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The Perception of Students on Abortion: A Survey of Senior High Schools in the Sunyani Municipality of Ghana

Paul APPIAH-SEKYERE

Abstract

This study sought to find out the perceptions of the students in Senior High schools in the Sunyani Municipality in Ghana on abortion. The study employed the descriptive survey research design. With the simple random sampling procedure, 364 students were selected from a total of 6,824 to participate in the study. The study found out that the students perceived abortion to be morally unacceptable. A significant majority of the students disagreed with arguments that are in favour of abortion. The majority of the students can be described as anti-abortionists. What influenced their perceptions and how they will react, when they find themselves in an unwanted pregnancy situation, are not known. The study also found out that there was no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female students on abortion. In relation to the findings, the study recommended that issues on abortion, and others related to human sexuality, should be taught in Senior High Schools. This will put the students in a better position to make right ethical decisions on abortion.

Introduction

The issue of morality, especially among the Ghanaian youth today, has become a matter of great concern to most Ghanaians. The reported incidents of rape, prostitution, paedophilia, homosexuality, teenage pregnancy and abortion in our societies have led to a wake-up call for people to assist in reducing, if not eradicating, these social problems. This is because they threaten the future of the nation. Among these moral issues stated above, "there is probably no more controversial issue in bioethics today, or one that touches so many lives, as abortion. An estimated 43 percent of American women will have an abortion by age forty-five" (Boss, 1999: 108). Abortion is a social problem in many countries the world over, including America, and the Ghanaian case is, therefore, no exception. In other words, the problem of abortion is not peculiar to Ghana alone. In Ghana, it is estimated that there are "17 induced abortions per 1,000 women of reproductive age" (Ahiadeke, 2001: 5).

The issue of abortion is of critical interest to ethicists, and for that matter, scholars because it involves human life. Unsafe abortion is probably one of the key contributors to maternal mortality in Ghana. Despite the liberalisation of the abortion law in Ghana in 1985, many abortions continue to be induced illegally under unhygienic conditions by providers who are either untrained or inadequately trained to do them (Turpin, Danso & Odoi, n. d). This paper examines students' perceptions on abortion with a focus on the direct-induced type of abortion. Within the context of this paper, the word abortion is used specifically to mean direct-induced abortion.

The following questions then arise. Does one have a moral right to terminate the life of an innocent embryo because of one's own perceptions on abortion? Is one morally obliged to save the life of a foetus no matter how threatening the situation can be? People have tried to answer these and similar questions by taking different positions. Whether people may be classified as pro-abortionists or anti-abortionists, the fact remains that abortion is being practised among the youth in Ghana. According to the "unadjusted data from the Maternal Health Survey Project, the abortion rates were 19 abortions per 100 pregnancies and 27 abortions per 100 live births; the abortion rate was 17 induced abortions per 1,000 women of reproductive age" (Ahiadeke, 2001: 5).

It is, however, difficult to get up-to-date data on abortion. This is because, generally, the various ethnic groups in Ghana frown on abortion. This could be one of the reasons why people are unwilling to come forward even to seek proper medical care. Furthermore, this could contribute to the difficulty of the interested agencies in providing reliable and up-to-date information on the actual state of the problem. This presents a challenge to this paper in studying how the Senior High School students in the Sunyani Municipality perceive abortion.

Since the effects of abortion on males might differ from those of females, it is probable that the perceptions of male and female students on abortion might also differ. This study, therefore, endeavours to find out whether differences exist between the perceptions of male and female students on abortion or not using Senior High Schools in the Sunyani Municipality.

In selecting the study area, the researcher considered several places but the lot fell on Sunyani, the capital of a region that contains "the central point of the landmass of Ghana" (<http://www.ghanadistricts.com/region/?r=10>). The Brong Ahafo Region has a territorial size of 39,557 square kilometres. It is the second largest region in the country, sharing boundaries with the Northern Region to the north, the Volta and Eastern Regions to the south-east, Ashanti and Western Regions to the south, and Cote d'Ivoire to the west (<http://www.ghanadistricts.com/region/?r=10>).

According to Buah (1998), there was a Bono Kingdom and the first remembered king is King Asaman, who is credited with leading his Akan people from what may be the present-day Burkina Faso, or even further north, to Bonoland. It was as a result of later migrations that led to the Asante, Fante, Denkyira and other Akans settling in their present locations. In fact, Nana Akumfi Ameyaw III traces his ancestry to King Akumfi Ameyaw I (1328-63), under whose reign the Brong Kingdom with its capital at Bono Manso grew to become the most powerful kingdom of its time. Oral tradition has it that nearly all the different groups of the Akan trace their origins to Bono (Buah, 1998). In fact, the Akan form the largest ethnic group (49.1%) in Ghana (<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/general/statistics.php>).

The Brong Ahafo Region was created on 4th April, 1959 (by the Brong Ahafo Region Act No. 18 of 1959). It is estimated that more than 97% of the

people in the Brong Ahafo Region are Ghanaians, with 94% being Ghanaian by birth. The proportion of Ghanaians by birth in the districts ranges from 91% to 97%, with Sunyani, the capital, having the highest, that is, 96% (<http://www.ghanadistricts.com/region/?r=10>). In the light of the above, the selection of Sunyani is considered suitable by the researcher for a study of this nature that examines the perceptions of the Ghanaian youth, in this case, the students in Senior High Schools in the Sunyani Municipality, on abortion.

Research Question and Hypothesis

1. What are the perceptions of Senior High School students in the Sunyani Municipality on abortion?
2. H_0 : There is no significant difference in the perceptions of male and female students in the Senior High Schools on abortion.

Review of Related Literature

It is noteworthy that the controversy on abortion even begins right from its definition. Thus, there are several definitions of abortion. According to Glenn and Merz (2009), abortion is the termination of a pregnancy before birth, resulting in the death of the foetus. These people did not include in their definition the intention behind such acts or the processes that will lead to them. This could have thrown more light on it for a critical assessment. Chandrasekhar (1974: 21) also defines abortion as “a physiological process of evacuating a pregnant uterus”. The one who is conducting the act goes through physical, chemical and clinical processes solely aimed at terminating the life of the foetus. This indicates a deliberate or intentional expulsion of the foetus with the consequence of terminating its life. Whichever way one defines abortion, critical moral questions arise when the method of conducting it is a direct-induced one.

As regards the spontaneous type of abortion (commonly known in ordinary parlance as miscarriage), there is no culpability because it is not an intentional act and so it could be classified as a non-deliberate accidental act. In a similar development, in therapeutic abortion, the prime intention is to cure the pregnant woman of a malady. The unintended death of the foetus is not a deliberate but an unavoidable accidental side effect of the therapy. Hence, therapeutic abortion is not blameable.

The Abortion Debate

There are people who think that direct-induced abortion is ethically wrong. Others think it is right. Even though some countries have come to terms on the moral permissibility or otherwise of direct-induced abortion, by enacting laws on it, the fact remains that the abortion debate continues. The following are some of the respective arguments that have been propounded by pro-abortionists and anti-abortionists.

According to the pro-choice, the foetus is not yet a human person but a conglomeration of human blood cells. Warren (cited in Boss, 1999) argues that at no stage does the foetus meet the criteria of personhood. A foetus does not become a person until sometime after birth, when the infant becomes a 'socially responsive member of a human community'" (Boss, 1999: 116). She further suggests that the traits which are most central to the concept of personhood or humanity in the moral sense include consciousness, reasoning, self-motivated activity, the capacity to communicate, the presence of self-concepts, and self awareness (Mappes & Zembaty, 1997). If the foetus is not yet a human being, then it follows that it does not have human rights. Granted that this is the case, then, the expulsion of the foetus is just like throwing out any unwanted thing. Noonan (cited in Boss, 1999) disagrees with this view arguing that there is no distinction between biological humanhood and personhood. According to him, human beings have moral value simply because they have a human genotype no matter what their age or stage of development is. Are we to grant moral right to life to the foetus right from conception? At what stage does it meet the criteria of personhood? Do we have universally accepted criteria for the classification of persons and non-persons? The difficulty in answering these questions and the like, compound the abortion controversy.

It is perceived that the foetus is an appendage and so it could be removed from the mother's body if the mother so desires. The pregnant woman has the moral right to allow the foetus to be 'a tenant in her house (womb) or to eject it'. Does a human being have the right over his or her body so much so that the said right overrides another human being's rights even to the extent that the former can destroy the latter's life? Why can we not grant equal rights here? If leaving the foetus untouched does not threaten the life of the host, is it reasonable to take the foetus's life due to one's selfish gains? In fact, considering the fragile condition of the foetus, one can argue that the foetus' right to life is stronger and overrides the mother's right to decide what happens in her body. It could be argued further that, granted that the foetus is a human being with human rights, when the right of the foetus interferes with that of the mother, though the mother is the host of the foetus, the one with the greatest possibility of survival must be considered. According to Lowen (2011), "...women who demand complete control of their body, should include preventing the risk of unwanted pregnancy through the responsible use of contraception or, if that is not possible, through abstinence" (<http://womensissues.about.com/od/reproductiverights/Abortion.Argumen.htm>). This argument by Lowen (2011) is laudable; yet, it departs from the main issue, abortion, to the side issue of prevention of pregnancy. The question then arises: what happens to those who are prevented from using contraceptives, as is the case of rape victims?

In another development, the pro-abortionists argue that every human being needs love but a child needs more love than an adult. If a woman is pregnant and feels that the pregnancy is unwanted then this implies that the baby is not going to be loved by the mother and therefore the foetus can be destroyed.

In which of these instances can women show love? Is it the termination of the embryo's life or giving birth to it? Is it not more reasonable to show one percent (1%) of love by allowing it to live than showing ninety nine percent (99%) of "love" by terminating its life? Is it not possible that a mother, who is unloving towards her child in the beginning, may later change her mind to love it?

The pro-choicers further argue that population explosion or over-population has its own consequences such as unemployment, and pressure on the existing infrastructure. Consequently, abortion, which is a sure way of preventing over-population, should be allowed. According to Murdoch (1980),

Poor countries have very high population growth rates, and each extra person is an additional burden on the economy, so population growth causes poverty. Populations are expanding in a finite world and therefore we are in danger of depleting resources and destroying our life support systems (pp. 7-8).

From the above extract, it is clear that over-population affects the standard of living of people. In response to this argument, however, one can raise the following question: if humans have taken time to study and discover that over-population has negative effects on people, why can humans not have a similar time to research into the effects of abortion? For example, to mention just a few, one can talk of haemorrhage, perforation of the uterus, death, sterility and infections as some of the effects of abortion. Besides, does a person have a moral right to kill foetuses that are potential human beings for other human beings to enjoy the world? If we think that over-population is causing problems, why can we not kill any group of humans, for example criminals, instead of the foetus?

The debate on when the human body is ensouled is an ongoing one. There are two basic theories of ensoulment, namely, immediate ensoulment and late ensoulment theories (Marie, 2007). As the terms connote, the first theory suggests that the foetus is ensouled right from conception while the second theory says the foetus is ensouled at a later period after conception. Granted that the foetus is ensouled right at the time conception takes place then abortion will be morally impermissible. If it is true that the foetus is ensouled lately during pregnancy, then abortion is permissible before the body is ensouled. Have we come to terms with the exact time the foetus is ensouled? Is it ethically right to kill a human being when one is not sure about his humanness? What is the morally acceptable decision to make when one is in doubt? Is it morally right for me to bury my sick father when I am not certain that he is dead? Will society allow me to do such a burial? In the context of uncertainty, does morality not demand that I suspend action and undergo more verification exercises?

According to Mappes and Zembaty (1997), "there are other instances in which having a child or having another child, will be an unbearable financial burden" (p. 1). Pro-abortionists argue that a teenager, for example, in a Junior High School who becomes pregnant and does not have the needed funds to cater for the baby should have the right to abortion. This is because; if she keeps the pregnancy, she might end up dropping out of school. Furthermore, the teenager may be physiologically not matured enough to carry a baby to term. In this case, some people argue that abortion should be permitted.

On the issue of teenage pregnancy, one needs to note that the teenager has full knowledge of her status as a teenager and must be responsible for her actions as she can take precautions against pregnancy. If she does not take precautions, she must be held responsible and not the innocent foetus. In this context, we could raise the following question: "is it ethically right to destroy an innocent foetus because of the mistake of another person, namely, the teenager"? In fact, financial assistance could be sought from government agencies, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and philanthropists to help the teenager and the foetus. If teenagers are not made to face the consequences associated with getting pregnant prematurely, abortion and its related effects will rather be on the increase.

In hard cases like rape or incest where the victim becomes pregnant, pro-choicers argue that abortion should be allowed to protect the integrity of the parties involved. The trauma that the child will give to the rape victim is enough to justify abortion in this instance. In the Ghanaian cultural context, for example, it is a taboo to have sex with one's blood relations. Anti-abortionists argue that the rapist is the one who has committed the crime and deserves punishment. The innocent foetus has not committed any crime so to punish the foetus is morally unjust. In a similar perspective, those who are involved in the pregnancy that has been caused by an incestuous relationship should be held responsible for their actions and not the innocent foetus.

In another perspective, the abortion debate concerns the nature of man, the existence of a soul and the beginning of human personhood. In some countries, laws have been enacted on abortion legalising it while others prohibit it and allow abortion for therapeutic reasons. What does the Constitution of Ghana say about abortion? In Ghana, abortion is permitted on the grounds of saving the life of a woman, preserving physical and mental health in cases such as rape, incest and foetal deformation. Abortion is not permitted for economic, social and personal reasons. In the case where it is permitted it must be performed by a registered physician with the consent of the pregnant woman. It must also be performed in a government hospital or a private hospital or a clinic registered under the Private or Maternity Homes Act of 1958 (No. 9) or in a place approved for the purpose. Homes Act (www.un.org/esa/population/abortion/doc/ghana.doc).

According to Boss (1998), one of the main types of moral theories that underlies a persons' moral decision is ethical relativism. She posits that,

“Ethical relativists believe that because there is disagreement among people on moral questions, there are no universal moral principles. Instead, ethical relativists hold that ethical values are created by, or are relative to, the people who hold the beliefs” (Boss, 1998: 29). In fact, one's moral theory may underpin one's position on abortion and each position has its respective setbacks.

Methodology

The research design that was employed for this study was the descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey design involves the collection of data in order to test a hypothesis or answer research questions concerning the current status of the subject under investigation (Gay, 1992). This design has been chosen because it offers the researcher the opportunity to conduct a comprehensive appraisal of the perceptions of students on abortion. Amedahe (2002) also maintains that in descriptive research, accurate description of activities, objects, processes and persons is objective. In order to have an objective analysis of the perceptions of students, the researcher saw this design as very suitable.

The population of the study was all students in Senior High Schools in the Sunyani Municipality totalling 6,824. There are six Senior High Schools in the Sunyani Municipality. “Samples are expected to be representative. Actually, samples are expected to be chosen by means of sound methodological principles” (Sarantakos, 1997: 140). Out of the 6,824 students, 364 of them were selected for the study. In determining the sample size for the study, the table for determining sample size from a given population as suggested by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) and cited by Sarantakos (1997: 163) was used. This was to increase the representativeness of the sample for onward generalisation. The students who were selected for the study were chosen using the simple random sampling procedure. The sample units were selected by the use of the table of random numbers. “This type of sampling, gives all units of the target population an equal chance of being selected” (Sarantakos, 1997: 141).

According to Gay (1992), all research studies involve data collection. The data of the study was collected using questionnaires. The instrument composed of two parts with the first part on gender and age of respondents. The second part was a three point Likert scale that dealt with arguments on abortion. The research instrument that was used to gather the data was subjected to validity and reliability test. The instrument was given to an expert to ascertain how it meets the validity expectations, namely, face and content. The suggestions, as given by the expert, were used to effect the necessary changes. A pilot test was conducted whereby the questionnaire was administered in some selected schools in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis. The data was analysed and a Cronbach's alpha of .78 was obtained. The research instrument was deemed reliable because according to Fraenkel and Wallen (2000), “For research purposes a useful rule of thumb is that reliability should be at 0.70 and preferably higher” (p. 17).

The data collected was analysed through the computation of frequencies and percentages, means and standard deviations. In fact, the type of statistics that was employed was the descriptive statistics.

Data Analysis Procedure

This study looked at the perceptions of Senior High School students on abortion. The data on the characteristics of respondents was analysed through the computation of frequencies and percentages whilst those of the main data were analysed with means, standard deviations and independent T test as the statistical tools. In fact, descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data.

Results and Discussions

The abortion debate is still ongoing. It is very necessary to assess the perceptions of the respondents. Adolescents can be said to be vulnerable in terms of sexually-related problems like abortion. This section presents the interpretations, discussions and findings that were made from the survey. Table 1 presents the characteristics of the students that were sampled for the study.

Table 1
Characteristics of Sampled Students

Variable	Subscale	No	%
Gender	Male	163	44.8
	Female	201	55.2
Age	10 – 15 years	7	1.9
	16 – 20 years	348	95.6
	21 – 25 years	9	2.5

Table 1 shows that 44.8% of the respondents were males whilst 55.2% were females. Thus the females form the majority. It can also be noted that only 1.9% of the students fell within the ages of 10 – 15 years; while 95.6% were between 16 – 20 years old and 2.5% fell within 21 – 25 years. Thus, a greater number of the respondents were at the adolescent age. The adolescent age which is characterised by a lot of bodily changes puts them at a very vulnerable position in terms of sexually-related challenges. It is in this wise that their perceptions on abortion are needed to inform parents, guardians, heads of schools, policy makers and stakeholders that are responsible for the development of these adolescents.

Table 2 deals with the responses that the students gave to the respective arguments for or against abortion.

Table 2
Students' Responses to Arguments on Abortion.

Arguments	Mean	SD
The foetus in the woman's womb is a human being so abortion should be prohibited.	1.16	.46
If the foetus is a human being, then it has a human right to live.	1.09	.37
Abortion should be permitted because a woman has the right to decide what happens to her body.	1.97	.44
The woman's right overrides that of the foetus so abortion should be allowed.	2.01	.39
Abortion should be permitted because a woman will hate a baby from an unwanted pregnancy.	1.91	.54

Table 2 continued

Abortion should be allowed because it can prevent over-population	1.90	.47
It is right to kill the foetus for others to enjoy the world.	2.01	.23
It is right to have abortion within the first three months because at this time, the foetus is without a soul.	1.98	.55
Instead of allowing unwanted pregnancy to prevent me from completing my school, I will commit abortion.	1.87	.49
In a rape case that results in pregnancy, abortion should be allowed	1.79	.49
In case of incest (sexual affair with a close blood relative) that results in pregnancy, abortion should be allowed.	1.85	.61

Mean of Means = 1.60

Mean of Standard Deviation = 0.47

Scale: 1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Uncertain.

Research Question

What are the perceptions of SHS students in the Sunyani Municipality on abortion?

This study sought to investigate the perceptions of 364 Senior High School students in the Sunyani Municipality on the moral acceptability or otherwise of abortion. A cursory survey of some arguments for and against abortion gave the following results.

Initially, concerning the argument for abortion that states that the foetus in the woman's womb is a human being so abortion should be prohibited, 1.16 mean and .46 standard deviation were achieved. Running the mean to the nearest whole number, it falls on the scale 1 (Agree). The majority of the students, therefore, agreed to these statements. This corresponds with John Noonan's view that there is no distinction between biological humanhood and personhood due to the fact that they have the human genotype no matter what their age or stage of development is (Boss, 1999). The support for the argument that abortion should be prohibited because the foetus is a human being was a unanimous one because the item had a low standard deviation of .46 as compared to the mean of standard deviation of .47. The students also supported vehemently the view that the foetus is a human being and so it has a human right to live. This item recorded a mean of 1.09 and a standard deviation of .37. These values indicate clearly that most of the students agreed to this argument. The respondents generally agreed to the arguments that were against abortion.

The majority of the respondents disagreed with the arguments that were posed in favour of abortion. The mean of means of 1.60, when run to the nearest whole number, fell on 2 (Disagree) indicating that, to a large extent, the students were anti-abortionists. The following individual items support the assertion that most of the students were anti-abortionists.

With respect to the item, 'abortion should be permitted because a woman has the right to decide what happens to her body,' 1.97 (mean) and .44 (standard deviation) were attained. This means that the majority of the respondents objected to the statement. The position that the woman's right overrides that of the foetus and so abortion should be allowed was also opposed to, by the respondents. This is because a mean of 2.01 and standard deviation of .39 was obtained for this item. The mean in this case, falls on the scale 2 (Disagree) which shows that the students unanimously disagreed with the statement. The .39 standard deviation that was registered also depicts the students' strong opposition to the respective argument. This stance agrees with Lowen (2011) who posited that "For women who demand complete control of their body, they should include preventing the risk of unwanted pregnancy through the responsible use of contraception or, if that is not possible, through abstinence" (<http://womensissues.about.com/od/reproductiverights/Abortion.Argument.htm>).

With reference to the item 'abortion should be permitted because a woman will hate a baby from an unwanted pregnancy,' it was clear that the respondents were against that position. A mean of 1.91 and a standard deviation of .54 were achieved. Similarly, the students opposed the view that abortion should be allowed because it is a sure way of preventing overpopulation. With this item, 1.90 (mean) and .47 (standard deviation) were obtained. Though, it is true, according to Murdoch (1980), that population growth causes poverty, it is, however, not morally right to kill the foetus to satisfy other people's whims or aspirations. After all, there are other ways such as abstinence and the use of

contraceptives in checking overpopulation. As to the rightness or wrongness of killing the foetus for other people to enjoy the world, the respondents said that it is not right to do that. Here, a mean of 2.01 and a standard deviation of .23 were achieved. It is worth noting that this item had the lowest standard deviation indicating that the degree of opposition of this assertion was very high.

The time the foetus is ensouled cannot be given with certainty. When the students were asked to indicate their opinion on the argument that: it is right to have abortion within the first three months because, at this time, the foetus is without a soul, 1.98 mean and a standard deviation of .55 were obtained. This means that a greater proportion of the students were against abortion even within the first trimester.

With respect to the statement, instead of allowing unwanted pregnancy to prevent them from continuing their schooling, they will commit abortion, a majority of the students disagreed with it. A mean of 1.87 and a standard deviation of .49 were achieved. Though, the students disagreed, the measure of spread is higher than the mean of standard deviation showing that their responses varied.

In a rape case that results in pregnancy, abortion should be allowed. In response to this argument, the respondents strongly opposed it. This item recorded a mean of 1.79 and a standard deviation of .64. The mean in this instance is approximately 2 (Disagree) showing that the respondents objected to it. Similarly, in the case of incest that results in pregnancy, the respondents disagreed that abortion should be allowed. In line with this, 1.85 (mean) and .61 (standard deviation) were obtained. It follows that, in difficult cases such as rape and incest that result in pregnancy, the majority of the respondents disagreed with the position that abortion should be allowed.

The Null Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant difference in the views of male and female students in the Senior High Schools on abortion. This is demonstrated in Table 3.

Table 3
Independent Sample t-Test

Gender	M	SD	t	df	P
Male	19.7	2.0	1.128	362	.260
Female	19.4	2.7			

From Table 3, the differences in mean indicate that the males seem to have a different perceptions about abortion as compared to the females. The standard deviation also indicated that the male students were more consistent in terms of their perceptions on abortion than the females. The independent sample t- test indicates, however, that the perceptions of the male students (M=19.7, SD=2.0) and those of the female students (M=19, SD=2.7) are not significantly different

statistically ($t=1.128$, $df=362$, $p > 0.05$). The aforementioned null hypothesis is, therefore, accepted.

Conclusions

From the foregoing analysis and discussions, the study concluded that the Senior High School students in the Sunyani Municipality perceive abortion as morally unacceptable. However, it is not known how they will react to abortion issues when they find themselves in the actual situation. Probably, a further research would unearth their attitudes towards abortion and that may be similar to or different from their perceptions. One acute limitation is that data on students who have committed abortion are very hard to get. What they have indicated in this study might be different from how they have been reacting practically to abortion issues.

In another perspective, what has influenced their perceptions that abortion is morally wrong is not known at this juncture. It might be from a religious point of view. Most probably, the majority of them may be believers in God. They may be followers of African Indigenous Religion or Christianity or Islam since all these three religions in Ghana frown upon abortion. It could also be from the societal point of view. This is because those who engage in abortion are looked down upon and branded as spoilt girls and boys in the Ghanaian society. There might be other factors that could have influenced the students to perceive abortion as ethically unacceptable. Nevertheless, this study has endeavoured to examine the perceptions of students in the Senior High Schools on abortion, using the Sunyani Municipality as a case study.

Recommendations

Finally, the study offers the following recommendations:

1. The curriculum for the Senior High Schools should include the treatment of human sexuality.
2. Abortion and its related issues could form part of the subject matter studied in the Senior High Schools.
3. Policy-makers and other stakeholders should work together to come up with measures that can prevent the media from disseminating unbridled sex-related information to the vulnerable members of the society especially teenagers.
4. Religious groups could include sex education in their religious formation programmes for the youth.
5. Parents should be encouraged to fulfil their parental roles and responsibilities, as well as offer guidance to their children especially the teenagers on issues related to human sexuality.
6. Senior High Schools should have permanent counsellors available to the students.

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