

Original Research Article

# Factors Affecting Contraceptives usage among Pupils in Selected Secondary Schools within Chingola District, Zambia

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**Abstract: Background:** The contraceptives usage among pupils remains a topical issue globally, regionally and locally. Zambia is underpinned by Christian principles and values and despite that, the country continues to record high levels of unplanned pregnancies among pupils and this hampers the education of a girl child. The study has established that most pupils are sexually active and this puts them at a higher risk of getting unplanned pregnancies and consequently dropping out of School. **Objective:** The study aimed at investigating the “Factors Affecting Contraceptive Usage Among Pupils in Selected Secondary Schools within Chingola District, Zambia”. **Methods and Materials:** The study used a cross-sectional study design in which 52 pupils from Chingola and Sekela Secondary Schools were included in a study. The study employed semi-questionnaires and interview guides. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. Chi-square test was used to determine the relationship between independent and dependent variables. **Conclusion:** The study has revealed that pupils are at a higher risk of unplanned pregnancies as well as sexually transmitted diseases despite them having knowledge of contraceptives usage. The study has also indicated that 63.5% of pupils were aware of the existence of contraceptives and their functions as a means of prevention of pregnancies. Therefore, there is need of deliberate move by Ministry of Health through District Health offices to promote accessibility to various methods of contraceptives by pupils especially those in Secondary Schools who are sexually active.

**Keywords:** Contraceptives, Usage, Pupils.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Modern contraceptives usage remains an important public health intervention as a cost-effective strategy to prevent unplanned pregnancies especially in developing countries (Beson *et al.*, 2018). In Zambia, the Ministry of Health (MoH) report on reproductive health acknowledges that adolescents are at higher risk of getting pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases (Chola *et al.*, 2022). Similarly, the Ministry of Education (MoE) affirms that unplanned and early pregnancies greatly affect the health and education of a girl child especially those in Secondary Schools (MoE, 2019). In the same vein, despite the benefits of contraceptives, Beson *et al.*, (2018) reports low usage of contraceptives among reproductive-aged women in most developing countries. While much has been researched on contraceptives usage in Zambia, little has been documented on their usage among pupils in Secondary Schools within Chingola District, Zambia. It is on this basis that the study assessed the “Factors Affecting

Contraceptives Usage Among Pupils in Secondary Schools within Chingola District, Zambia”.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The United Nations (UN) affirms that contraceptives usage is among the indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN, 2019). Aviisah *et al.*, (2018) stated that, the use of modern contraceptives helps to reduce maternal deaths, prevent unsafe abortions, and or other complications that happen due to unplanned pregnancies, especially to young people who are not yet ready for child bearing. Sidibé *et al.*, (2020) reported that low usage of modern contraceptives contributes to over 90 percent of the annual unplanned pregnancies among adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa. Additionally, Chola *et al.*, (2020) points out that adolescent childbearing is associated with adverse health and social economic risks such as increased maternal mortality and morbidity, obstetric fistulae, sexually transmitted infections and School

dropouts. Despite the adverse effects of adolescent pregnancies, Chola *et al.*, (2020) reports that contraceptives usage among adolescents in Sub-Saharan Africa remains low. Zambia’s adolescent contraceptives usage remains low as well despite high universal knowledge of at least one modern contraceptives method such as the use of the condoms, (Chola *et al.*, 2020).

### 3.0 OBJECTIVES

The general objective of the study was to explore the “Factors Affecting the Contraceptives Usage Among Pupils in Secondary Schools within Chingola district, Zambia”. The specific objectives were to; investigate the extent to which individual related factors affect contraceptives usage among pupils in Secondary Schools within Chingola District, Zambia, investigate how the society has an effect on contraceptives usage among pupils in Secondary Schools Within Chingola District, Zambia and assess the extent to which the health systems affect contraceptives usage among pupils in Secondary Schools Within Chingola District, Zambia.

### 4.0 METHODS

The study used a cross-sectional study design in which 52 pupils from Chingola and Sekela Secondary Schools were included in a study. The study employed semi-questionnaires and interview guides. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. Chi-square test was used to determine the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The study’s inclusion criteria were; all adolescents who were in grade 11 and 12 respectively with the age limit of 18 years. The study did not include adolescents who were pregnant before. The sample Size was calculated using Slovin’s formula;  $\{n=N/(1+Ne^2)\}$ . The confidence level was placed at confidence 95% (0.05).  $n = \frac{N}{1+Ne^2}$

Where; N=Total population, e=standard error=0.05 and n=sample size from the population. Therefore;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

$$n = \frac{60}{1 + 60 \times 0.05^2}$$

$$n = \frac{60}{1.15}$$

$$n = 52.17$$

$$N=52$$

### 5.0 DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social sciences (SPSS) version 21 for closed ended questions. This enabled the researcher to report percentage of respondents giving answers that fell in each category. The open ended questions were analyzed using thematic data analysis.

### 6.0 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical approval was sought from Excellent Research Ethics and Sciences (ERES) Converge. The purpose of the study was explained and a written consent was obtained from each and every respondent before the data was collected. The pupils that did not consent to participate in the study were reassured that they would not suffer any consequences as a result of not participating. Those Pupils who consented to the study were asked to sign the consent forms, which were explained to them fully before data was collected. The questionnaires were administered and interviews carried out in privacy respectively. The respondents were assured of anonymity as serial numbers were used on the questionnaires instead of writing their names. After data collection, the questionnaires were kept under lock and key for security and confidentiality purposes. No one, apart from the Principal researcher was allowed to access the collected data. The pupils were not subjected to any physical harm as the study did not involve invasive procedures or manipulation of any form.

### 7.0 RESSULTS

The findings of the study were presented according to the sections of the research instruments and in line with the themes that emerged. Some data were grouped together to give an overall picture. Data was presented using frequency tables, charts and graphs and narrations where open ended questions were asked.

#### 7.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents: The Grade Level of the Pupils in the Study:

The figure below gives the summary in percentages of the level of grades of the pupils who were part of the study.

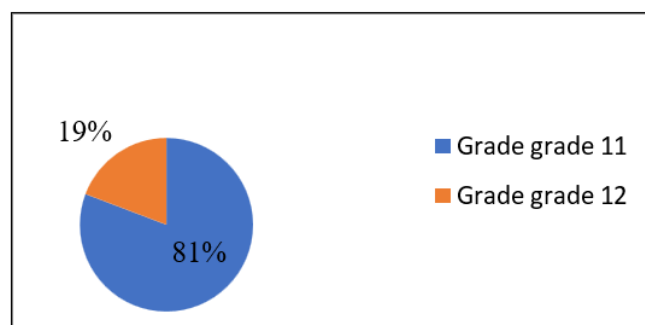
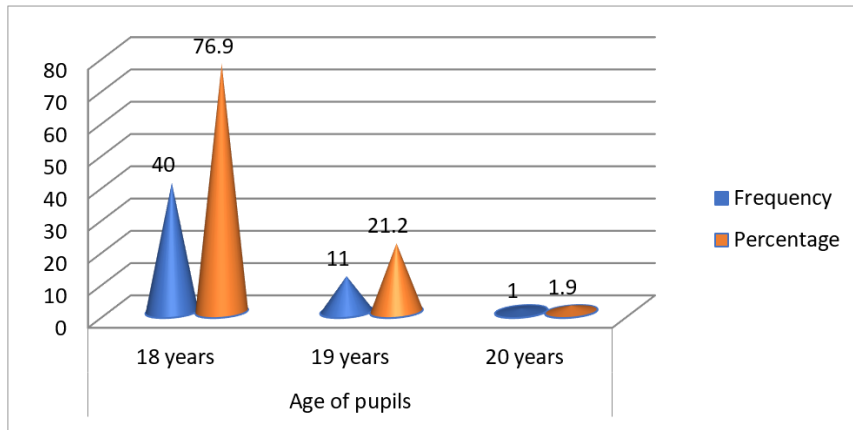


Figure 1: Grade level of Pupils

As shown in figure 1 above, 81% of the pupils were in grade 11 while 19% were in grade 12. The low participation among the grade 12 was as a result of them sitting for the November/December 2023 National examinations.

**Age distribution of Pupils under study:**

The figure below shows the age distribution among the pupils that were part of the study.

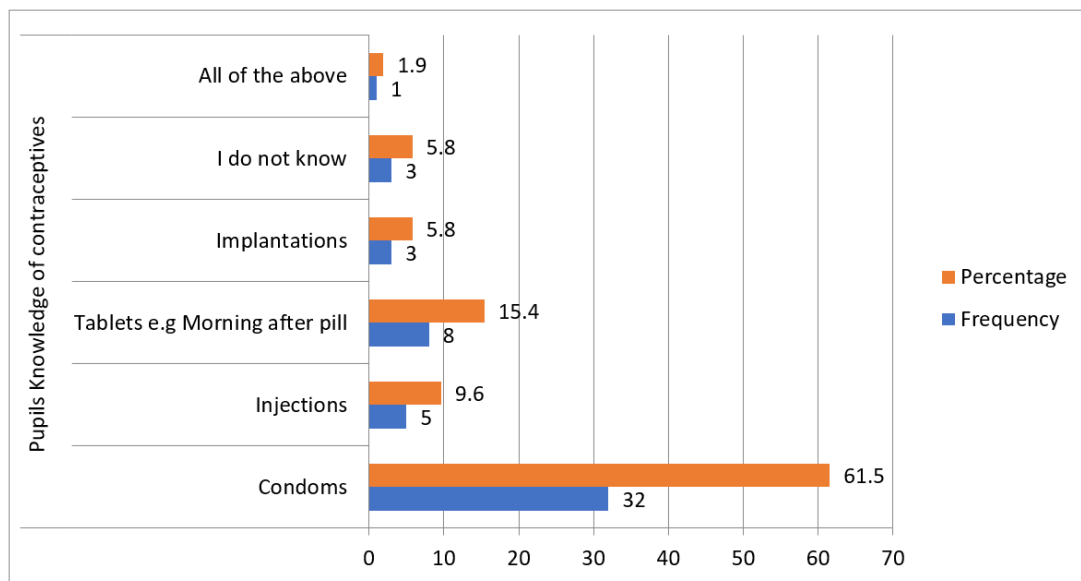


**Figure 2: Age distribution of Pupils**

As indicated in figure 2 above, the findings indicate that of the total participants, 76.9% were 18, 21.2% were 19 and 1.9% were 20 years old respectively. This indicates that the pupils were old enough to participate in the study as the consent age is 18 years and above in accordance with the Zambian law.

**7.2 Individual Related Factors**

The figure below shows the knowledge on contraceptives usage by pupils under study.

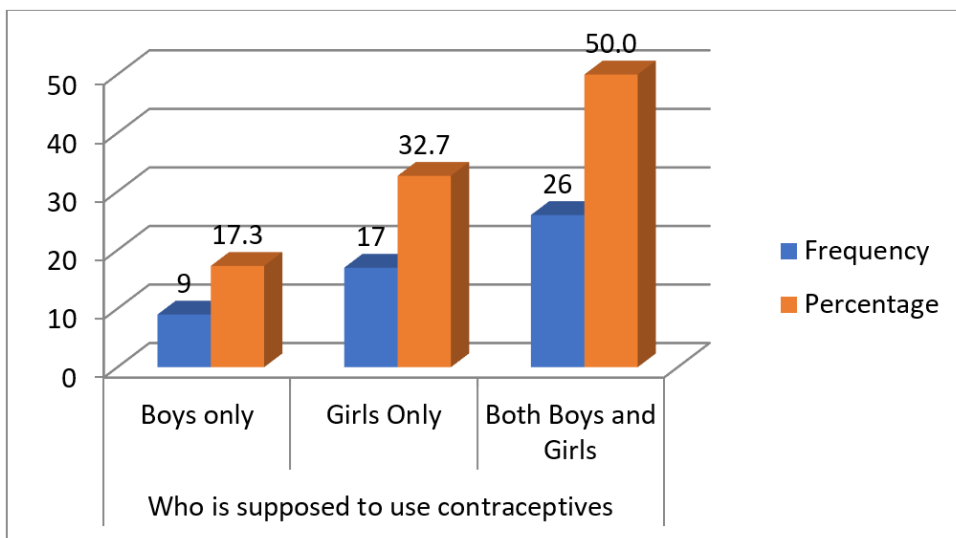


**Figure 3: Knowledge on contraceptives by Pupils**

Figure 3 reveals that the majority of the pupils (61.5%) were familiar with condoms while 15.4% were accustomed with morning after pill. Similarly, 9.6% said that they were aware of injections and 5.8% were aware of implants as method of contraceptive. Additionally, 1.9% asserted that they were aware of all forms of listed methods of contraceptives which were; condoms, injectables, tablets and implants. Only 5.8% did know any of methods of contraceptives listed above.

**7.3. The Usage of Contraceptives by Gender among the Pupils**

The figure below gives summary of the contraceptives usage by gender among the pupils that were engaged in the study.

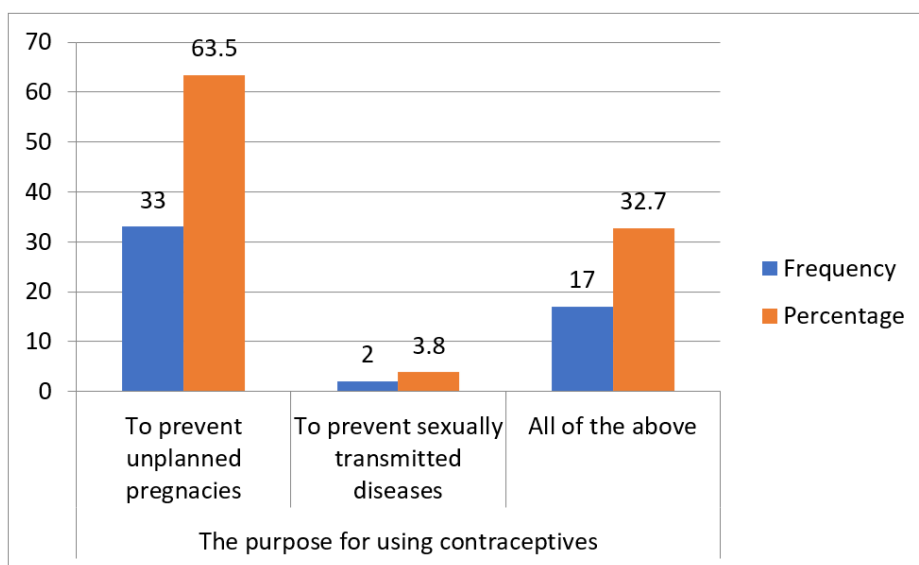


**Figure 4: Usage of Contraceptives by Gender**

As the shown in figure 4 pupils revealed that contraceptives are used by both males and females, while 32.7% said they are only used by girls and 17.3% attested that they are used by boys only.

**7.4 The Purpose of the use of Contraceptives**

The figure below gives summary of the responses by pupils on the purposes of contraceptives.



**Figure 5: Purpose for use of contraceptives**

Figure 5 above shows the purposes of contraceptives usage and findings indicated that 63.5% of the pupils asserted that contraceptives served the purpose of preventing pregnancies, 3.8% said that they were meant to prevent sexually transmitted diseases and 32.7% advanced that contraceptives prevented both

unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases respectively.

**7.5 Usage of Contraceptives by Pupils**

The table below shows the response by pupils on contraceptives usage by themselves.

**Table 1: Usage of Contraceptives by Pupils**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	52	100.0	100.0	100.0

As shown in table 1, all pupils revealed that they had never used contraceptives before giving a valid

percent of 100. The table below shows the challenges pupils faced in accessing the contraceptives.

**Table 2: Challenges pupils face in accessing contraceptives**

Sn	Challenges
1	They are expensive
2	They are not available in school
3	Prolonged period
4	Head pains
5	Stomach pains
6	Missing of the periods
7	People would laugh at you

Table 2 above shows the challenges pupils faced in using contraceptives. In view of that, the findings indicated that pupils bemoaned that contraceptives were expensive; they are not available in Schools, they cause prolonged periods; they cause head pains; Stomach pains and lead to missing of the periods. In the same vein, people would laugh at them once they use contraceptives. In view of the forgoing, participant 17 cited, “*stomach pains and head pains.*” Participant 31 went to say, “*Some have stock pain and missing of the*

*periods.*” Participant 37 said, “*People would laugh at you.*” Participant 10 echoed that, “*they are expensive.*”

**7.6 Society Effect on Contraceptives Usage**

The availability of guidance and counselling room or section in schools. The table below gives summary of responses by pupils in selected Secondary Schools on the availability of counselling rooms in their respective Schools.

**Table 3: The availability of guidance and counselling room or section in Schools**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	25	48.1	50.0	50.0
	No	25	48.1	50.0	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>96.2</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Missing System		2	3.8		
<b>Total</b>		<b>52</b>	<b>100.0</b>		

Table 3 above shows that 48.1% indicated that guidance and counselling rooms were available while another 48.1% said the aforementioned were not available. 3.8% of the pupils did not respond.

**7.7 Teaching on Pregnancy Prevention in Schools**

**Table 4: Teaching on Pregnancy Prevention**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	38	73.1	74.5	74.5
	No	13	25.0	25.5	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>98.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Missing System		1	1.9		
<b>Total</b>		<b>52</b>	<b>100.0</b>		

The results in table 4 shows that 73.1% of the pupils agreed that teachers taught on pregnancy prevention while in 25% teachers did not agree. Some of the responses given by pupils were; participant 28 said that the teachers taught them on contraceptives in class through civic education and echoed; “*We learn about condoms in civic education.*” In the same vein, participant 49 asserted that teachers taught them on using

condoms and abstaining from sex and was cited to have said, “*Using condoms and abstaining from sex.*” Additionally, participant 6 also said that teachers taught them on abstinence and highlighted that, “*yes, they tell us to abstain from sex.*”

**7.8 Use of Contraceptives to Prevent Pregnancies and Sexually Transmitted Diseases**

**Table 5: Use of Contraceptives to prevent Pregnancies & Sexually transmitted Diseases**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	16	30.8	32.7	32.7
	No	33	63.5	67.3	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>94.2</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Missing System		3	5.8		
<b>Total</b>		<b>52</b>	<b>100.0</b>		

The findings in table 5 above indicate that 33% of the parents were hostile towards the topic on contraceptives with their children while 30.8% freely talked about contraceptives and 5.8% of the respondents could not give a response. In cementing the findings, participant 23 echoed, “I have never been told by my parent.” In the same vein, participant 27 said that parents never discussed with her and cited that, “no they have never discussed it with me.....” On the other hand, it

was found that some parents educated their girl children on the importance of abstaining from sex and participant 31 recounted that, “yes, they tell us the effects of early sex which makes us not to do or involve ourselves in sexual activities.”

### 7.9 The Church Talking about Ways of Preventing Pregnancies

**Table 6: The Church talking about ways of Preventing Pregnancies**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	24	46.2	50.0	50.0
	No	24	46.2	50.0	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>92.3</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Missing System		4	7.7		
<b>Total</b>		<b>52</b>	<b>100.0</b>		

As shown by in table 6 the participants agreed and disagreed on a 50% basis respectively that the church talked about preventing pregnancies while 7.7% did not respond.

### 7.10 Extent to which the Health Systems Affect Contraceptives usage

Ministry of Health teaching pupils about contraceptives in Schools as a way of preventing pregnancies has been summarized in the table below.

**Table 7: Ministry of Health Teaching Pupils about Contraceptives**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	28	53.8	58.3	58.3
	No	20	38.5	41.7	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>92.3</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Missing System		4	7.7		
<b>Total</b>		<b>52</b>	<b>100.0</b>		

As opined in table 7, 53.8% of pupils indicated that they received information from the health workers in Schools while 38.5 of them said that health workers did teach them about contraceptives in Schools.

### 7.11. Health Professionals Teaching on Contraceptives when Pupils Visit the Clinics.

The table below summarizes the responses concerning Health Professionals teaching on contraceptives when pupils visit the clinics.

**Table 8: Health Professionals talking about Contraceptives at the clinics**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	18	34.6	38.3	38.3
	No	29	55.8	61.7	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>90.4</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Missing System		5	9.6		
<b>Total</b>		<b>52</b>	<b>100.0</b>		

Table 8 above asserts that 55.8% of pupils said that when they visited the clinics, the Health Professionals did not talk about contraceptives usage to them. In that same vein, 34.6% accepted that Health Professionals talked about contraceptives in clinics. 9.6% of the pupils did not respond.

19% and the majority of pupils were from grade 11 whose representation stood at 81%. The low participation among the grade 12 pupils was as a result of them sitting for the November/December 2023 National Examinations during the period of data collection.

## 8.0 DISCUSSION

### 8.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

A total of 52 pupils were included in the study whose age distribution was 18(76.9%), 19(21.2%), and 20(1.9%) years respectively. Most of the pupils aged 20 years were from grade 12 whose representation stood at

### 8.2 Individual Related Factors

The majority of the pupils (61.5%) were familiar with condoms as a means of contraceptive while 15.4% of them were accustomed with morning after pill. This shows that pupils could have had used the condoms to prevent themselves from getting pregnant as the

condoms were easily accessible. Furthermore, morning after pill is usually used for prevention of pregnancies where an individual engaged herself in sexual activity without using any protection. The findings showed that pupils were familiar with this mode of contraceptive which could mean that they once engaged in unprotected sex exposing them to unplanned pregnancies. Generally, the study has revealed that pupils were aware of the existence of contraceptives and by virtue of the majority being aware of the condoms, goes to show that pupils were familiar of the commonly available contraceptives to prevent unplanned pregnancies.

### **8.3 The usage of Contraceptives by Gender among the pupils**

The majority (50%) of the pupils accepted that contraceptives could be used by both males and females. Implicationally, the pupils understood the fundamental principle that contraceptives could be used by all, as there are contraceptives that are meant for both males and females respectively. The knowledge of contraceptives usage by both gender could be an indication that pupils are sexually active. This assumption is consisted with United Nations (2019) in its estimates and projections of family planning indicators reports which indicated that the largest-ever group of young people in history is becoming sexually active and therefore needs contraceptive utilisation services.

### **8.4 The Rationale for using Contraceptives**

Whereas contraceptives serve many functions, the discourse of this study was to establish knowledge of the pupils on the function of contraceptives in preventing unplanned pregnancies. In view of the foregoing, the findings indicated that 63.5% of the pupils knew that contraceptives served the purpose of preventing pregnancies. In this vein, the pupils knew one of the cardinal functions of contraceptives which is preventing pregnancies, a notion that is consisted with this study that contraceptives should be used to curtail the rising levels of unplanned pregnancies among pupils in Secondary Schools.

### **8.5 Kind of Contraceptives**

The study found that pupils knew a myriad of contraceptives which included condoms, microgynon, morning after pill, tubal-ligation, diaphragm, intra-uterine devices, Depo-Provera, injections and implants. This was advanced by participants 33, 3, 20 who among recapped the aforementioned contraceptives. This indicates that pupils are aware of not only ordinary contraceptives such as condoms, but advanced contraceptives such as tubal ligation, intrauterine device and Dep-Provera. This finding could mean pupils could have either used or read on family planning as one way of preventing themselves from unwanted pregnancies.

### **8.6 Usage of Contraceptives by pupils**

The study found that all pupils involved in the study indicated that they had never used contraceptives

before. Whereas this finding is explicit from the narrations of the pupils, a further review of the findings indicates that pupils bemoaned challenges in accessing contraceptives. This contradicts with their answers given under 8.7 below, meaning that there is a possibility of them using contraceptives but did not want to reveal to the researcher. However, the low usage of contraceptives is supported by De Vargas *et al.*, (2020) who asserted that the absolute number of youths who use contraceptives is relatively low due to barriers that include erratic supply, costs, inhibiting laws and policies especially for the unmarried youths. The finding of this study could mean that pupils at these study sites are at high risk of engaging themselves in unprotected sexual intercourse as well as unplanned pregnancies.

### **8.7 Challenges Pupils Face in using Contraceptives**

Despite pupils asserting that they were not sexually active, they mentioned challenges of accessing contraceptives and this could mean that they sought contraceptive services and some of them could have used them before. The pupils bemoaned that contraceptives were expensive; they were not readily available in Schools; they caused prolonged periods; they caused head pains, stomach pains and missing of the periods while others mentioned that were afraid of people laughing at them once they used contraceptives. This finding alone shows that pupils were sexually active and were at risk of getting pregnant and contracting sexually transmitted diseases if they never used any protection. The findings are consisted with Teshome *et al.*, (2021) who found that in Ethiopia most of the adolescents and youths did not use contraceptives because of lack of access and low information dissemination about reproductive health services. Similarly, the findings are supported by Nsanya *et al.*, (2019) who found that in North-Western part of Tanzania, there was low usage of contraceptives among the adolescents because of inadequate reproductive health services and also discrimination by friends and society was associated with the usage of contraceptives.

### **8.8 Availability of Guidance and Counselling Rooms**

The study established that the Schools had guidance and counselling rooms. This indicates that the Schools had established channels to educate pupils on integrated reproductive health services such as contraceptives usage. Generally, the pupils agreed that in their respective Schools, there was a component of guidance and counselling covered under civic education where they received information on sexuality. Munsaka (2021) in his study found that in Samfya District, Zambia, despite having comprehensive sexuality education implemented in Secondary Schools, cases of unplanned pregnancies continued to increase.

### **8.9 Extent to which Health Systems Affect Contraceptives usage**

The study found that the Ministry of Health workers went to Schools to disseminate health

information on pregnancy prevention. However, the Health workers did not visit Schools so frequently. The Ministry of Health should promote School Health Services by use of mobile clinics. This finding is affirmed by WHO (2020) reports that young people's limited exposure to sexual reproductive health (SRH) information is among the factors leading to the situation of high pregnancy rates among pupils globally. It is evident that health workers are not readily available to attend to pupils in Secondary Schools. This is also in line with Zoe Janice Health Foundation (2023) who found that not all Zambian adolescents had access to adolescent responsive health services, especially in regard to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and this has contributed to 38 percent of unplanned pregnancies.

## 9.0 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Limited resources to carry out a study at large scale.
- The research was costly on part of the researcher since it was not funded therefore, it was not easy to carry out.
- Long distance between supervisor and Researcher.
- Time limitation-The researcher is a full employee of the Ministry of Health with very.
- Busy schedule and this delayed the researcher to complete the study as scheduled.

## 10. CONCLUSION

The study has revealed that pupils are at a higher risk of unplanned pregnancies as well as sexually transmitted diseases despite them having knowledge of contraceptives usage. The study has also indicated that 63.5% of pupils were aware of the existence of contraceptives and their functions as a means of prevention of pregnancies. Therefore, there is need of deliberate move by Ministry of Health through District Health offices to promote accessibility to various methods of contraceptives by pupils especially those in Secondary Schools who are sexually active.

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