics they considered sensitive and private with parents or friends (Barak & Fisher, 2015; Valkenburg & Peter, 2018). The Internet's appeal as a sex education resource may therefore be based on more than just the quality of an adolescent's available offline sex education; the Internet's ease of use, its availability to increasingly large numbers of adolescents, and its perceived anonymity regarding sensitive topics are unique in the delivery of sexual information in the digital age.

This approach helps to construct a scholar centered sex education where learners can study at their own pace, anywhere and anytime, answer questions and ask question that is of concern to them without shame. Internet has also been at the forefront of new instructional techniques use in teaching and learning in this digital age (Hannafin, 2017). The use of technology is regarded as an



instructional enhancement in the classroom (Kearsley, 2014).

Today young people are known for their early and fervent adoption of the Internet and its associated mobile technologies, such as cell phones and tablet computers (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2015). Unlike their parents, undergraduate students in the digital age accept the Internet as playing an important role in their everyday lives where information on sexuality and reproductive health concerns are handy. It is well documented that the Internet is used to view sexually explicit material, in addition to nonsexual entertainment and information (Fox & Jones, 2019; Peter & Valkenburg, 2015).

Faced with a lack of access to correct information, youth harbor misconceptions about sex, and remain ill-equipped to deal with unwanted pregnancies or sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Internet sex education is required to create healthy perceptions about sexuality and knowledge of prevention and mitigation of STDs and unwanted pregnancies. Evidence suggests that the Internet could serve as an alternative source of strategic health education (Borzekowski, 2016; Nwagwu, 2017).

Internet sex education is a process whereby information is given or imparted to a group of young ones and which takes into account the development, growth, the anatomy and physiology of the human reproductive system and changes that occur from youth all through the stage of adulthood (Yinka, 2012). Goldman (2016) defined Sex education as the acquisition of knowledge that deals with human sexuality. It consists of instruction on the development of an understanding of the physical, mental, emotional, social, economic, and psychological phases of human relations as they are affected by sex through digital source. According to Humphrey (2016), sex education involves providing children with knowledge and concept that will enable them make informed and responsible decisions about sex at all stages of their lives. It is also to develop in adolescents the desired skills necessary to enhance interactive learning so that communication, negotiation, and listening skills can be developed and practiced (Mario, 2014). Sex education does not encourage early initiation of intercourse but instead delay first intercourse and lead to more consistent and understanding of what the concept is all about.

The aims of sex education according to British Medical Association Foundation for AIDS are ambitious relating to the life-long quality of relationships and personal behavior. It should be age appropriate and available to everyone through a variety of formal and informal settings. Therefore, it is widely accepted that these undergraduates have the right to internet sex education because it is a means by which they are helped to protect themselves against abuse, exploitation, unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and understand their body mechanism in general (World youth, 2000 in Nwaizu, 2016). Some adolescents' characteristics predispose them to high risky sexual activities, behavioral interventions are needed to reduce these at risk behaviors. This present study is an attempt in that direction.

Researchers have identified four main types of sex education namely; abstinence-only, abstinence-based, comprehensive sex education (Fields, 2016; Allen, 2012). A fourth type of sex education, often referred to as sex positive education is rarely taught in schools but is more common in Europe and Nordic countries (Schalet, 2014)

Bialo & Sivin-Kachala (2013) listed the following benefit of effectiveness of using internet in these types of sex education: emphasizing active learning, responding to different learning styles, enhancing collaborative learning, increasing individualized learning and self-paced study, and encouraging greater student independence. Other researchers (Cardenas, 2014; Lyons, Kysilka, & Pawlas, 2016) also reported the positive learning benefits for learners using multimedia, which include; more interactivity, exploratory learning, and higher class retention. Effective learning occurs when learner interacts with multimedia content and on basis of activity feedback which they performed to improve their skills. Internet is blind to racial, cultural and sexual differences as it offers no more or less learning support to any individual. It promotes disinhibition which enables learners to express themselves openly. It promotes the interaction of shy people because they are more comfortable when they have space and time. The accessibility of E-learning content has biggest impact on learners so they can access learning at their own convenience.

However, Interactive multimedia has negative implications on the learners which include the problems resulting from self-guidance, lack of personal contact, unreliable sources, diminished media richness and issues regarding technology compatibility (Kopena, 2013). Variations on learner preferences like lack of self-directed learning, unclear objectives may result in a hesitancy and reluctance to learn among them. Due to instructional systems, multimedia may be time consuming for learners and sometimes due to lack of experience beginners take poor decision to proceed with given information. Media richness associated with face to face communication diminishes when communication goes electronically. It can be resolved by using multimedia content as adding visual to text. If learner gets distracted due to information available on the web or in online environment then desired animated software enhance their interactive skills and provide fun learning environment for others. Lots of technical issues are involved in interactive multimedia as lots of software are required to play multimedia files and computer capabilities affect online speed in web that prevent learners from accessing multimedia efficiently.



Furthermore, in teaching learning process in sex education, various channels are being utilized by undergraduates like Radio, TV, newspaper, smart phones, laptops, digital media including social network site etc. Digital media, including social networking sites, apps and text messaging services, are increasingly being used to reach adolescents with sexual health interventions, and studies have demonstrated efficacy in improving knowledge and behaviours across a range of sexual health outcomes (Adepoju, 2015). It provides a dynamic interaction between students (Kelly & Morgan-Kidd, 2017). The sources are used as a delivery tools to present information, receive the response, analyze the response and give immediate feedback to the students (Debra, 2014). To ensure that internet use for teaching sex education realize their potential, it is necessary to stand back and re-examine how they can be used to enhance sex education. It is against this background that the present study is being carried out.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A lot of problems seem to be invading the knowledge of sex education and sexual risk behaviors among undergraduate students. There is increase problem today as to moral laxity, promiscuity, unwanted pregnancy, abortion, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), forced marriage, school dropout among youths. Also, the increase in these problems has been attributed to ignorance of youths about sex education. However, most parents are not interested in the developmental stages of their adolescents because they have no time for their wards only seeking for money. Adolescents who are sexually active need to explore the changes being experienced. They usually have so many unanswered questions and thus need listening ears from their parents who have no time for them.

Due to lack of sex education, most undergraduate students have become victims of sexual molestation and other social vices; some have dropped out of school due to unwanted pregnancies, stigma from sexually transmitted diseases and infections, etc. furthermore, many factors have been attributed to sexual risk behaviors which include; inadequate access to correct information online and from peers, limited availability to health services, peer pressure and coercion of the role of the family as a source of information on sex education. This study therefore, intends to investigate the use of internet in teaching sex education among undergraduate students of university of Port Harcourt. This is the problem of the study.

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to examine the use of internet in sex education among undergraduate students: a case study in university of Port Harcourt. Specifically this study intends to;

1. Examine the effectiveness of using internet in sex education among undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt
2. Know the availability of using internet in sex education among undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt
3. Examine the best source of using internet in sex education among undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions will guide this study

1. How is the effectiveness of using internet in sex education among undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt
2. What extent is the availability of using internet in sex education among undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt
3. What is the best source of using internet in sex education among undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt

METHODOLOGY

The research design of the study is descriptive research design. The population of the study was 20,568 undergraduate students. The sample size of 300 was drawn using two sampling techniques: cluster sampling technique and simple random sampling technique. In adopting the cluster sampling technique, the researcher first of all divided the thirteen (13) faculties in the University of Port Harcourt into three clusters. Therefore, random sampling technique by balloting was used to draw one faculty from each of the above clusters. This is because random sampling technique gives each member equal opportunity of being selected during study. The selected faculties were Education, Health Sciences and Agriculture and two (2) departments were selected from each of the faculties. From the total 6 department, 42 students are selected from each of the department using simple random sampling technique. A questionnaire tagged "Use of Internet in Sex Education Questionnaire" (UISEQ) was used to collect data for the study. The reliability of the instrument was 0.76. The data collected were analyzed with mean and standard deviation to answer question one and two while research question three was answered with percentage count.

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND ANALYSIS

Research Question 1: How is the effectiveness of using internet in sex education among undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt?



Table 1: Showing analysis of mean and standard deviation of effectiveness of using internet in sex education

S/N	Items	X	SD	Decision
1.	Internet helps in sharing and Providing learning material	2.78	0.73	Accepted
2.	Internet allows different learning styles and can be used as a platform independently by various users	2.56	0.62	Accepted
3.	Internet has measurable assessment which can be used to evaluate learners	2.61	0.68	Accepted
4.	It is cost efficient	2.87	0.82	Accepted
5.	Internet allows selection of learning material according to knowledge level of learner	3.06	3.08	Accepted
Grand Mean		3.1	0.9	Accepted

The result of the data analyzed shows that the items had a grand mean of 3.1 and standard deviation of 0.9 while the criterion mean is 2.5. This shows that there is effectiveness in using internet for sex education among undergraduate students. Since the calculated mean is greater than the criterion mean, it is accepted. This implies that using internet for teaching of sex education is effective.

Research Question 2: What extent is the availability of using internet in sex education among undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt?

Table 2: Showing analysis of mean and standard deviation of Availability of Internet in Sex Education

S/N	Items	X	SD	Decision
1.	I have access to internet at home and at school	3.11	3.41	Accepted
2.	Internet are much time effective and less costlier than traditional learning	2.99	3.55	Accepted
3.	I have access to the computer in ICT to study and do my assignment	2.04	3.31	Accepted
4.	I have smart to phone access the internet	2.87	0.82	Accepted
5.	I have personnal computer to access the internet	2.87	3.14	Accepted
Grand Mean		2.7	0.83	Accepted

In table 2, the result of the data analyzed shows that grand mean score is 2.7 and SD = 0.83 while the criterion mean is 2.5. Since the calculated mean is greater than the criterion mean, it is accepted. Therefore, this indicates that there is availability of internet for sex education among undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt?

Research Question 3: What is the best source of using internet in sex education among undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt?

**Table 4.3: Showing percentage count of Best Source of Using Internet in Sex Education**

S/N	Items	N	%
1.	Website	24	12%
2.	Social Media	104	54%
3.	Apps	51	25.5%
4.	Online Content	21	10.5%
Total		200	100%

Based on Table 4.4, 52% (104 students) agree that the social media is the best source for sex education followed by Apps (25.5%), website 12%, and online content 10.5% respectively. Hence, this shows that undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt agree that social media is the best suited channel for sex education followed by Apps, website and online content respectively.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. The findings revealed that there is effectiveness in using internet for sex education among undergraduate students.
2. The findings revealed that there is availability of internet for sex education among undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt?
3. From the findings, respondents agreed that social media is the best source for sex education among undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result of the findings revealed that there is effectiveness in using internet for sex education among undergraduate students. This shows that there is effectiveness in using internet for sex education among undergraduate students. This study is in agreement with a previous study by Odu (2020) who stated that effective sex education develops young people's skills in negotiation, decision-making assertion and listening. It also helps them to be able to recognize pressures from other people and to resist them, deal with and challenge prejudice, seek help from adult including parents, careers and professionals through the family, community, health and welfare services the need for sexual education that work, according to Forest also help equip young people with skills to be able to differentiate between accurate and inaccurate information, discuss and range of mortal and social issues and perspectives on sex and sexuality, including different cultural.

More so, the result of the findings revealed that there is availability of internet for sex education among undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt. Therefore, this indicates that there is availability of internet for sex education among undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt. This present study agrees with the previous study by Kelvin (2019) who stated that the Internet's appeal as a sex education resource may therefore be based on more than just the quality of an adolescent's available offline sex education; the Internet's ease of use, its availability to increasingly large numbers of adolescents, and its perceived anonymity regarding sensitive topics are unique in the delivery of sexual information in the digital age.

Furthermore, from result of the findings, the respondents agreed that social media is the best source for sex education among undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt. Hence, this shows that undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt agree that social media is the best suited channel for sex education followed by Apps, website and online content respectively. The study agrees with the previous study by Owell (2011) who stated that the sources are used as a delivery tools to present information, receive the response, analyze the response and give immediate feedback to the students (Debra, 2014).

CONCLUSION

From the findings, the study concluded that there is effectiveness in using internet for sex education among undergraduate students. The findings revealed that there is availability of internet for sex education among undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt. Finally, respondents agreed that social media is the best suited channel for sex education among undergraduate students in university of Port Harcourt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were highlighted based on the findings of the study.



1. Internet sex education should be introduced at all level of the educational systems in Nigeria, this will to a large extent expose undergraduate students to the dangers associated with certain dangerous sexual behaviour which is occasioned by exposure to the social media.
2. Universities should set up effective counselling units to counsel students on the dangers social media pose to their sexual and reproductive health.
3. Students should be aware that the internet portrays more of sex inviting images that appeal to their emotion, thus, public enlightenment on the dangers of excessive exposure to the social media should be organized for undergraduates students.
4. Instructors should obtain more training in multimedia development and delivery, this as a major inhibitor to the use of multimedia technology.
5. Administrators should develop appropriate skills in making appropriate selection of media materials with regards to curriculum needs, objectives of instruction, characteristics of the students and condition of instruction.
6. Lecturers' enormous opportunities for making learning and teaching environment meaningful and effective. A lecturer cannot be a substitute of technology and hence he must not compromise his positive role in the classroom while using technological aids in the classroom.
7. Teachers or instructors should check process of students in multimedia as the ultimate goals of multimedia teaching is to promote students' motivation and learning interest, which can be a practical way to get them involved in the sex education.
8. Programme developers and implementers should sensitize men and women on the existence of gender disparity and the benefits of gender balance in matters related to reproductive health. This can be done through radio broadcasts, schools and churches.

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