

AWARENESS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS CONTRACEPTIVES AMONG TEENAGERS OF BARANGAY COGON, TAGBILARAN CITY, BOHOL

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ABSTRACT

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Despite a decline in national prevalence in teenage pregnancy, it remains a persistent public health concern in the Philippines. Awareness and attitude on the use of contraceptives are important factors in addressing the rise in teenage pregnancy, especially since the adolescent period is the stage where individuals are risk takers and sexual desire towards the opposite sex is at its peak, which may lead to premarital sex that results in teenage pregnancy. However, the use of contraceptives among unmarried Filipino individuals is still considered unacceptable in the community; thus this study was conducted to assess the

level of awareness and attitudes toward contraceptives among teenagers in



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Barangay Cogon, Tagbilaran City, Bohol. A descriptive quantitative research design was employed with 318 respondents aged 15–19 years, including both in-school and out-of-school youth. Data were collected using validated questionnaires to assess respondents' awareness and attitudes toward the use of contraceptives. Reliability testing yielded acceptable Cronbach's alpha values (.859 for awareness and .88 for attitude). The gathered data were tested for normality and statistically analyzed. Results indicated that respondents demonstrated moderate awareness (composite mean = 2.92) and a moderately positive attitude toward contraceptives (composite mean = 2.81). Significant relationships were found between demographic variables (age, sex, and educational status) and both awareness and attitude ($p < .05$). A significant positive correlation was also observed between awareness and attitude toward contraceptives ($p < .001$). These findings underscore the importance of strengthening comprehensive, community-based sexual health education programs to improve contraceptive knowledge and foster positive attitudes among adolescents.

INTRODUCTION

Teenage pregnancy remains a public health concern worldwide and in the Philippines. Recent statistics found that the global adolescent birth rate for girls aged 10–14 years in 2022 was estimated at 1.5 per 1000 women, with higher rates in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Adolescence is a stage in an individual's life where sex hormones are at their peak, making teenagers more interested in sex.

In the Philippines, more than 500 adolescents become pregnant and give birth every day, making the country one of the highest teenage pregnancy rates among the ASEAN members, which somehow influences the economic status of the country (UNFPA, 2020). This increase in teenage pregnancy rate prompted the strengthening of RA 10354 known as "The Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012", which is a groundbreaking law that guarantees universal and free access to nearly all modern contraceptives for all citizens, including impoverished communities, at government health centers (Philippine Commission on Women, 2012).

As of the 2022 National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS), teenage pregnancies among Filipino women—15 to 19 years old—fell from 8.6 percent in 2017 to 5.4 percent in 2022 (Dela Peña, 2023). This data is a good indicator that teenage pregnancy is decreasing. However, adolescent pregnancy cases persist, and awareness and attitude toward contraceptives are still a public health goal. In Tagbilaran City, Bohol, there is still a battle over teenage pregnancy. As of October 31, 2023, based on the City Health Office of Tagbilaran's statistics, there are a total of 78 cases of teenage pregnancy, with Barangay Cogon recording the highest number at 12 cases. This calls for utmost concern in determining the awareness and attitude towards

contraceptives among teenagers, thus the conduct of this study.

Awareness refers to the knowledge of teenagers about contraception and different kinds of contraceptives. The study is essential as it relates to the promotion of contraceptives and safe sex practice, and conducts health education about the importance of using contraceptives to lessen the possibility of getting pregnant and associated reproductive health risks to the teenagers involved. Given these persistent global patterns and contextual challenges, it is necessary to research teenagers' contraceptive understanding and attitudes in specific local areas where teenage pregnancy is still prevalent. Despite extensive international research on adolescents' awareness and attitudes toward contraception use, particularly in African and Asian contexts, there is a notable gap in locally focused, community-based studies in the Philippines.

Existing research focuses mostly on national trends or school-based populations, with little attention given to barangay-level assessments of both in-school and out-of-school kids. Furthermore, few research have investigated the association between demographic variables, awareness, and attitudes about contraception among Filipino teenagers. Empirical data on adolescents' contraceptive awareness and attitudes are rare in Barangay Cogon, Tagbilaran City, which has one of the highest recorded rates of teen pregnancy. Addressing this gap is critical for guiding context-specific interventions and boosting community-based reproductive health services.

This study is based on known behavioral and nursing theories, which give a solid foundation for understanding teens' contraceptive awareness and attitudes (King, 1981).

The study is guided by Imogene King's Theory of Goal Attainment, which examines how good communication, mutual understanding, and engagement between teenagers and health educators influence informed contraceptive decision-making. In this context, the theory supports the assessment of how teenagers can create and achieve personal health objectives, such as avoiding unwanted pregnancy, through knowledge acquisition and positive attitudes. Adolescents' awareness and attitudes concerning contraception are affected by social interaction and observational learning in their surroundings, which includes peers, family members, and media influences (Bandura, 2004). Furthermore, the Theory of Planned Behavior suggests that teenagers' attitudes regarding contraception, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioral control all influence their intention to use contraception (Ajzen, 1991).

In addition to these theoretical foundations, the research is grounded in fundamental legal and regulatory frameworks that assure ethical behavior and contextual relevance. These include Republic Act No. 10354, also known as the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012, which requires access to reproductive health information and services; the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3, which focuses on good health and well-being (United Nations, n.d.); and DepEd Order No. 31 (2018), which establishes policy guidelines for implementing Comprehensive Sexuality

Education. These theories and legal bases work together to provide an integrated framework for understanding the human, societal, and structural elements that influence teenagers' contraceptive awareness, attitudes, and health practices.

With the risky behaviors among teenagers, teenage pregnancy remains a global issue that has an impact on maternal and fetal health, particularly in developing countries with less developed healthcare systems (Chakole et al., 2022). It raises human rights issues, as it prevents girls from attending school, accessing contraception, and obtaining reproductive health information. Irregular use of birth control, frequent sex, low socioeconomic status, domestic violence, neglect, and ignorance of sexual and reproductive health are predictors of teenage pregnancy (Ochen et al., 2019). This calls for utmost concern in determining the awareness and attitude towards contraceptives among teenagers.

Advancements in contraceptive methods seek to reduce the incidence of unintended pregnancies. Bansode et al. (2023) observed that the most significant advancements in women's reproductive health occurred in the 20th century, leading to a broader range of medical options, devices, and therapies. Contraceptive services alleviate health issues associated with adolescent parenthood by delaying conception, hence reducing maternal morbidity and pregnancy mortality, while safeguarding health and human rights. The public maintains a favorable view of contemporary contraceptives and demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of them (Der & Tarkang, 2023).

Students' views and understanding of contraceptives are often shaped by age, marital status, and religious beliefs (Kara et al., 2019). The understanding of contraceptives among men is mostly shaped by peer experiences, healthcare providers, public awareness campaigns, and the negative consequences encountered by their partners. They are concerned about the effectiveness of the approaches, the negative health implications for women and children, and the lack of regard for their HIV status. Contraceptive use was more common among individuals with higher educational qualifications (Grover et al., 2022).

Nonetheless, young males are deeply fascinated by several biological and cultural misconceptions around contraception. Some people think that birth control will affect their future fertility, which could lead to congenital disabilities or problems getting pregnant. Some individuals believe that birth control will result in women becoming more promiscuous and will diminish their sexual autonomy (Mwaisaka et al., 2020). Furthermore, adolescents frequently experience feelings of humiliation regarding contraceptive use as a result of societal censure and the fear of stigmatization. According to Boamah-Kaali et al. (2021), the inability to deliver information may negatively impact both treatment adherence and an individual's health outcomes. As a general rule, adolescents are aware of modern methods of birth control, particularly oral tablets and condoms, according to research that was carried out in African and Asian cultures. On the other hand, this comprehension

does not always result in effective or consistent execution due to hurdles related to gender, religion, and social issues.

Research that was carried out in Ghana, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and Kenya (Der & Tarkang, 2023; Atuhaire et al., 2021; Kara et al., 2019; Marimirofa et al., 2022) demonstrates that despite the fact that the majority of adolescents are aware of birth control, they continue to face difficulties in gaining access to services that are specifically designed to meet their requirements. The majority of adolescents in Asian cultures exhibited good attitudes toward contraception and displayed a moderate level of comprehension of the topic. They did, however, feel discomfort when discussing the usage of contraceptives and indicated issues surrounding social judgment and acceptability (Muangchang & Pongsuthirak, 2017; Ghule et al., 2024). It was discovered that a similar pattern occurred. The findings of this research collectively highlight the fact that a range of factors, such as personal knowledge, cultural standards, gender expectations, and educational exposure, influence the beliefs and awareness of contraception among adolescents.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design to provide a thorough and accurate account of teenagers' knowledge of and attitudes toward contraceptives in a particular locality. This design allowed one to capture a snapshot of the existing conditions without imposing any experimental or intervention variables. The study was conducted in the Cogon district of the City of Tagbilaran, Bohol. According to the City Health Office, Barangay Cogon had the highest number of teenage pregnancy cases last January - June 2019, and as of October 31, 2023, had a total of 12 cases among all barangays in Tagbilaran City. The respondents of this study were 318 teenagers aged 15-18 years who were currently studying and Out-of-School youths residing in Barangay Cogon, Tagbilaran City, Bohol. Excluded from the study were adolescents under 15 years and those who declined to participate. A modified questionnaire patterned after the "Awareness on Contraception among Participants Questionnaire" by Elkalmi et al. (2015) was used in the study to assess respondents' level of awareness. A standardized tool from Black

(2013), the Contraceptive Attitude Scale (CAQ), was used to determine the level of Attitude among the respondents. The modified tool was pilot tested with a Cronbach's alpha of .859. Items were rated using the Likert Scale:

Scale	Symbol	Descriptive Value	Meaning	Interpretation
4	SA	Strongly Agree	The respondents have high knowledge about contraceptives.	Highly Aware
3	A	Agree	The respondents have moderate knowledge of contraceptives.	Moderately Aware
2	D	Disagree	The respondents have poor knowledge about contraceptives.	Poorly Aware
1	SD	Strongly Disagree	The respondents are not knowledgeable.	Not Aware at All

Scale	Symbol	Descriptive Value	Meaning	Interpretation
4	SA	Strongly Agree	The respondents hold positive beliefs about contraceptives.	Positive Attitude
3	A	Agree	The respondents have moderately positive beliefs about contraceptives.	Moderately Positive Attitude
2	D	Disagree	The respondents have negative beliefs about contraceptives.	Negative Attitude
1	SD	Strongly Disagree	The respondents have a firm negative belief about contraceptives.	Highly Negative Attitude

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study examines the respondents' demographic profile, including age, sex, and educational status. Results revealed that the majority of respondents (23.6%) were 19 years old, female (53.8%), and currently enrolled in Senior High Schools (36.5%).

Level of Awareness Towards Contraceptives among Teenagers. The results of the study indicate that the majority of the adolescents who participated in the survey had a modest level of awareness regarding contraception. It was discovered that the group of respondents had the highest level of awareness of the fact that contraceptives assist in preventing sperm from entering the reproductive system of a woman during sexual activity (WM = 3.47). The fact that teenagers have a clear awareness of the principal aim of contraception is suggested by this. Following closely behind this is the moderate knowledge that male condoms exist and are available (WM = 3.32), which suggests that male condoms are highly visible, frequently promoted, and easily obtainable, and that they are considered to be the most familiar method of contraception

among adolescents.

Gaps have been observed, though, especially in respondents' knowledge of more technical forms of birth control, such as female condoms (WM = 2.76), Depo-Provera injections (WM = 2.76), and appropriate condom use, which includes placing a condom correctly before having sex (WM = 2.75). According to these findings, although respondents might be aware that some contraceptive methods exist, they do not fully comprehend how to use them correctly, the characteristics of each method, or the options available to women, all of which are essential for effective contraceptive practice.

Moreover, poor knowledge was also noted in the data, revealing further gaps in the respondents' understanding of contraceptives. Respondents have rated poor awareness on the aspect that it is only women who are responsible for using contraceptives (WM= 2.39). This may appear to have a low weighted mean. Still, it indicates a more positive result, indicating that the use of contraceptives is a shared responsibility for both men and women.

Overall, the pattern of responses suggests that teenagers are more knowledgeable about the basic function and commonly used methods of contraception, particularly male condoms, but demonstrate weaker awareness of female-controlled, long-acting, and responsibility-related aspects of contraceptive use. These findings point to the need for more comprehensive and balanced sexual and reproductive health education that not only reinforces basic concepts but also addresses correct usage, method diversity, and shared accountability in preventing unintended pregnancies.

Level of Attitude Towards Contraceptives among Respondents.

A composite mean of 2.81 indicates that respondents' attitudes about contraceptives were usually somewhat positive. This implies that although teens generally have positive opinions about using contraceptives, these opinions are still developing and could still be impacted by interpersonal, societal, and cultural variables.

Among the attitude indicators, the statement "*Using contraceptives is much more desirable than having an abortion*" obtained the highest weighted mean (WM = 3.24), indicating a moderate positive attitude toward contraception. According to this conclusion, respondents believe that contraception is a better preventive option than abortion. Because the use of contraceptives dramatically lowers the rate of unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions, this perception is consistent with global public health perspectives. Effective contraceptive use also lowers mother-to-child HIV transmission, boosts girls' educational achievement, increases women's involvement in the workforce and in society at large, and reduces maternal and newborn health risks, according to the World Health Organization (2019).

The item "I do not talk about contraception with my friends or family," on the other hand, had the lowest weighted mean (WM = 2.30), which was interpreted as indicating a negative attitude toward communication about contraception. This finding suggests that many teenagers feel awkward or

reluctant to talk about contraception with their close friends and family. Such hesitancy could be caused by perceived parental disapproval, cultural taboos, or fear of stigma. This conclusion is supported by earlier research, which points out that social disapproval and embarrassment frequently deter teenagers from candidly talking about using contraceptives, which may have a detrimental impact on their ability to obtain correct information and make well-informed decisions (Boamah-Kaali et al., 2021). Teens' decisions on contraception are nevertheless greatly influenced by peer experiences and observations, even though they may refrain from talking about it with family members. On the other hand, attitudes may be indirectly influenced by religious beliefs and family values (Claringbold et al., 2019). The respondents' consistent pattern with data from related studies is confirmed by the composite mean of 2.81 overall. 51.5% of respondents had a moderate attitude toward contraception, according to Latt et al. (2021). On the other hand, Mudi and Pradhan (2023) discovered that around two-thirds of Juang women had low-to-moderately positive opinions about using contraceptive methods.

These parallels suggest that moderate positivity toward contraception among adolescents remains a common trend, underscoring the need for interventions that not only promote favorable attitudes but also encourage open communication and normalize discussions surrounding contraceptive use.

Relationship between the Demographic Profile of the Respondents and their Level of Awareness and Attitude. The data presented in Table 1 examines the relationship between respondents' demographic profiles and their levels of awareness and attitudes toward contraceptives, using appropriate inferential statistical tests. Spearman's rho was used to assess the relationship between age and both awareness and attitude, and the chi-square test of independence was used to determine the associations between sex, educational status, and the outcome variables.

The results reveal a statistically significant relationship between age and level of contraceptive awareness ($\rho = .273, p = .000$) and between age and attitude toward contraceptives ($\rho = .193, p = .001$). This indicates that as age increases, respondents' awareness and attitude toward contraceptives also tend to increase.

In terms of sex, the chi-square analysis showed a significant association between sex and level of awareness ($\chi^2 = 9.557, p = .023$), as well as between sex and attitude toward contraceptives ($\chi^2 = 17.581, p = .001$). These findings imply that male and female respondents differ significantly in both their awareness and attitudes regarding contraceptive use, highlighting the role of gender-related factors in reproductive health knowledge and perceptions.

Moreover, respondents' educational status was significantly associated

with contraceptive awareness ($\chi^2 = 27.329, p = .001$) and attitudes toward contraceptives ($\chi^2 = 27.451, p = .001$). This suggests that those with higher educational attainment tend to be more aware and have more positive attitudes towards the use of contraceptives. Education enhances adolescents' access to accurate reproductive health information. These findings align with prior studies. Nsanya et al. (2019) reported that being in school and receiving contraceptive information from social networks and media significantly increased adolescents' contraceptive knowledge and self-efficacy. Similarly, Grover et al. (2022) found that higher educational levels were associated with increased contraceptive use. Furthermore, Ghule et al. (2024) emphasized that gender-equitable attitudes are related to improved contraceptive communication and use. D'Souza et al. (2022) noted that multiple socio-demographic and structural factors, including education, social norms, accessibility, and cost, were involved.

Table 1. *Test of Relationship between the Demographic Profile of the Respondents and their Level of Awareness (n = 318)*

Variables	Statistical Test Used	Test Value	P-Value	Decision	Interpretation
Age and Awareness	Spearman's rho	.273	.000	Reject the Ho	There is a significant relationship between the variables.
Sex and awareness	Chi-square Test	9.557	.023	Reject the Ho	There is a significant relationship between the variables.
Educational Status and Awareness	Chi-square Test	27.329	.001	Reject the Ho	There is a significant relationship between the variables.
Age and Attitude	Spearman's rho	.193	.001	Reject the Ho	There is a significant relationship between the variables.
Sex and Attitude	Chi-square Test	17.581	.001	Reject the Ho	There is a significant relationship between the variables.
Educational Status And Attitude	Chi-square Test	27.451	.001	Reject the Ho	There is a significant relationship between the variables.

Correlation between the Awareness and Attitude among Teenagers regarding

Contraceptives. The data presented in Table 5 provides insights into the correlation between awareness and attitude towards contraceptives among teenagers. The statistical test used to analyze the data includes Spearman's rho.

The Spearman's rho value of **0.236** indicates a weak-to-moderate positive correlation, suggesting that higher levels of contraceptive awareness are associated with more positive attitudes toward contraceptive use. This

finding implies that increased knowledge and understanding of contraceptives may contribute to more favorable perceptions and greater acceptance of contraceptive use among adolescents.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of Guzzo and Hayford (2018), who reported that individuals with a more positive attitude towards contraception during adolescence were more likely to use effective contraceptive methods in adulthood compared to those with less favorable attitudes or no contraceptive use. Their study further demonstrated that accurate knowledge of condoms and reproductive health during adolescence was positively associated with both contraceptive attitudes and subsequent utilization. Adolescents who possessed greater contraceptive knowledge and more favorable attitudes were found to use contraception more consistently later in life.

Similarly, Der and Tarkang (2023) found that a substantial proportion of respondents demonstrated adequate knowledge of modern contraceptive methods (78.5%) and a predominantly positive attitude toward contraceptive use (63%). These findings reinforce the present results by underscoring the close link between knowledge and attitude in shaping adolescents' reproductive health behaviors. Collectively, the evidence suggests that enhancing contraceptive awareness among teenagers may play a crucial role in fostering a positive attitude and promoting informed and responsible contraceptive practices.

Table 5. *Test of Correlation between the Awareness and Attitude among Teenagers regarding Contraceptives (n = 318)*

Variables	Statistical Test Value	Test Value	P-Value	Decision	Interpretation
Awareness and Attitude	Spearman's rho	0.236	< .001	Reject the Ho	There is a significant relationship between the variables.

CONCLUSION

The level of awareness and attitude on contraceptive use among the teenagers of Barangay Cogon, Tagbilaran City, is associated with their demographic profile, such as age, sex, and educational attainment. Furthermore, a positive association was found between attitude and awareness, indicating that the more aware the individual is about contraceptives, the more positive their attitude towards contraceptive use. The finding supports Imogene King's theory of Goal Attainment, which emphasizes the importance of knowledge, communication, and mutual understanding in informed health decision-making. Furthermore, the theory on Social Learning by Bandura underscores the influence of social environments on the level of awareness and attitudes of teenagers regarding contraceptive use.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are provided.

1. The University of Bohol Nursing Department, in collaboration with the Local Government Units of Tagbilaran City, will conduct seminars for teenagers on the types, use, and accessibility of contraceptives.
2. The College of Allied Health Sciences will organize community symposia for all women of childbearing age, addressing misconceptions and promoting openness on contraceptive use.
3. The researchers may coordinate with the City Health Office (CHO) and the Cogon Rural Health Unit (RHU) to disseminate research findings and support the strengthening of comprehensive sexuality education programs in the barangay.
4. Future researchers may replicate the study with a broader research environment coverage to further check additional factors influencing teenagers' awareness and attitudes toward contraceptives.
- 5.

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