Role of Perceived Superiority of Female Condoms

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Role of Perceived Superiority of Female Condoms

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Background

• India hosts the third largest population of people living with HIV/AIDS.
• The estimate ranges from 2.1 to 3.1 million (IIPS & Macro International, 2007) although the % is low (around 0.6% of the population).
• Female sex workers (FSWs) and their male clients, primarily truck drivers and migrant workers, are the core carriers of this virus.
• As a result, HIV/AIDS prevention efforts, including condom promotion, have targeted these groups.
Background

- Low male condom usage (6%)
- Unless FSWs insist their clients wear male condoms, these campaigns would not be effective in reducing the HIV/AIDS incidence.
- Role of patriarchy
  - Nature of financial and nonfinancial negotiation
- Female condoms is a good solution to overcome these barriers, to promote safe sex and to prevent HIV/AIDS

Background

- In recent years, efforts have also focused on promoting female condoms among FSWs
- Extensive efforts have been undertaken by the government, headed by National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) in partnership with the private sector.
Background

• A large number of studies have investigated factors that influence the use of male condoms among FSWs.
• Fewer studies have looked at the predictors of female condoms.
• Since the cooperation of male partners is less critical when using female condoms (as compared to male condoms), women feel empowered to use female condoms.
• It is logical to expect that, if female condoms are promoted, condom use will increase among FSWs.

Purpose of study

• Studies in the past have not investigated whether female condoms are truly considered to be superior (by offering more benefits or fewer barriers) to male condoms and how this superiority encourages use of female condoms.
• In addition, our study also investigated the influence of age, years in business, and client attitude on the frequency of female condoms usage.
• In summary, the purpose of this study was to identify the reasons that come in the way of acceptance of female condoms (FCs) by FSWs.
Method

• Study was conducted in five Indian states
  – High FSW activity:
    • Andhra Pradesh (Hyderabad)
    • Karnataka (Bangalore, Mysore)
    • Maharashtra (Mumbai, Pune)
    • Tamil Nadu (Chennai, Madurai)
  – West Bengal (Kolkata, Darjeeling)
• 40% rural, 60% urban
Method

• Ajay Singh and his four colleagues collected data with help of NGO’s and police officers
• A total of 3,000 FSWs were approached, of which 2,450 participated in the survey study.
• Of these, we removed responses from those who were either unaware of female condoms, and/or had never used them resulting in 1,939 cases.
• FSWs were recruited based on judgmental and convenience sampling technique and represented brothel-based, street-based, and home-based workers.

FSW categories

• Brothel-based FSWs solicit clients through an agent (such as pimp or a madam) or mediator and provide services at a brothel (a place of sex work with two or more FSWs working under the control of an agent).
• Street-based FSWs solicit clients on streets (such as cinema, park, bus-stand, railway station, hotel/lodge) and provide services at hotel/lodge or a place of client’s choice.
• Home-based FSWs solicit clients at their own homes either directly or through a mediator and provide services at their own homes.
Method

• The respondents were asked the questions and requested to rate them on a 7-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree and 7 = Strongly agree). The measurement scales were produced based on previous studies as well as focus groups conducted among FSWs
• The questionnaire took 5-10 minutes to complete.

Independent factors

Factor analysis revealed three factors with Cronbach's alpha exceeding 0.86:
• “Barriers to use female condoms” (Clients will know when FCs are being used, FC can only be used if clients allow it, it is necessary to remove FC immediately after intercourse, usage of FC is uncomfortable, FC can slip easily during the intercourse, FCs are costlier than MCs)
• “Advantage over male condoms in terms of marketing strategy” (FCs are easier to use than MCs, FCs are more easily available in the market as compared to the MCs, Clients pay extra money for using FCs more than MCs, I get more incentives from Government/NGO’s for using FCs as compared to MCs)
Independent factors

- “Advantage over male condoms in terms of environmental support” (FCs allow women to make the decision about using condoms more so as compared to MC, My mausi (i.e. brothel in-charge) encourages me to use FCs more than MCs, my sakhi (i.e. co-workers) support the use of FCs more than MCs)

- A fourth factor “client attitude” had two items (Clients enjoy FC as part of foreplay, FCs give pleasure to the clients). These two were significantly correlated (r = 0.78, p<.01).

- Age, Indian state where located, and number of years in business were additional independent variables.

Dependent variable

- Frequency of usage of female condoms was measured with a single item (Describe your usage of female condom: One time used till date, once in a month, once in a week, once a day, 1 to 3 times in a day, 4 to 6 times in a day, more than 6 times in a day).
Descriptives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Usage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20% have used once, 34% have used once a week or less, 47% one or more than once a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age in years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>48% less than 30 year old, 50% 31-50 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in the business</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>56% had 5 or fewer years of experience, 44% 6 or more</td>
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<tr>
<td>Client Attitude</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive Advantage (Strategy)</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive Advantage (Support)</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>2.05</td>
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</table>

Correlation analysis

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Frequency of usage</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years in business</th>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Competitive advantage (Strategy)</th>
<th>Competitive advantage (Support)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.70**</td>
<td>-.40**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Years in business</td>
<td>-.38**</td>
<td>-.37**</td>
<td>.66**</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Barriers</td>
<td>-.88**</td>
<td>-.33**</td>
<td>.67**</td>
<td>.45**</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Competitive advantage (Strategy)</td>
<td>.89**</td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td>-.67**</td>
<td>-.45**</td>
<td>-.91**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Competitive advantage (Support)</td>
<td>.87**</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>-.66**</td>
<td>-.36**</td>
<td>-.88**</td>
<td>.88**</td>
<td>.86**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Client attitude</td>
<td>.88**</td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td>-.63**</td>
<td>-.37**</td>
<td>-.88**</td>
<td>.88**</td>
<td>.86**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SEM Analysis

• Model indicators:
  • Chi-Sq. = 5.07, df = 3, n.s.
  • GFI = .99
  • NFI = 1.00
  • TLI = .99
  • CFI = 1.00
  • RMSEA = .02 (0 -.05)

• Major findings:
  • All std. betas sig. at p<.01
  • Support, client attitude, and strategy positively influenced behavior while barriers influence negatively
  • Strategy improved support and client attitude, while it reduced barriers
  • Barriers also reduced by positive support and client attitude
  • Higher the age and years in business, higher the barriers and support, lower the client attitude.

Geographical variation in female condom usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>2.48a</td>
<td>1.51</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>2.90b</td>
<td>1.31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
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<td>3.30c</td>
<td>1.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
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<td>3.00bc</td>
<td>1.17</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>4.14d</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Diversity by state

- Cooperation of police
- Decisions and willingness of the state health minister and health secretary.
- Degree of mobility and HIV risk.
- Unionization of FSWs
- Promotion of condoms, involvement of NGO’s

Role of mobility

- CSWs moved to at least three different locations
  - at least one or two locations outside the district in the one in which they interviewed
- Greater mobility associated with consistent decrease in condom use; increased exposure to STIs and HIV.
- FSWs move to maximize trade opportunities
Translation to Social Marketing Practice

- Findings suggest that the perceived superiority for female condoms (over male condoms) felt by FSWs influences their usage of female condoms.
- This perceptual gap should be highlighted in the female condom social marketing campaigns, something neglected in the past.
- Improving effectiveness of social products to influence behavior is a critical area of research. Similar research studies need to be conducted to promote healthy diet, physical activity, and so on.

Translation to Social Marketing Practice

- While promoting female condoms among FSWs in India, it is necessary to:
  - tailor by age
  - role of mobility
  - create positive attitude among clients towards female condoms
  - gain cooperation of brothel in-charge and co-workers
  - ensure easy availability, offer monetary incentives, and finally
  - reduce any misperceptions that FSWs may have about the usage (such as likely slippage during intercourse).
- Among all the factors, attractiveness of marketing strategy and client attitude were the strongest influencers, confirming an understanding that a good social marketing strategy can play a pivotal role in enhancing the effectiveness of the campaign.
Learner Objectives

• While promoting a newer version of a social product, it is helpful to highlight its superiority over the existing version.
• This may be necessary to reduce perceived barriers (raised by the current social product), enhance environmental support, improve customer attitude, increase product use, and thus increase the effectiveness of the social marketing campaign.

Thank You, Questions, and Suggestions
Questions

Please wait for the microphone and state your name and organisation before asking your question.