PERCEIVED DETERMINANTS AND MITIGATING MEASURES OF INDUCED ABORTION AMONG STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

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ABSTRACT
Induced abortion remains a significant and sensitive issue affecting many university students and it is influenced by a variety of social, economic and personal factors. This study investigated the perceived determinants and mitigating measures of induced abortion among students of University of Benin. Four research questions were raised to guide the study and two hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance. A descriptive survey research design was used in the study. Through the use of convenience sampling and simple random selection, 444 respondents were chosen at random from the population size of 44,332 students. The results showed that the perceived determinants of induced abortion among the respondents are personal or career goals, unplanned pregnancy, peer pressure, financial constraints, lack of sexuality education, social stigma, lack of access to contraception, religious or cultural factors, health concerns, rape or sexuality assault and lack of family or partner support. The perceived measures to mitigate induced abortion by respondents includes: use of contraceptives, comprehensive sex education, financial assistance or support programs for pregnant student, awareness campaigns about reproductive health, stronger support from family and peers, and abstinence from sexual activity. Drawing from the study's results, the researchers recommended among others that, the government, non-governmental organisation and other relevant stakeholders in public health should ensure that students have easy access to affordable and diverse contraceptive methods on campus, thereby, reducing unintended pregnancies which could lead to induced abortion.
Keywords: Perceived Determinants, Mitigation Measures, Induced Abortion and Students

Introduction

Induced abortion is a significant public health issue globally, with implications for the well-being of individuals and societies (WHO, 2024). Abortion is defined by World Health Organization (WHO, 2022) as a pregnancy termination prior to 20 weeks' gestation. An abortion can either be done with medical intervention such as medications or surgical procedures or it can occur on its own which is called a miscarriage (Alabi, 2022). Induced abortion among students often results from unplanned pregnancies, lack of sexual health education and fear of stigma which leads to the making difficult choices in secrecy, and its impact can include emotional distress, academic disruption, and health risks especially when it is carried out unsafely. This has

highlighting the need for comprehensive support and reproductive education on campuses. Given the increasing rates of unintended pregnancies among students, it is important to understand the perceived determinants that drive the decision to undergo induced abortion (Adewoye, 2022).

Induced abortion is a deeply complex issue that involves a variety of factors, such as personal, socio-cultural and economic considerations (WHO, 2024). In recent years, the perception of induced abortion among students has garnered increasing attention due to its relevance in the context of educational settings, youth empowerment and public health (Kwon, 2023). According to studies, one of the major perceived determinants influencing the decision to seek an induced abortion among students is inadequate sexual education (Adebayo, 2025). Bello (2025), indicated that while students receive formal education on the biological aspects of reproduction they often lack practical knowledge regarding contraception, safe sexual practices and the legal aspects of induced abortion. This knowledge gap leaves many students unprepared when faced with pregnancies that are unintended which leads to a higher likelihood of induced abortion. Also, a study by Olutayo (2023) revealed that, 67% of university students in Nigeria reported insufficient sexual education which directly correlates with poor contraceptive use and higher rates of unintended pregnancies. Similarly, many young people particularly those in higher education, report limited knowledge regarding contraception and reproductive health (Singh & Horne, 2021). This lack of education can result in pregnancies that are unintended with students perceiving abortion as a quick, albeit potentially risky, solution to their situation (Kwon, 2023).

Another critical determinant of induced abortion among students is the role of social stigma surrounding unplanned pregnancies and in many cultures unintended pregnancies especially among young women are met with societal judgment, which can significantly influence a student's decision-making process (Hassan, 2024). Durojaiye and Nwachukwu (2022) attested that the fear of social ostracization, loss of respect and potential academic or familial consequences often pushes students toward seeking abortion. In many societies where issues like premarital sex and reproductive autonomy are heavily stigmatized and students may view abortion as a way to avoid the negative social repercussions of continuing a pregnancy (Hassan, 2024). The stigma associated with being an unmarried mother or failing to conform to traditional reproductive norms can lead to significant psychological distress, further complicating the decision (Smith, 2023).

Additionally, peer influence also plays a pivotal role in shaping students' perceptions and decisions regarding abortion this is due to the university environment which is often marked by intense social interactions and peer pressure that can significantly affect an individual's reproductive health decisions; This statement is supported by a recent study of Okoye (2023), which suggests that Nigerian university students which includes those at the University of Benin are more likely to seek abortions due to pressure from friends or social circles. Students may perceive abortion as a way to preserve their social status, avoid the stigma associated with unplanned pregnancies or maintain academic focus. Peer influence is especially strong in a cultural context where there is considerable stigma attached to bearing children outside of marriage which makes abortion a preferred choice for some students (Akinmoladun, 2021).

In summary, the decision to undergo induced abortion among university students is shaped by a complex interplay of socio-economic, cultural, religious and educational factors. The University of Benin provides a relevant case study for understanding these determinants within the context of Nigerian higher education. By exploring these factors, this study aims to offer recommendations for improving reproductive health education and services at universities, ultimately reducing the occurrence of unsafe abortions among students.

Statement of the Problem

According to Adewoye (2022), the risks that may be associated with induced abortion may span from ectopic pregnancy, secondary infertility, hysterectomy, infection, scarring of the uterus, financial burden, septic shock, perforated bladder and possibly death. These were among reasons why Sanni (2022), signified that the perception of young adults (especially students) are often shaped by some predisposing factors which may include socio-economic status, cultural background, religious beliefs, and access to quality healthcare services. Inadequate understanding of these determinants can lead to stigmatization, misinformation, and limited access to safe abortion services (Sanni 2022).

Following the possible risks associated with induced abortion, one will think young adults will avoid going in for induced abortion but this is not always the case because many girls seems to be involved in induced abortion which reduces the public health outcomes and negatively impacting the health of lots of women globally (Bello, 2025). In Nigeria, abortion is legal only when performed to save a woman's life. Still, abortions are common, and most are unsafe because they are done clandestinely by unskilled providers or both (Bello, 2025). What

could be responsible for this? Is that student's lack knowledge of abortion? Or they are having unfavourable attitudes towards abortion? Due to these aforementioned questions, it is important to understand the perceived determinants and mitigating measures of induced abortion among students in University of Benin; Hence, the need for this study.

Objective of the Study

This study investigated the perceived determinants of induced abortion among students of University of Benin. The specific objectives of this study were as follows:

1. To identify the perceived determinants of induced abortion among students in University of Benin.
2. To identify perceived measures to mitigate induced abortion among students in University of Benin.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What are the perceived determinants of induced abortion among students in University of Benin?
2. What are the perceived measures to mitigate induced abortion among students in University of Benin?
3. Are the perceived determinants of induced abortion among students in University of Benin based on sex?
4. Are the perceived determinants of induced abortion among students in University of Benin based on age?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significant difference in the perceived determinants of induced abortion based on sex among students of the University of Benin.
2. There is no significant difference in the perceived determinants of induced abortion based on age.

Method

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted of all the 44,332 students from the 15 faculties/schools in the University of Benin. The Source is from Senior Planning Office, Academic Planning (2021). The sample sizes of 444

students were selected for the study as determined by the taro Yamane formula. All the faculties with odd numbers were selected using proportional stratified sampling to select students from each of selected faculties to give a total of 444. The instrument employed for the study was a researcher designed questionnaire title "Perceived Determinants and Mitigation Measures of Induced Abortion among Students of UNIBEN". The instrument was divided into two sections – A and B. Section A contains some personal data (Bio-data) of the respondents such as Age and Gender, while section B contains 2 open-ended questions. Section B was specifically designed to explore and analyse the perceived factors influencing induced abortion and the measures associated with it among students at the University of Benin. The reliability of the instrument was done using test-retest reliability. The instrument was administered twice to 20 undergraduates who were not part of this study from another university with similar characteristics within a two-week interval between the both administrations. Scores from first and second administrations were analysed with Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient and a coefficient score of 0.74 was achieved. Data were collected personally by the researchers with the aid of two research assistants who were briefed of the purpose of the study. The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages to answer the research questions raised, while inferential statistics of chi-square (x) was used to test the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research question one: What are the perceived determinants of induced abortion among students in University of Benin?

Table 1: Frequency distribution of perceived determinants of induced abortion among students among students in University of Benin

S/N	Main Reasons for Induced Abortion among Students	Frequency	Percentage %
1	Unplanned pregnancies	320	77.0
2	Financial constraints	255	61.0
3	Social stigma	176	42.0
4	Peer pressure	303	73.0
5	Lack of access to contraception	155	37.0
6	Lack of family or partner support	98	24.0
7	Personal or career goals	388	93.0

8	Health concerns	115	28.0
9	Religious or cultural factors	139	31.0
10	Rape or sexual assault	110	26
11	Lack of sexuality education	200	46

Source: *Field Survey: 2025*

The table one above revealed the perceived determinants of induced abortion among respondents and the table revealed that the reasons induced for abortion were: personal or career goals (93%), unplanned pregnancies (77%), and lack of sexuality education (77%). Other factors included peer pressure (73%), financial constraints (61%), and social stigma (42%). Additionally, 37% of respondents cited lack of access to contraception, 31% mentioned religious or cultural factors, and 28% identified health concerns. Fewer respondents perceived rape or social assault (26%) and lack of family or partner support (24%).

Research question two: What are the perceived measures to mitigate induced abortion among students in University of Benin?

Table 2: Frequency distribution of measures used to mitigate induced abortion among students of University of Benin

S/N	Measures that can reduce the occurrence of induced abortion among students	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Comprehensive sex education	310	74.0
2	Improved access to contraceptive methods	246	59.0
3	Increased counselling and emotional support services	235	56.0
4	Financial assistance or support programs for pregnant students	289	69.0
5	Awareness campaigns about reproductive health	219	53.0
6	Stronger support systems from family and peers	150	36.0
7	Legal reforms related to reproductive rights	108	26.0
8	Abstinence	359	86.0
9	Use of contraceptives	335	80.0

Source: *Field Survey, 2025*

The table two above revealed the measures used to mitigate the perceived determinants of induced abortion. The table revealed that 80% (335) respondents believe that the use of contraceptives can reduce the occurrence of abortion among students, 74% (310) respondents view comprehensive sex education as a measure that can reduce the occurrence of induced abortion among students, 59% (246) respondents believe that improve access to contraceptive methods can serve as a measure that can reduce the occurrence of induced abortion among students, 56% (235) respondents are of the opinion that financial assistance or support programs for pregnant students serves as a measure that can reduce the occurrence of induced abortion among students, 53% (219) respondents believe that awareness campaigns about reproductive health serves as a measure that reduces the occurrence of induced abortion among students, 36% (150) respondents see stronger support from family and peers as a measure that can reduce the occurrence of induced abortion among students and 26% (108) respondents see abstinence from sexual activity as a measure that can reduce the occurrence of abortion among students and

Hypothesis One

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant difference in the perceived determinants of induced abortion based on sex.

Table 3: Perceived determinants of induced abortion based on sex among students of the University of Benin using chi-square test at a 0.05 level of significance

Sex	N	DF	LS	Calculated X^2 valued	Table X^2 value	Contingency Coefficient(cc)	Remark
Male	212	10	0.05	51.87	18.31	0.32	H_o rejected
Female	232						
Total	**444**						

From the table three above, the calculated chi-square of 51.87 is greater than the table value of 18.31 at 0.05 level of significance and 10 degree of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected; this means there is statistically significant difference in perceived determinants of induced abortion based on sex. In simpler terms: male and female students perceived the causes of induced abortion differently.

Hypothesis Two

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant difference in the perceived determinants of induced abortion based on age.

Table 4: Perceived determinants of abortion based on age among students of the University of Benin using chi-square test at a 0.05 level of significance

Age	N	DF	LS	Calculated X^2 valued	Table X^2 value	Contingency Coefficient(cc)	Remark
19 years and below	244	10	0.05	130.38	18.31	0.48	H_o rejected
20 and above years	200						
Total	**444**						

From the table four above, the calculated chi-square of 130.38 is greater than the table value of 18.31 at 0.05 level of significance and 10 degree of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected; this means there is statistically significant difference in perceived determinants of induced abortion based on age. In simpler terms: younger students (19 years and below) and older students (20 and above years) have different views or perceptions about what determines induced abortion.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion of the finding was based on the research questions and the hypotheses

The findings of this study as shown on research question one, revealed the perceived determinants of induced abortion among respondents were, personal or career goals, unplanned pregnancy, peer pressure, financial constraints, lack of sexuality education, social stigma, lack of access to contraception, religious or cultural factors, health concerns, rape or sexuality assault and lack of family or partner support. This is attested to by the data obtained from the respondents in choosing the determinants of abortion. Key perceived determinants identified were largely in line with previous research findings in Nigerian university contexts and beyond. This include the earlier findings Okeke (2022) and Adamu (2023), who found that unintended pregnancies are the leading cause of induced abortions among university students in Nigeria; the earlier findings of Akinyemi (2021) highlighted that, many students expressed concerns about how pregnancy could interfere with their education and career goals, leading them to seek

abortion as a solution; Ibrahim and Okafor (2021) noted that, social stigma surrounding pregnancy especially for unmarried students, and peer pressure are significant factors in the decision-making process regarding abortion; Bello (2020) findings revealed that, and lack of family or institutional support was also noted as a significant factor in abortion among students.

The data from research question two, revealed the measures used to mitigate the perceived determinants of induced abortion among students of university of Benin are, use of contraceptives, comprehensive sex education, financial assistance or support programs for pregnant student, awareness campaigns about reproductive health, stronger support from family and peers and abstinence from sexual activity. This is attested to by the data obtained from the respondents in choosing the mitigation measures of induced abortion. These above measures are largely in line with previous recent studies. This include the earlier findings of Adamu (2023), who found that contraceptive use was the most common preventive measure among university students in Nigeria; The earlier findings of Akinyemi (2021) and Okeke (2022) emphasized the importance of sexual health education in universities to reduce the incidence of abortion; Also, Bello (2020) expressed the need for universities to offer robust counselling services to address the emotional and mental health challenges associated with unintended pregnancies.

The findings in table three revealed sex significant differences between male and female perceptions of induced abortion which suggest that gender plays a pivotal role in shaping reproductive health decisions. These findings support the conclusions of Adewuyi and Adebayo (2019) and Musa (2021) revealed that female students tend to perceive induced abortion determinants through a lens of emotional, psychological and social vulnerability, while male students often approach the issue with more detached or moralistic views. These differences highlight the need for sex sensitive reproductive health education.

The findings in table four revealed that age significantly influences how students perceive the causes of induced abortion. Younger students (19 years and below) and older students (20 years and above) differ in their awareness and prioritization of various determinants, such as peer influence, lack of parental guidance, or access to contraception. The stronger contingency coefficient (0.48) indicates a relatively strong association between age and perception. These findings are consistent with the previous studies of Okonofua (2020) and Chukwu & Ibrahim (2022) found that younger students (below 20 years) are more likely to be influenced by peer pressure, social media, and limited access to accurate reproductive health information, while

older students tend to consider financial, academic, and social consequences more seriously. Also, Adetunji & Salami (2023) further confirms that perceptions toward induced abortion determinants are not uniform and are shaped by intersecting variables such as age, gender and exposure to reproductive health campaigns. This reinforces the present study's conclusion that public health initiatives and interventions should be designed with attention to demographic differences in perception.

Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight a complex interplay of personal, social, educational and economic factors with key determinants such as unplanned pregnancy, career goals, peer pressure and lack of sexuality education. These findings align with prior research in similar contexts which confirms that both individual circumstances and broader societal influences shape students' decisions regarding induced abortion. The study also highlights effective mitigating measures such as contraceptive use, sex education and support systems which emphasize the role of preventive strategies. Furthermore, significant gender and age differences in perception underscore the importance of tailoring reproductive health education and interventions to demographic characteristics. Overall, the study calls for inclusive, age and gender sensitive public health approaches to address the root causes of abortion among university students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In other to properly mitigate the perceived determinates of induced abortion among students in University of Benin, the following recommendations are put forward.

1. Comprehensive evidence-based sexual and reproductive health education should be incorporated into the university curriculum to address myths, misconceptions and cultural stigmas which is related to induced abortion among students
2. The government, non-governmental organisation and other relevant stakeholders in public health should ensure that students have easy access to affordable and diverse contraceptive methods on campus, thereby, reduce unintended pregnancies which could lead to induced abortion.
3. Peer-led sexual health education initiatives which will foster open, judgment-free discussions among students helping them make informed choices about their sexual health.

4. Further research: Future studies could explore how other variables such as religion, socio-economic status, and educational background influence abortion perceptions.

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