

## Research Article

# ATTITUDE OF FEMALE YOUTHS TOWARD THE USE OF CONTRACEPTIVES: A THREAT TO SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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### ABSTRACT

The study investigated the attitude of female youths toward the use of contraceptives and its threat to sustainable national development. The researchers used survey design of the descriptive type of research for the study. A sample size of four hundred and fifty (450) respondents was used for the study. The research instrument used for this study was a self-structured, closed ended questionnaire designed by the researchers. Inferential statistics of Analysis of Variance was used to test the hypotheses postulated at 0.05 level of significance. The researchers concluded that female youths do not have interest in the use of contraceptives. Also it was concluded that female youths hate the use of contraceptives. The researchers recommended that more orientation should be given to the general public by the Federal Government on the importance of contraceptives use and its role in achieving sustainable national development among other things.

**Keywords:** Attitude, Youth, Contraceptive, Sustainable, Development, Interest.

### INTRODUCTION

One major challenge of sustainable national development anywhere in the world is population explosion. In order to check population explosion, birth control is needed. Birth control is a method used to prevent unwanted pregnancy in order to prevent overpopulation. Birth control method are numerous and can be categorized into traditional and modern method. Birth control whether traditional or modern could involve the use of device, i.e. contraceptive. Contraceptive is a pill or device that is used to prevent pregnancy. According to Kantorova et al. (2020) contraception also known as birth control, anti conception and fertility control, is a method or device used to prevent pregnancy. It is worth noting that in the medical parlance both terms ('Birth control' and 'contraceptive') are used interchangeably. Birth control has been used since ancient times but effective and safe methods of birth control only became available in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Kantorova et al., 2020). Contraceptive use particularly modern contraceptive use remains prominent in demographic and health literature because of its numerous health benefits to women and families such as preventing unintended pregnancies, promoting healthy birth spacing, reducing lifetime risk of maternal deaths and enhancing attainment of development goals. In addition, contraceptive use remains a dominant population and health issue because of its important role in the demographic transitions in different countries with varying degrees of demographic situations (Lesthaeghe, 2016). Despite the numerous benefits accrued unto the use of contraceptives, many people still shy away from its use. According to Solanke (2017), despite the aggressive effort of government and non governmental agencies to improve access to and use of contraceptive methods in sub Saharan Africa over the past three decades, the dominant studies reported low levels of contraceptive use. Kriel et al. (2019) added that despite the many supply and demand side interventions aimed at increasing contraceptive uptake, modern contraceptive prevalence rate (mCPR) as remained very low in Nigeria and that Nigeria's mCPR is one of the lowest globally, currently estimated at

9.8%. Though contraceptive use remains a dominant population and health issue because of its associated benefits. The attitude of people toward its use will determine whether it is used or not. Attitude is a psychological construct, a mental and emotional entity that inheres in, or characterizes a person. They are complex and are an acquired state through experiences. It is an individual's predisposed state of mind regarding a value and it is precipitated through a responsive expression towards a person, place, thing, or event (the attitude object) which in turn influences the individual's thought and action (Perloff, 2017). Attitude may also be defined as an enduring predisposition or readiness to react or behave in a particular manner to a given objective or situation, idea, material or person (ledunote.com, 2020). It could be said that a female youth who has a positive attitude towards the use of contraceptive will be interested in the use. Interest is a feeling or emotion that causes attention to focus on an object, event or process. In contemporary psychology of interest, the term is used as a general concept that may encompass other more specific psychological terms, such as curiosity and to a much lesser degree surprise (Mathôt et al., 2016). Pekrun (2019) stated that interest can be more broadly defined as intrinsically motivated engagement with any specific object, content or activity. According to Encyclopedia (2021) interest, etymologically is a state or condition of being concerned in or having a share in anything, hence a legal or other claim to or share in property, benefits or advantages. Interest basically refers to the motivating force of an individual which impels him to attend a person, a thing, an object or an activity. Interest and attention are inseparable and interest is treated as latent attention and attention is considered as interest in action. Contraceptives use affects people in myriad ways. Most fundamentally, it advances human rights. Voluntary contraceptives help women and men secure their rights to decide freely and for themselves, whether, when and how many children they want to have—a basic human right. Planned, purposeful and safe use of contraceptive is family planning. Family planning, as defined by World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Population Funds (UNPF), encompasses services leading up to conception (WHO, 2019; UNPF, 2018). Family planning supports the rights of the girl child to remain unmarried and childless, until she is physically,

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psychologically and economically ready and desires to bear children. It supports the rights of adolescent boys and girls to information on how rapid, repeat pregnancies will affect their future. It strengthens the rights of women with HIV to decide on future childbearing, free of coercion. Family planning supports the rights of all people to accurate, unbiased information on contraceptive methods that can help them achieve their reproductive preferences. Yet, in many countries, despite possessing these inherent rights, women and girls often bear more children than they want or at times when they are not planned. These have a lot of implications on the family and poses a great threat to the society. The researchers observed that most female youths do not have adequate knowledge, right attitude and practice of contraceptive use and even the few that engage in the practice might end up in the abuse. The concept behind the invention of contraceptives was majorly to regulate and control procreation process but it was observed that most female youths lack the useful information about contraceptives use which also may have led to low practice and poor attitude. It was on this view that the researchers tend to examine the attitude of female youths toward the use of contraceptives and its threat to sustainable national development.

### Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- to investigate the interest of female youths in the use of contraceptives.
- to find out if female youths hate the use of contraceptives

### Research questions

The following research questions were raised for the study.

- Do female youths have interest in the use of contraceptives?
- Do female youths hate the use of contraceptives?

### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested for the study at 0.05 level of significance

- There is no significant interest of female youths in the use of contraceptives.
- There is no significant hatred attitude of female youths toward the use of contraceptives.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The importance of family planning in addressing a range of challenges in developing countries is now widely accepted. Family planning is a key factor in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. And getting it right can help countries in meeting related targets such as education, particularly for women and girls. Unintended pregnancy is a factor leading to population explosion and its associated problems. According to Beyene (2019) unintended pregnancy is a pregnancy that is either unwanted or mistimed. Unwanted pregnancy is pregnancy that occurred when no children were desired and mistimed pregnancy is the one that occurred earlier than desired. The proportion of young women reporting unintended pregnancy and unmet need for contraception remains high in developing countries (Akintade et al., 2011). Globally, there were an estimated 99.1 million unintended pregnancies per year, of which 21.6 million were in Africa and Eastern Africa alone encompasses 8.85 million. Worldwide, an estimated 44% of pregnancies and 23% of births were unintended and 56% of all unintended pregnancies ended in abortion. Likewise, 39% of all pregnancies in Africa and 46%

of pregnancies in Eastern Africa were unintended. Similarly, 27% of births in Africa and 37% of births in Eastern Africa were unintended (Bearak et al, 2018). Unintended pregnancies are associated with increased risk of unsafe abortions, maternal morbidity and mortality (Summers, 2015). An unintended pregnancy increases the risk of maternal depression and parenting stress (Bahk et al., 2015). In order to avert the unintended pregnancies and consequent adverse outcomes, contraceptive use has been prioritized as a key intervention (WHO, 2008). Contraceptive use is a pillar of safe motherhood and is now seen as a human right. It is a cost effective method of reducing maternal morbidity and mortality. Contraceptive methods have had a considerable positive impact on maternal and infant health and population growth. It is however unfortunate that unwanted pregnancies and unsafe terminations of pregnancy still occur in large numbers (Diaz, 1998). Between 2020 and 2014, of the 6.86 million abortions carried out each year in Africa, 75.6% (95% confidence interval {CI} 66.4 to 81.4%) of these were classified as unsafe (using untrained practitioners and / or non-recommended methods) (Ganatra et al., 2017). Religious beliefs and practices are some of the important factors that shape the interest and attitude of Nigerian youths toward the use of contraceptives. In most cases they are under obligation to take decisions in line with the teachings and ideals of their religious leaders or doctrine. Even within the same religious faith and between one religion and the other there are shades of opinion on various issues of life among which are marriage, fertility, contraceptive adoption and abortion. Colley et al. (2017) stated that religion is often an important part of the cultural fabric of communities and as such can influence decision making, ideologies, moral behaviours and ethical behaviours. James et al. (2018) supported that Christian ideas about contraception come from church teachings rather than scripture, as the bible has little to say about the subject. Among members of the Islamic faith, many are in support of birth control while few conservatives are opposed to the idea. The resistance to birth control was reflected in 2005 when a conference involving 40 Islamic scholars from 21 countries urged fresh efforts to push population planning and better the productive health services (Ross et al., 2017). Globally, youths are more sexually active than any subgroup of the population. The proportion of sexually active adolescents has been on the increase worldwide including Nigeria (Alika, 2012). The likelihood of being sexually active increases with grade, by 8 to 12% points each year. In 2015, 16% of 9<sup>th</sup> grade students reported they were sexually active, compared with 46% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders. The difference was slightly greater among female students (Child Trends Databank [CTD], 2017). It is estimated that the global population will increase by 2.5 billion over the next 43 years, from the current 6.7 billion to 9.2 billion in 2050 (Hammad et al., 2010). This rapid population growth may pose a burden on resource-limited health care settings particularly in many developing countries. Fast population growth may also compromise economic development and political stability. Therefore, controlling population growth is an important component in the overall developmental goal of improving living standards and the quality of life and social well-being of the people (Ezeh et al., 2012). According to Brennan (2018) population control is the practice of artificially maintaining the size of any population. It simply refers to the act of limiting the size of an animal population so that it remains manageable, as opposed to the act of protecting a species from excessive rate of extinction, which is referred to as conservation biology. According to Mnyanda (2013) youths who are knowledgeable about contraception consider it as bad because of their awareness of contraceptive side effects and their perception of the condom as reducing sexual pleasure. As such, they would rather go for an abortion which they feel is a better method of preventing the effects of unwanted pregnancy. Studies have shown that the attitude youths have about contraceptives is an important determinant of the use and non-use of contraceptives. Contraceptive

use helps couples and individuals realize their basic right to decide freely and responsibly if, when and how many children to have. The growing use of contraceptive methods has resulted in not only improvements in health-related outcomes such as reduced maternal mortality, infant mortality, cancer, infertility, endometriosis and uterine fibroids (Leon- Larios et al., 2019; Rutstein & Winter, 2015; Bhutta, 2014) but also improvements in schooling and economic outcomes, especially for girls and women (Schultz & Joshi, 2013; Canning & Schultz, 2012). According to Bernstein and Jones (2019) for a woman who has completed her desired child bearing, the knowledge that she will not take another maternity leave, for example, can impact her engagement in the labour market, career choices and advancement. The United Nations General Assembly reaffirmed these commitments when it adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations [UN], 2015). Ugoji, (2008), in his studies among students in tertiary institutions in South-western Nigeria opined that students develop negative attitude toward contraceptives for several reasons. These include insufficient information, fear of side effects, experience of contraceptive failure, the perceived tedious routine involved with methods such as the oral pill and societal disapproval of contraception among young and unmarried youths. In the opinion of Ezeanolue et al. (2015) spousal approval or disapproval affects contraceptive use. Women whose partners disapprove contraception are less likely to use modern contraceptive than women whose partners approve contraception. Raselekoane et al. (2016) added that negative attitude towards contraception was based on the belief that contraceptive methods are unreliable, cause cancer, decrease sexual pleasure, increase promiscuity and have no significant effect. In every cultural group events such as coitus, pregnancy and birth show differences. In a society, appropriate conditions for fertility and bringing the child to the world, pregnancy, how birth will be, what the prenatal and postnatal care standards are, the 'birth culture' that is peculiar to the collective and tries to preserve the basic approaches, perhaps changing a little from generation to generation and taught to other generations. (Sulthana, et al., 2015). Population explosion is a threat to sustainable national development everywhere in the world. Hence, it needs to be prevented. In order to prevent population explosion birth control is needed. The new development agenda includes two targets relevant for family planning under broader goals on health and on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Contraceptives use helps couples to plan in advance for the desired number of children in their lifetime and allows pregnancy spacing. Contraceptive in form of family planning is important for the health of a mother and her children, as well as for the family's economic welfare. Thus, access and utilization of family planning services helps to control population growth and enhance economic development (Al-Muallm, 2015).

## METHODOLOGY

The researchers used survey design of the descriptive type of research for the study. This is because it gave the researchers the opportunity to elicit the needed information from the respondents. The population of the study consisted of all female undergraduate students from 100 level to 400 level of University of Nigeria Nsukka, Ikere Campus. The 100 level to 400 level female students are one thousand six hundred and eighty seven students (1,687) (source: Academic Planning Unit, 2019). The sample size of four hundred and fifty (450) respondents which is 27% of the total population of the female undergraduate student was used for the study. This sample size is 50% larger than the sample size suggested by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), for a population of 1,700 individuals in their table for "Determining sample size from a given population". The researchers used this larger sample size because it will help to draw a more acceptable inference for the study. The respondents were drawn from

the five (5) schools which are school of education, art and social science, science, languages and vocational and technical education using simple random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured close ended questionnaire which was constructed by the researchers to obtain information from the respondents for the purpose of the study on the attitude of female youths toward the use of contraceptives and its threat to sustainable national development. The face and content validation of the instrument was done by giving the draft of the questionnaire to two (2) experts. In order to determine the reliability of the instrument, split half method was used for the study. The researchers administered the instrument to forty five (45) respondents from one of the departments that was not among the departments used for the research. The data collected was analysed with the use of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The coefficient obtained was 0.89 at 0.05 level of significance. The entire data generated from the questionnaire was analysed using One-way Anova to test the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

#### Hypothesis 1

There is no significant interest of female youths in the use of contraceptives.

**Table 1: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of interest of female youths in contraceptive use.**

	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	$f_{(cal)}$	$f_{(tab)}$	Sig.
Between Groups	80.194	1	80.194	3.230	3.260	060
Within Groups	10.964	448	024			
Total	91.158	449				

**N = 450, P > 0.05**

**Source: Field work 2020**

The result of analysis presented in table 1 revealed that f calculated (3.230) was lesser than f table value of 3.260. Also, the P-value (0.060) was greater than 0.05 level of significance. These results led to the non rejection of hypothesis one. This means that female youths do not have interest in the use of contraceptives.

#### Hypothesis 2

There is no significant hatred attitude of female youths toward the use of contraceptives.

**Table 2: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of hatred from female youths for use of contraceptive**

	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	$f_{(cal)}$	$f_{(tab)}$	Sig.
Between Groups	69.209	1	69.209	922.487	3.260	000
Within Groups	33.611	448	075			
Total	102.820	449				

**N = 450, P < 0.05**

**Source: Field work 2020**

The result of analysis presented in table 2 revealed that f calculated (922.487) was greater than f table value of 3.260. Also, the P-value

(0.000) was less than 0.05 level of significance. These results led to the rejection of hypothesis two. This means that Female youths hate the use of contraceptives.

## DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1 which stated that there is no significant interest of female youths in the use of contraceptive was not rejected. This implies that female youths do not have interest in the use of contraceptives. This might be as a result of religious or cultural influence. This finding supported the assertion of Colley et al. (2017) that religion is often an important part of the cultural fabric of communities and as such can influence decision making, ideologies, moral behaviours and ethical behaviours. The finding also supported the assertion of James et al. (2018) that Christian ideas about contraception come from church teachings rather than scripture, as the bible has little to say about the subject. The lack of interest for the use of contraceptives by female youths might lead to increased procreation beyond the available national resources. Feeding, housing and access to medical care might be difficult due to overpopulation and this might be detrimental to sustainable national development. Hypothesis 2 which stated that there is no significant hatred attitude of female youths toward the use of contraceptives was rejected. This means that female youths hate the use of contraceptives. This finding supported the view of Mnyanda (2013) who asserted that youths who are knowledgeable about contraception consider it as bad because of their awareness of contraceptive side effects and their perception of the condom as reducing sexual pleasure. As such, they would rather go for an abortion which they feel is a better method of preventing the effects of unwanted pregnancy. Studies have shown that the attitude youths have about contraceptives is an important determinant of the use and non-use of contraceptives. This finding also supported the report of Ugoji (2008) in his studies among students in tertiary institutions in South-western Nigeria that students develop negative attitude toward contraceptives for several reasons. These include insufficient information, fear of side effects, experience of contraceptive failure, the perceived tedious routine involved with methods such as the oral pill and societal disapproval of contraception among young and unmarried youths. In every cultural group events such as coitus, pregnancy and birth show differences. In a society, appropriate conditions for fertility and bringing the child to the world, pregnancy, how birth will be, what the prenatal and postnatal care standards are, the 'birth culture' that is peculiar to the collective and tries to preserve the basic approaches, perhaps changing a little from generation to generation and taught to other generations (Sulthana, et al., 2015). In the opinion of Ezeanolue et al. (2015) spousal approval or disapproval affects contraceptive use. Women whose partners disapprove contraception are less likely to use modern contraceptive than women whose partners approve contraception. Raselekoane et al. (2016) added that negative attitude towards contraception was based on the belief that contraceptive methods are unreliable, cause cancer, decrease sexual pleasure, increase promiscuity and have no significant effect. The hatred attitude of female youth toward the use of contraceptives may debar them from enjoying the numerous health benefits associated with the use of contraceptives. This indeed is a threat to a sustainable national development because a nation whose citizens are not healthy cannot be developed.

## Conclusion

This study investigated the attitude of female youths toward the use of contraceptives: a threat to sustainable national development. Based on the findings derived from this study, the researchers concluded that female youths do not have interest in the use of

contraceptives. Therefore increasing procreation in the society, thereby leading to over population, poverty, poor socio-economic status, postpartum depression. Also the researchers concluded that female youths hate the use of contraceptives, thereby becoming a threat to sustainable national development as a result of insecurity, unemployment and inadequate health care services resulting from over population. More orientation should be given to the general public by the Federal Government on the importance of contraceptives use and its role in achieving sustainable national development. Furthermore, male and female youths should engage themselves in the use of health related social media platforms, as this will afford them the opportunity to acquire more information about contraceptives use. Lastly all tiers of educational institutions should engage their students in the teaching and learning of sex education irrespective of their gender.

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