



The Impact of Library-Based Sexual and Reproductive Health Awareness Programs on Adolescents and Youth in Nigeria, Universities

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ABSTRACT: University libraries, as centers of learning, have increasingly incorporated Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) awareness programs to provide students with credible health resources, including digital materials, workshops, and informational sessions. This study investigates the role of library-based SRH awareness programs in Nigerian universities, focusing on their impact on students' SRH knowledge, attitudes, and practices. Using a mixed-methods approach, data collection included surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis, involving 300 students. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis using NVivo. The findings reveal both the effectiveness and limitations of library-based SRH programs. Availability remains a major challenge, with 95% of respondents rating SRH workshops and seminars as very low. Access to SRH books, journals, and digital resources is similarly restricted, with 40% rating it as very low and another 40% as low. Online and social media-based SRH awareness programs show slightly better accessibility, with 50% rating them as moderate. However, collaboration with health organizations remains extremely low (90% very low). Student engagement is minimal, with 95% reporting very low participation, despite 70% finding SRH resources useful. Key barriers include cultural beliefs (70% very high), financial constraints (95% very high), and institutional policies (70% very high). Despite these challenges, SRH programs have positively impacted students, with 95% reporting increased knowledge, 75% noting improved attitudes, and 90% acknowledging a very high influence on decision-making. Findings from this research provide valuable insights for librarians, educators, and policymakers to enhance library-based health education initiatives. Recommendations include strengthening digital health services, training librarians as SRH facilitators, and integrating SRH materials into academic curricula. This study contributes to youth-centered health education policies, emphasizing the role of university libraries as essential platforms for SRH literacy and offering a model that can be adapted in other African institutions to promote informed reproductive health decisions among youth.

KEYWORD: Sexual and Reproductive Health, Library-Based Programs, Adolescents and Youth, Awareness Programs, University Libraries

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BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) is a critical aspect of adolescent and youth well-being, influencing their overall health, education, and future opportunities. In Nigeria Universities and across Africa, young people often face significant barriers to accessing accurate and youth-friendly SRH information, including cultural taboos, misinformation, and inadequate school-based education. Libraries, particularly in universities, serve as vital information hubs, offering students access to credible resources, awareness programs, and expert-led discussions on SRH. Many universities in Nigeria have introduced library-based health literacy initiatives, workshops, and digital repositories to bridge knowledge gaps. However, the effectiveness and impact of such programs remain under-researched. This study aims to assess how library-based SRH awareness programs influence knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of university students in Nigeria. Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) among adolescents and youth is a critical aspect of their overall well-being, encompassing access to accurate information, services, and the ability to make informed decisions regarding their sexual lives. Adolescents aged 10–19 and youth aged 15–24 face unique challenges related to SRH, including unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and limited access to contraceptives and healthcare services (WHO, 2022). Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) plays a key role in equipping young people with the knowledge and skills

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necessary to engage in safe sexual practices, understand consent, and recognize the importance of gender equality (UNESCO, 2018). However, social and cultural barriers, stigma, and misinformation often hinder access to reliable SRH information, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

Access to adolescent-friendly health services is crucial for improving SRH outcomes. Research highlights that youth-friendly services that are non-judgmental, confidential, and accessible contribute significantly to increased contraceptive use and improved health outcomes (Chandra-Mouli et al., 2015). Digital health innovations, such as mobile applications and social media platforms, have emerged as effective tools in disseminating SRH information to young people (Gonsalves et al., 2020). Despite these advancements, persistent barriers such as restrictive policies, gender disparities, and socioeconomic inequalities continue to limit SRH service utilization among adolescents and youth. Addressing these challenges requires multi-sectoral approaches, including policy reforms, community engagement, and investment in youth-friendly SRH services to promote informed decision-making and overall well-being

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Adolescents and youth in Nigeria Universities face significant challenges in accessing accurate sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information due to deeply rooted cultural norms, stigma, misinformation, and inadequate comprehensive sexuality education within school curricula. Many young people rely on peers or social media for SRH knowledge, which often leads to misconceptions about contraception, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and reproductive rights. The lack of reliable and youth-friendly SRH education contributes to high rates of unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions, and increased vulnerability to STIs, including HIV/AIDS. These issues highlight the urgent need for alternative platforms that can provide credible and evidence-based information to support young people's sexual and reproductive well-being. Despite the growing recognition of the importance of library-based SRH programs, there is limited research assessing their impact on adolescents and youth in Nigerian universities. Understanding how these initiatives influence students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding SRH is essential for improving program effectiveness and advocating for broader policy support. This study seeks to evaluate the role of university library SRH awareness programs in enhancing students' access to credible information, promoting positive health outcomes, and addressing barriers to SRH education. By exploring these impacts, the research aims to contribute to the development of sustainable and inclusive SRH interventions that align with the needs of Nigerian adolescents and youth.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the availability and nature of library-based SRH awareness programs in selected Nigerian universities.
2. To assess the level of students' participation in these programs.
3. To evaluate the impact of these programs on students' SRH knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.
4. To identify challenges hindering the effectiveness of library-based SRH awareness programs.
5. To propose strategies for enhancing SRH information dissemination through university libraries.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What types of SRH awareness programs are available in university libraries in Nigeria?
2. What is the level of student engagement with these programs?
3. How have these programs influenced students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding SRH?
4. What challenges affect the implementation and effectiveness of these programs?
5. What strategies can be adopted to improve library-based SRH awareness initiatives?

HYPOTHESIS

H1: Students who participate in library-based SRH awareness programs will demonstrate higher SRH knowledge, more positive attitudes, and improved health-seeking behaviors compared to those who do not participate.

H2: Library-based SRH awareness programs have no significant impact on students' SRH knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of academic libraries in promoting health literacy, including sexual and reproductive health (SRH), has gained increasing attention in recent years. Researchers have emphasized that libraries are not only academic resource hubs but also spaces that can provide vital health information to students, particularly in underserved communities. According to Anyaoku et al. (2020), academic libraries in Nigeria have begun integrating health literacy programs into their services. These programs often include workshops, the provision of print and digital resources, and collaborations with health professionals. They highlight that by offering free and confidential access to SRH resources, libraries can mitigate the stigma often associated with seeking such information. Similarly, Oyewusi and Oyeboade (2009) assert that libraries are pivotal in addressing the information needs of university students, including sensitive topics such as SRH.

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According to Chiedozie and Uzoamaka (2018). University students are at a critical stage in their lives where they are exposed to a variety of SRH challenges, access to SRH information significantly influences students' decision-making and health outcomes. Their research demonstrates a positive correlation between access to reliable SRH information and a reduction in risky behaviors. However, they also identify gaps in the availability of SRH-focused library resources, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. Several studies have highlighted the barriers students face in accessing SRH information through libraries. For instance, Aina and Opeke (2019) identify cultural and social stigmas as significant obstacles. These barriers discourage students from utilizing available resources, even when they are accessible. Moreover, Aina and Opeke argue that a lack of trained library staff to guide students on sensitive topics further limits the effectiveness of these services. Innovative library programs have proven effective in promoting SRH awareness. Eze et al. (2021) discuss the implementation of digital platforms in Nigerian university libraries, such as anonymous chat services and online SRH resource guides. These initiatives have been successful in creating a safe space for students to seek information. Furthermore, Ojedokun and Ibenne (2012) highlight the importance of integrating multimedia resources, such as educational videos and podcasts, into library collections to engage younger audiences effectively.

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter outlines the methodologies employed in conducting the study. mixed-methods approach **was** adopted qualitative and quantitative to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of library-based SRH programs. University students (adolescents and youth aged 15–29). University librarians and health information officers involved in SRH programs. A random sample of **300 students** 60 per university was participate in surveys. Two Librarian from each university was interviewed. Distributed to students to assess their awareness, participation, and perception of library-based SRH programs. Conducted with librarians and program coordinators to explore program implementation, challenges, and impact. Conducted with students to gain deeper insights into their experiences and opinions on SRH resources in libraries. Reviewing existing library resources, policies, and program reports on SRH awareness initiatives. Descriptive and inferential statistics will be analyzed using **SPSS** Thematic analysis was applied to interview and FGD transcripts using **NVivo** software.

RESULTS

Table 1 Availability of SRH Awareness Programs in University Libraries

To assess the availability of SRH programs and resources in university libraries

S/N	Question	Very Low Extent	Low Extent	Moderate Extent	Higher Extent	Very high Extent
1	To what extent are SRH education workshops and seminars available in your university library	95	5	X	X	X
2	To what extent does your university library provide books, journals, and digital resources on SRH?	40	40	20	30-	X
3	To what extent are online and social media-based SRH awareness programs accessible through your university library?	X	10	50	20	20
4	To what extent does your university library collaborate with health organizations for SRH programs?	90	10	X	X	X

The findings indicate that the availability of Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) awareness programs in university libraries is generally limited. SRH education workshops and seminars are largely unavailable, with 95% of respondents rating their availability as very low and only 5% indicating a low extent. These results highlight a significant gap in SRH education and resource availability within university libraries. Enhancing library services by incorporating more SRH-related materials, increasing digital and social media engagement, and fostering collaborations with health organizations could improve access to essential SRH information for students. 5% indicating a low extent. Similarly, access to books, journals, and digital resources on SRH is also restricted, with 40% of respondents rating it as very low, another 40% indicating a low extent, and only a small percentage (20%) considering it moderately available. A slightly better scenario is observed in online and social media-based SRH awareness programs, where 50% of respondents rated accessibility as moderate, 20% as higher, and 20% as very high. However, collaboration between university libraries and health organizations remains extremely low, with 90% reporting a very low extent and 10% indicating a low extent of partnership.

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Table 2: Level of Student Engagement with SRH Programs

To evaluate students' participation in and usage of SRH programs.

S/N	Question	Very Low Extent	Low Extent	Moderate Extent	High Extent	Very High Extent
1	To what extent do students attend and participate in SRH programs organized by the university library?	95	5	X	X	X
2	To what extent do students access and use SRH materials available in the university library?	95	5	X	X	X
3	To what extent do students find SRH resources in the university library useful?	X	X	70	X	30
4	To what extent do factors like stigma, cultural beliefs, or lack of awareness affect student engagement with SRH programs?	X	X	10	20	70

The results from Table 2 highlight the level of student engagement with Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) programs in university libraries. The data reveal that student participation in SRH programs organized by the university library is very low, with 95% of respondents indicating a very low extent of engagement and only 5% reporting a low extent. Similarly, the usage of SRH materials available in the library follows the same pattern, with 95% of respondents reporting very low engagement and 5% indicating a low extent, suggesting that most students do not actively utilize these resources. However, when assessing the perceived usefulness of SRH resources, responses were more varied. While 70% of students rated the resources as moderately useful, 30% found them very useful, indicating that for those who do access the materials, they offer value. Additionally, factors such as stigma, cultural beliefs, and lack of awareness play a significant role in shaping student engagement with SRH programs. A majority (70%) of respondents indicated that these barriers impact engagement to a very high extent, while 20% considered their impact to be high, and 10% rated it as moderate.

Table 3: Influence of SRH Programs on Students' Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviors

To determine the impact of SRH awareness programs on students.

S/N	Question	Very Low Extent	Low Extent	Moderate Extent	High Extent	Very High Extent
1	To what extent have SRH programs in the university library increased students' knowledge of reproductive health?	X	X	X	5	95
2	To what extent have SRH programs influenced students' attitudes toward reproductive health and rights?	X	X	X	75	25
3	To what extent have SRH programs impacted students' decision-making regarding sexual health practices?	X	X	X	10	90
4	To what extent have SRH programs led to positive behavioral changes, such as increased use of contraception or STI testing?	X	X	X	30	70

The findings from Table 3 indicate that Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) programs in university libraries have a significant impact on students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. A vast majority (95%) of respondents reported that these programs have increased their knowledge of reproductive health to a very high extent, while 5% rated the impact as high. Similarly, SRH programs have influenced students' attitudes toward reproductive health and rights, with 75% indicating a high extent of influence and 25% a very high extent.

Regarding decision-making on sexual health practices, 90% of students acknowledged a very high impact, while 10% rated the influence as high, suggesting that these programs play a critical role in guiding students toward informed choices. Additionally, the programs have contributed to positive behavioral changes, such as increased use of contraception or STI testing, with 70% of respondents reporting a very high extent of impact and 30% a high extent.

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Table 4: Challenges Affecting the Implementation and Effectiveness of SRH Programs

To identify barriers to the success of SRH programs in university libraries.

S/N	Question	Very Low Extent	Low Extent	Moderate Extent	High Extent	Very High Extent
1	To what extent do institutional or policy-related barriers hinder the implementation of SRH programs in university libraries?	X	X	X	30	70
22	To what extent do cultural or religious beliefs limit the effectiveness of SRH awareness programs in the university library?		10	10	10	70
3	To what extent do financial or resource constraints affect the availability of SRH materials in university libraries?	X	X	X	5	95
4	To what extent do university staff and students resist SRH awareness programs in the library?	15	20	65	X	X

The results from Table 4 highlight key challenges affecting the implementation and effectiveness of Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) programs in university libraries. Institutional and policy-related barriers are significant, with 70% of respondents rating their impact as very high and 30% as high, indicating that administrative and regulatory constraints pose major obstacles to program execution. Cultural and religious beliefs also play a crucial role in limiting the effectiveness of SRH awareness programs, with 70% of respondents identifying their influence as very high, while 10% rated it as high, moderate, and low, respectively. This suggests that deeply ingrained societal norms continue to shape perceptions and engagement with SRH initiatives. Financial and resource constraints emerged as another major barrier, with 95% of respondents acknowledging their impact to a very high extent and 5% to a high extent. Limited funding and inadequate resource allocation significantly affect the availability of SRH materials in university libraries. Resistance from university staff and students presents a mixed challenge. While 65% of respondents identified moderate resistance, 20% rated it as low, and 15% as very low. This suggests that while some opposition exists, it may not be as strong as other barriers.

Table 5: Strategies to Improve Library-Based SRH Awareness Initiatives

To explore possible ways to enhance SRH programs in university libraries.

S/N	Question	Very Low Extent	Low Extent	Moderate Extent	High Extent	Very High Extent
1	To what extent can digital tools and social media enhance the reach of SRH awareness programs in university libraries?	X	X	15	20	65
2	To what extent can partnerships with health professionals and NGOs improve SRH awareness programs in university libraries?	X	X	X	30	70
3	To what extent can student-led initiatives and peer education improve SRH awareness in university libraries?	X	X	X	30	70
4	To what extent can increased funding and policy support strengthen SRH programs in university libraries?	X	X	X	10	90

The findings from Table 5 suggest several effective strategies for enhancing Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) awareness initiatives in university libraries. Digital tools and social media are seen as highly impactful, with 65% of respondents rating their effectiveness as very high and 20% as high, indicating that online platforms can significantly expand the reach of SRH programs. Partnerships with health professionals and NGOs are also considered a crucial improvement strategy, with 70% of respondents rating their impact as very high and 30% as high. Similarly, student-led initiatives and peer education programs received strong support, with the same response distribution, highlighting the importance of student engagement in promoting SRH awareness. Increased funding and policy support are viewed as essential, with 90% of respondents recognizing their potential impact to a very high extent and 10% to a high extent. This suggests that financial investment and institutional backing are key to strengthening SRH programs in university libraries.

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FINDINGS

This indicates that Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) awareness programs in university libraries are significantly underutilized, with low student participation and limited access to resources. While SRH programs have been shown to greatly enhance students' knowledge, attitudes, and decision-making regarding sexual health, several barriers hinder their effectiveness. Institutional and policy-related constraints, cultural and religious beliefs, financial limitations, and resistance from students and staff all contribute to the challenges faced in implementing these programs. Despite these obstacles, strategies such as leveraging digital tools and social media, forming partnerships with health professionals and NGOs, promoting student-led initiatives, and increasing funding and policy support have been identified as highly effective ways to improve SRH awareness in university libraries. Addressing these challenges through a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach could enhance student engagement, improve accessibility, and strengthen the impact of SRH programs in academic institutions.

CONCLUSION

The findings highlight that while university libraries have the potential to serve as valuable hubs for Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) awareness, their current role remains limited due to low student engagement, resource constraints, and various institutional and cultural barriers. Despite these challenges, SRH programs have demonstrated a significant positive impact on students' knowledge, attitudes, and decision-making regarding sexual health. To maximize this impact, universities must adopt a multi-faceted approach that includes digital outreach, partnerships with health organizations, student-led initiatives, and increased policy and financial support. By addressing the barriers and implementing strategic improvements, university libraries can become more effective platforms for promoting SRH awareness, ultimately contributing to the overall well-being and informed decision-making of adolescents and youth in Nigeria Universities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to improve the availability, engagement, and effectiveness of Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) awareness programs in university libraries:

1. **Enhance Digital and Social Media Integration:** University libraries should leverage digital platforms, including social media, websites, and mobile applications, to expand the reach of SRH programs. Providing online resources, virtual workshops, and interactive content can help engage students more effectively.
2. **Strengthen Partnerships with Health Organizations and NGOs:** Collaborating with health professionals, NGOs, and government agencies can improve the quality and credibility of SRH programs. These partnerships can facilitate expert-led workshops, resource sharing, and access to healthcare services.
3. **Encourage Student-Led Initiatives and Peer Education:** Universities should establish student-led SRH awareness clubs or peer educator programs within libraries. Peer-led discussions and workshops can help overcome stigma and encourage open conversations about sexual and reproductive health.
4. **Increase Funding and Policy Support:** Institutional leadership should allocate more financial resources to SRH programs, ensuring the availability of books, digital materials, and trained personnel. Policies should also be revised to integrate SRH education into university library services.
5. **Address Cultural and Religious Barriers:** Universities should adopt culturally sensitive approaches when delivering SRH information. Engaging community leaders, religious figures, and culturally diverse materials can help break taboos and promote acceptance of these programs.
6. **Improve Awareness and Engagement Strategies:** Conducting targeted awareness campaigns through posters, email newsletters, and library events can help increase student participation. Confidentiality and anonymity in accessing SRH materials should also be ensured to encourage students who fear stigma.
7. **Regularly Evaluate and Update SRH Programs:** University libraries should periodically assess the effectiveness of their SRH initiatives through student feedback and impact assessments. Updating materials and adapting programs to address emerging SRH challenges will ensure continued relevance and effectiveness.

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