
Contraceptive Factors Contributing to Unintended Pregnancy in Public Universities in Delta and Bayelsa States, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study sought to ascertain the contraceptive factors to unintended pregnancy in public universities using the descriptive survey. One research question and one hypothesis guided the study. Three hundred and ninety five (395) respondents comprised of female undergraduate students were drawn from a population of nineteen thousand, seven hundred and sixty (19,760) female undergraduates in four public universities in Delta and Bayelsa States using the snow ball sampling technique constituted the respondents for the study. A thirty three (33) item self-structured questionnaire titled: Socio-Environmental Determinants of Unintended Pregnancy (SEDUP) questionnaire with four (4) items eliciting information on respondents' demographics and twenty nine (29) items eliciting information on the variables of the study scaled on a four (4) point modified Likert type scale of rating with Very High (VH) 4 points; High (H) 3 points; Low (L) 2 points and Very Low (VL) 1 point was used to generate data. The reliability index (r) was established at 0.96 using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Coefficient. The research question was answered using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation with a criterion mean value of 2.50 while the hypothesis was tested using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that non-use of contraceptives with a mean value of 3.20 which is above the criterion mean value of 2.50 is a contraceptive factor which contributed to unintended pregnancy in female undergraduates to a high extent. The findings also revealed that lack of knowledge on contraceptive methods with a mean value of 3.47 which is above the criterion mean value of 2.50 is a contraceptive factor which contributed to unintended pregnancy in female undergraduates to a high extent. It was recommended that the teaching of sexuality education at the secondary school level should be placed on the front burner.

Introduction

Achieving personal dreams as well as contributing to national growth and development through personal engagements and contributions in nation building forms the fulcrum on which the aspirations and goals of females seeking to acquire formal education rest. Efue (2021) noted that there are times such lofty dreams of female undergraduates are cut short by unpleasant developments which arise from either misplaced priorities or unforeseen and unplanned personal acts with one of such unforeseen or unplanned personal act being unintended pregnancy. Johnson-Mallard et al (2017) espoused that an unintended pregnancy is a pregnancy that was mistimed or unwanted. They further explained that mistimed pregnancies are those which would occur among women who do not want to be pregnant at the time the pregnancy occurred but at some other time in the future while unwanted pregnancies are those women experience when they do not want to be pregnant then or at any other time in the future. Bottcher, Abu-El-Noor and Abu_el-Noor (2019) stated that unintended pregnancy which account for 40% of pregnancies worldwide can occur from contraceptive failure, non-use of contraceptive services and, less commonly, rape. They not only contribute to maternal mortality and morbidity, they can negatively affect children's health.

Jain and Muralidhar (2012) stated that contraception is an intentional prevention of conception through the use of various devices, sexual practices, chemicals, drugs or surgical procedures. They also noted that, an effective contraception allows a physical relationship devoid of the fear of an unwanted pregnancy and ensures freedom to have children when desired. WHO (2017) espoused that contraceptive methods allow people to attain their desired number of children, if any, and to determine the spacing of their pregnancies thus preventing unintended pregnancies and helping to lower maternal ill-health and the number of pregnancy-related deaths.

Fagbamigbe, Adebawale and Olaniyan, (2011) espoused that the youth are generally more sexually active than any group in the population thus; sexually active adolescents are on the rise globally including Nigeria. Ahmed, Sule, Abolagi, Mohammed and Nguku (2016) noted that the early onset of puberty has widened the window for premarital sexual activity that further exposes youth (females) to the risk of unwanted pregnancy and unsafe abortion.

Nsubuga, Sekandi and Makumbi (2015) posited that the proportion of young women reporting unintended pregnancy and unmet needs for contraception is high in developing countries and identified contraceptives use as a key intervention in averting unintended pregnancy as well as its adverse outcome. They argued that effective contraceptive use would potentially prevent 90% abortion, 20% pregnancy related morbidity and 30% maternal mortality. Wang, Long, Cai, Wu, Xu, Shu, and Yin (2015) carried out a cross sectional study within 49 universities across China on contraceptive use and unintended pregnancy among unmarried female university students. The study sought to understand the attitude of students towards the use of contraceptives as well as the relationship between contraceptive behaviour and unintended pregnancy. The study revealed that sexual intercourse is relatively common among unmarried female university students with a low frequency of contraceptive use resulting in the students opting for surgical or medical abortions as escape routes from unintended pregnancy.

WHO (2011) and Lamina (2015) noted in their studies that the rate of contraceptives use among Nigerian youths had remained low over time despite the high rate of sexual activities and increased awareness of contraceptive technologies. Sweya, Msuya, Malande and Manongi (2016)

stated that in Universities, the knowledge of contraceptives among females/youths still remained questionable. Somba, Mbonile and Mahande (2014) in a cross sectional analytical study among undergraduate female students in two universities in Dare Salaam region to assess sexual behaviour, contraceptive knowledge and use among female undergraduates revealed that the withdrawal method was the mostly used method. Despite the fact that students had knowledge of contraceptives, the rate of contraceptive use was still low.

Dreyer (2012) reported a worldwide trend wherein, female students are exposed to the risk of unplanned pregnancies as a result of ineffective or non-use of contraceptives. The study of Peltzer and Pengpid (2015) revealed that at 21 years, over 20% of sexually active women reported to have been pregnant, yet only 57.4% of active students reported using contraception with an overall rate of 42.6% contraceptive non-use among sexually active students being comparable to studies among university students in China and Nigeria. They adduced reasons for a global unmet need for contraception to include: limited choice methods, fear or experience of side-effects, limited access to contraception particularly among young people, poorer segments of populations or unmarried people, cultural or religious opposition as well as poor quality of available services. They thus identified younger age, a high degree of religiosity or intrinsic religiosity, religious affiliation (Hindu and Muslim), socio-demographic factors, sexually protective behaviour, lack of internal assets and mental health status as being associated with contraceptive non-use.

The use of contraceptives would undoubtedly offer sexually active people the chance to a healthy, convenient and safe sex life. Coetzee and Ngunyulu (2015) observed that though females were aware of the benefits of contraceptives in preventing unplanned pregnancies, they however used contraceptives inconsistently as a result of being afraid of possible side-effects. They concluded that the limited awareness and use of emergency contraceptives resulted from inadequate knowledge and awareness on some contraceptive methods. Trussel and Raymond (2012) noted that the failure rate of contraceptive methods can vary from as high as 30 pregnancies per woman yearly to fewer cases. Makhaza and Ige (2014) espoused that the decline in the number of young women using contraceptives accentuates the need for more awareness and enlightenment about the usefulness of contraceptives as a measure to forestall such occurrences as unwanted pregnancies.

Justification for the Study

The high exposure rate of teenagers even at the secondary school level to certain negative influence of television, pornography, erotic literature and other social media have often times resulted in inappropriate dressing pattern, indiscriminate and unprotected sexual behaviour most times with multiple partners without recourse to the use of contraceptive devices. The desire for material gratification, affluence and economic/financial survival that make female undergraduate students indulge in reckless sexual behaviours have had them being labelled as “runs girls” and recently, “slay queens” and “slay mamas” without considering the need for sexual protective devices and the use of contraceptives thus contributing to the problem of unintended pregnancy.

It is in this regard that this study sought to ascertain the contraceptive factors contributing to unintended pregnancies in public universities in Delta and Bayelsa States, Nigeria with a view to proffering plausible solutions towards curbing the menace occasioned by unintended pregnancy.

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey design with a population of nineteen thousand, seven hundred and sixty {19,760} female undergraduate students in the four public universities in Delta and Bayelsa states namely: Delta State University, Abraka (12,465); Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun (715); Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island (2,050); and Federal University, Otuoke (4,530). A sample size of three hundred and ninety five (395) female undergraduate students was drawn comprised of 249 respondents from Delta State University, Abraka; Federal University of Petroleum Resources (14); Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island (41) and Federal University, Otuoke (91) representing 2% of the population using the snow ball sampling technique. The instrument for generating data was a thirty three (33) item self-structured questionnaire titled; Socio-Environmental Determinants of Unintended Pregnancy Questionnaire (SEDUPQ). Four (4) items elicited information on respondents' demographics and twenty nine (29) items elicited information on the variables of the study on a four (4) point modified Likert type scale rating of Very High (VH) - 4 points; High (H) - 3 points; Low (L) - 2 points and Very Low (VL) - 1 point. The reliability index of the instrument was established at 0.96 using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Coefficient with the face and content validity ascertained by three experts in the Department of Health and Safety Education, Delta State University, Abraka. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation with a criterion mean value of 2.50.

Results

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of contraceptive factors to unintended pregnancy among female university undergraduates.

N=395

S/N	Contraceptive Factors	VH	H	L	VL	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
	The extent to which lack of knowledge of contraceptive methods contribute to the occurrence of unintended pregnancy in female undergraduate students is	223 56.5%	136 34.4%	33 8.4%	03 0.8%	3.47	0.68	High
	The extent to which non-use of contraceptives contributes to the occurrence of unintended pregnancy in female undergraduate students is	122 30.9%	234 59.2%	33 8.4%	06 1.5%	3.20	0.64	High
Criterion Mean						2.50		

The results in table 1 showed that 126 respondents accounting for 31.9% responded that the extent to which contraceptive devices prevent unintended pregnancy after intercourse is very high, 212 respondents accounting for 53.7% responded that the extent to which contraceptive devices prevent unintended pregnancy after intercourse is high and 49 respondents accounting for 12.4% responded that the extent to which contraceptive devices prevent unintended pregnancy after intercourse is low while 8 respondents accounting for 2% responded that the extent to which contraceptive devices

prevent unintended pregnancy after intercourse is very low with a mean value of 3.15 and a standard deviation of 0.71.

The table showed that 223 respondents accounting for 56.5% responded that the extent to which lack of knowledge on family planning methods contribute to the occurrence of unintended pregnancy in female undergraduate students is very high, 136 respondents accounting for 34.4% responded that the extent to which lack of knowledge on family planning methods contribute to the occurrence of unintended pregnancy in female undergraduate students is high and 33 respondents accounting for 8.4% responded that the extent to which lack of knowledge on family planning methods contribute to the occurrence of unintended pregnancy in female undergraduate students is low while 3 respondents accounting for 0.8% responded that the extent to which lack of knowledge on family planning methods contribute to the occurrence of unintended pregnancy in female undergraduate students is very low with a mean value of 3.47 and a standard deviation of 0.68.

The table showed that 184 respondents accounting for 46.6% responded that the extent to which inadequate information on the use of contraceptives contributes to the occurrence of unintended pregnancy in female undergraduate students is very high, 178 respondents accounting for 45.1% responded that the extent to which inadequate information on the use of contraceptives contributes to the occurrence of unintended pregnancy in female undergraduate students is high and 29 respondents accounting for 7.4% responded that the extent to which inadequate information on the use of contraceptives contributes to the occurrence of unintended pregnancy in female undergraduate students is low while 4 respondents accounting for 1% responded that the extent to which inadequate information on the use of contraceptives contributes to the occurrence of unintended pregnancy in female undergraduate students is very low with a mean value of 3.36 and a standard deviation of 0.67.

The table showed that 122 respondents accounting for 30.9% responded that the extent to which non-use of contraceptives contributes to the occurrence of unintended pregnancy in female undergraduate students is very high, 234 respondents accounting for 59.2% responded that the extent to which non-use of contraceptives contributes to the occurrence of unintended pregnancy in female undergraduate students is high and 33 accounting for 8.4% responded that the extent to which non-use of contraceptives contributes to the occurrence of unintended pregnancy in female undergraduate students is low while 6 respondents accounting for 1.5% responded that the extent to which non-use of contraceptives contributes to the occurrence of unintended pregnancy in female undergraduate students is very low with a mean value of 3.20 and a standard deviation of 0.68.

A grand mean value of 3.30 which is above the criterion mean value of 2.50 and a standard deviation of 0.68 indicate that the extent to which the non-use of contraceptives contributed to unintended pregnancy among female undergraduates in public universities in Delta and Bayelsa States, Nigeria is high.

The conclusion therefore is that the lack of knowledge on contraceptive methods, inadequate information on the use of contraceptives and non-use of contraceptives are contraceptive factors which contributed to unintended pregnancy among female undergraduates in public universities in Delta and Bayelsa States, Nigeria to a high extent.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study showed that lack of knowledge on contraceptive methods, inadequate information on the use of contraceptives and non-use of contraceptives are contraceptive factors which contributed to unintended pregnancy among female undergraduates in public universities in Delta and Bayelsa States, Nigeria to a high extent.

This is in agreement with the study of Nsubuga, Sekandi and Makumbi (2015) who posited that the proportion of young women reporting unintended pregnancy and unmet needs for contraception is high in developing countries. The finding is also in agreement with Wang et al (2015) study which revealed that sexual intercourse is relatively common among unmarried female university students and that the frequency of contraceptive use is low thereby making female students opt for surgical or medical abortions as an escape route from unintended pregnancy. The study also supports the findings of Somba, Mbonile and Mahende (2014) whose study revealed that despite the fact that students had knowledge of contraceptives, the rate of contraceptive use was still low with students practicing the withdrawal method majorly. The findings also support Coetzee and Ngunyulu (2015) who espoused that inadequate knowledge and awareness on some contraceptive methods are factors that account for unintended pregnancy. The findings of the study also support Dreyer (2012) who stated that female students are exposed worldwide to the risk of unplanned pregnancies as a result of ineffective or non-use of contraceptives. The findings are also in agreement with Peltzer and Pengpid (2015) who posited that an overall rate of 42.6% non-use among sexually active students seem comparable to studies among university students in China and Nigeria.

Conclusion

The lack of knowledge on contraceptive methods, inadequate information on the use of contraceptives and non-use of contraceptives in no small measures are contraceptive factors that contribute to unintended pregnancy in female undergraduates. Therefore, awareness and enlightenment on the methods and use of contraceptives as well as the adverse outcome of non-use need be emphasized during sexuality education classes to students early enough from the secondary education level so as to forestall the occurrences of unintended pregnancies and the negative attributes they portend on female undergraduates.

Recommendation

The implications of unintended pregnancy on female undergraduates are far reaching with negative consequences and as such, it would be of essence and a worthwhile venture to place the teaching of sexuality education particularly contraceptive methods, ineffectiveness of certain methods and the resultant consequences of non-use in the secondary school on the front burner. This would become exigent since the secondary school is the level from which students transit to tertiary institutions and the place where positive attributes would be cultivated.

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