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Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Family Planning among Married Women in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined knowledge, attitude and practice of family planning, among married women in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. A total of 143 respondents participated in the study. The instrument employed was “Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Family Planning, among Married Women Questionnaire”. The data collected from the study were analysed using simple percentage and mean to provide answers for the research questions raised for the study. Findings revealed that married women in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State are aware of family planning (Mean= 2.99) but do not practice it (Mean=1.86). Findings further revealed that the married women in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State portray negative attitude towards family planning (Mean=2.36). On this basis, the study recommended, among other things, that the government should endeavour to increase the level of awareness on the importance of family planning. In addition, the mass media should also be encouraged to do more in terms of enlightening the public on the benefits of modern contraceptive methods as this will help married couples to portray positive attitude towards the use of family planning.

Keywords: Knowledge, attitude, practice, family planning, married couples, public health facilities

Introduction

The issue of family planning and its approaches has attracted worldwide interest because of its importance in decision making on population growth and development issues. Family planning is defined as a couple's deliberate endeavor to restrict or space the number of children they have by using contraceptive techniques (Central Statistical Agency, 2016). Family planning (FP) can also be described as a way of thinking and living that is voluntarily adopted by people and couples based on their knowledge, attitude, and responsible actions (Kasa, Tarekegn and Embiale, 2018).

Since its introduction, the family planning service has been made available in both public and private sectors. For example, pills, injections, IUDs, condoms and Voluntary Surgical Contraception (VSC) have been made available at public health facilities and the clinics of NGOs.

Family planning has numerous health benefits such as preventing unwanted pregnancies, regulating the interval between pregnancies, controlling the time of birth in relation to the parents' ages, determining the number of children in the family, preventing sexually transmitted diseases and improving the quality of life of mother, fetus and family as a whole (WHO, 2018). For instance, the estimates made in 2017 showed that 54 million unplanned pregnancies, 79,000 maternal deaths and 1.2 million childhood mortality could have been prevented with universal access to effective family planning methods (Ajayi, Adeniyi and Akpan, 2018). As a matter of fact, family planning is now recognized as a basic human right and it must be seen as part of preventive health (Rozina, Uzma and Haleema, 2008). From the foregoing, it is obvious that the relevance of family planning cannot be over emphasized.

Due to the above mentioned benefits, the Nigerian government is increasing efforts to establish policies around family planning for a reduction in the birthrate through voluntary fertility regulation methods compatible with the nation's economic and social goals (Oduşina, Ayotunde, Kunnuji, Ononokpono, Bishwajit and Yaya, 2020). However, despite government and non-governmental organizations' efforts over the last three decades to enhance access to and use of contraceptive techniques in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Several studies have found low level of contraceptive use (Orji and Onwudiegwu, 2018; Blackstone, Nwaozuru and Iwelunmor, 2017; Blackstone and Iwelunmor, 2017). For instance, the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) data (2018) showed that only 14.5% of couples in country reported using any methods of contraception (Orji and Onwudiegwu, 2018). One, therefore, wonders if non-acceptance of family planning among women in Nigeria is as a result of their lack of knowledge and poor attitude towards it.

Knowledge is the ability to acquire, retain, and apply information, which is a combination of comprehension, experience, discernment, and skill (Oleson and Hora, 2014). In the context of this study, knowledge refers to what the research participants know about family planning, including the various methods of family planning how it can be applied. Several studies have shown that poor knowledge issues such as misconceptions about contraceptives and their side effects are the most common reasons for low contraceptive use in Nigeria (Okonofua, Hammed, Nzeribe, Abass and Oladosu, 2017).

Friends who have little or no knowledge of contraceptives, instead of health workers, are the main source of information on contraceptive (Fakokunde and Obisesan, 2018). In Nigeria, patent medicine shops, instead of pharmacies, are the main source of contraceptive supplies. The patent medicine shops are managed by unqualified drug vendors who have little or no knowledge about contraceptives and misinform their clients (Okonofua, 2019; Boniface, Augustine, Adesina, Abidoye, Kofo, Isaac and Ekanem, 2018).

Attitude refers to inclinations to react in a certain way to certain situations; to see and interpret events according to certain predispositions or to organize opinions into coherent and interrelated structure. Attitude in relation to the study refers to the views and opinions of the couples or research respondents on family planning methods. The study conducted by Kasa, Tarekegn and Embiale (2018) that the attitude towards family planning was relatively low and the level of family planning utilization was quite low in comparison with many studies. However, it was found in a study

conducted by Mgbe, Mgbe, Nwali and Odenigbo (2018) that most of the respondents were favourably disposed towards contraception with more than four-fifths having a positive attitude towards contraception. This implies that substantial proportion of married couples had positive attitude towards modern contraceptives. Similarly, Babatunde, Olusola and Osakinle (2019) found in their study that the attitude of married men and women towards family planning practices in Oyo state is positive.

Ojo (2020) noted that some Christians refuse to limit their family size and maintained that children are gifts from God, and because of this, their coming *into* the world should not be prevented. He also confirmed that Muslim leaders have argued that fertility control is against the doctrine and practices of Islamic religion and that it is an unlawful killing of human life, The Muslim belief favours large family size and this constitutes a problem for effective implementation of family planning,

Chamia (2017) in her study of sexuality and birth control decision among the Lebanese couple, found that religious attitude has a significant effect on fertility control, and that Catholics usually exhibit a negative attitude towards fertility control than other religious groups. Blair (2017) in her study in Latin America of family planning indicated that non-Catholics *are* more in favour of family planning than the Catholics. Here, the main difference centres around methods to be used.

On the influence of social, economic, traditional, cultural beliefs and practices, Ojo (2015) affirms that contraceptive practice tends to be very low in areas with cultural bias for great number of children.

Blair (2017), in Clarren (2018), and Udeozor (2017) in their separate studies point to the fact of socio-economic status of couples having bearing on their attitude to family planning. It was put forward that the practice of family planning increases as the family income increases. Large family sizes were found to be associated with low economic status. People with low economic might opt for large family sizes to make up for their low status in

the society especially in a society where large number of wives and children is seen as an achievement, Ukaeqbuma 2015) extensive studies in family planning attitudes and practices in Rural Eastern Nigeria results revealed that 50-60 per cent of wives have ever used traditional contraceptive is and that nearly 80 per cent of the women interviewed, expressed a willingness to attend a family planning clinic if one were accessible to them.

Practice means the application to the progress of knowledge and technology and is executed in an ethical manner. Practice within the context of this study refers to how the couples apply their knowledge about family planning methods into use for the purpose of fertility regulation. A study conducted among the Kanuris in Nigeria revealed that few Kanuri women used modern methods of family planning, the barriers being objection by their husbands, the fear of delayed return to fertility, damage to the reproductive apparatus and the belief that modern contraception was introduced to reduce Muslim populations (Mairiga et al., 2017). This implies that most women don't want to go into family planning because of its effect such as delayed return to fertility, fear of damage caused to the womb or other parts in them that might prevent them from giving birth again.

Further examples, “the Suri people of Ethiopia prevent and delay pregnancies using natural family planning methods. The desired benefit is that women regain their strength following the injuries caused by pregnancy and delivery, and that attention can be given to the welfare of growing children. But these objectives are often countered by lack of access to modern family planning methods and the desire for many children within a socio demographic context of threats to their tribal survival” (Eyayou, 2015). For example, Onokerhoraye (2017) gives detailed analyses of peoples' perceptions on family planning in Benue state, Nigeria by having a comparative analysis and peoples' perspectives of health care facilities.

He opines that “in spite of the introduction of family planning services as means of curbing fertility rate, the population still rises because of the attitudes of the people involved i.e. the African view of having many children with the notion “in case one dies the other will replace”. He further noted that, the devaluation of female birth

hinders family planning in that when a couple keeps giving birth to females, they tend to neglect family planning because they are looking for a male child. Against this backdrop, the study seeks to assess the knowledge, attitude and practice of family planning, among married women in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Family planning has attracted global attention due to its importance in decision making about population growth and development issues. Despite the campaign on the importance of family planning as it enhances a healthy family, it has been observed that contraceptive use is still low in many developing countries, including Nigeria. Over the past four decades, there have been numerous publications on contraceptives and other family planning methods but few researches have been done considering knowledge, attitude and practice of family planning among married women. As a result, this study examined knowledge, attitude and practice of family planning among married women in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study examined knowledge, attitude and practice of family planning among married women in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria while the specific objective was to:

- i. Examine the knowledge of family planning practice among married women in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria.
- ii. Find out the attitude of married women towards family planning methods in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria.
- iii. To what extent is the practice of family planning methods among married women in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria?

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised for the study:

1. What is the level of knowledge of family planning among married women in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria?
2. What is the attitude of married women towards family planning methods in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria?
3. To what extent is the practice of family planning methods among married women in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria?

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design of the expo facto was adopted for this study. This is because the research affords the researcher the opportunity to survey and sample the opinion of the respondent and prevent the researcher from manipulation. Therefore, the researcher collected the necessary data needed for the study in order to draw inferences about the independent variables (knowledge, attitude and practices) in association with the dependent variable (family planning) of interest. All married women in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria constituted the population of the study. A systematic random sampling technique was adopted to select 150 married women in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria. A 4-point-Likert scale questionnaire of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) was used to obtain data for the study. The questionnaire was divided into two parts: Part A dealt with demographic characteristics of the respondents while part B dealt with the issues of knowledge, attitudes and practice of family planning. The questionnaire was validated through face and content validity from experts in the Department of Adult Education and Institute of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The reliability of the instrument was determined through pilot study from 30 randomly selected respondents from Ibadan North Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria. Data obtained were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentage and mean.

Results and Discussion of Findings

The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in table one below:

Table 1: Socio-Demographical Data of Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
20-29yrs	57	39.9
30-39yrs	82	57.3
40-49yrs	3	2.1
50-59yrs	1	0.7
Religion		
Christianity	124	86.7
Muslim	13	9.1
Traditional	6	4.2
Ethnicity		
Yoruba	122	85.3
Igbo	21	14.7
Hausa	0	0
Marital Status		
Single	3	2.1
Married	121	84.6
Divorced	5	3.5
Separated	8	5.6
Widow	6	4.2
Educational Level		
No Education	15	10.5
Primary Education	27	18.9
Secondary Education	33	23.1
Tertiary Education	68	47.6
Type of Occupation		
Farming	7	4.9
House Wife	32	22.4
Trading	41	28.7
Civil Servant	45	31.5
Professional	13	9.1
Others	5	3.5

The total number of respondents was 143 (N=143). From the socio-demographical data distribution of the respondents, 57 respondents representing 39.9% were between 20 and 29 years, 82 respondents representing 57.3% were between 30 and 39 years, 3 respondents representing 2.1% were between 40 and 49 years, while 1 respondent representing 0.7% was between 50 and 59 years. This shows that majority of the respondents were between the ages of 30 and 39 years implying that majority of the married women in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria are young in marriage.

The analysis revealed that out of the 143 respondents, 124 respondents representing 86.7% were Christians, 13 respondents representing 9.1% were Muslims while the remaining 6 respondents representing 4.2% were practicing traditional religion. The study had more Christian respondents. It was also shown in the above table that 122 (85.3%) respondents are Yoruba, 21 (14.7%) are Igbo while none of the respondents are Hausa. In addition, 2.1% of them are single, 84.6% are married, 3.5% are divorced, 5.6% are separated and the remaining 4.2% are widow. It is important to also note that only 10.5% of the women had no education, 18.9% had primary education, 23.1% had secondary education while the rest 47.6% had tertiary education. Out of the 143 respondents, 4.9% were farmers, 22.4% were full house wives, 28.7% were traders, 31.5% were civil servants, 9.1% are professionals while the remaining 3.1 fell under other category.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question One: What is the level of knowledge of family planning among married women in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria?

Table 2 showing the level of knowledge of family planning among married women in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1.	I have heard of contraceptive before	72 50.3%	43 30.1%	15 10.5%	13 9.1%	3.22	Accepted
2.	Birth control pills are effective even if a woman misses taking them for two or three days in a row.	51 35.7%	39 27.3%	32 22.4%	21 14.7%	2.84	Accepted
3.	I use female sterilization to avoid pregnancy	11 7.7%	33 23.1%	53 37.0%	46 32.2%	2.06	Rejected
4.	Health education is important for women who want to use contraception	98 68.5%	31 21.7%	12 8.4%	2 1.4%	3.57	Accepted
5.	Contraceptive pills do not guarantee 100% protection	82 57.3%	43 30.1%	5 3.5%	13 9.1%	3.36	Accepted
6.	I have used condoms to prevent STIs before	46 32.2%	59 41.3%	11 7.6%	27 18.9%	2.87	Accepted
Weighted Average mean						2.99	

The item is accepted if the mean is above the criterion mean score of 2.50 but rejected if it is below. Responses of the respondents on the level of knowledge of family planning among married women in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria are as shown below: I have heard of contraceptive before (*Mean*=3.22); Birth control pills are effective even if a woman misses taking them for two or three days in a row (*Mean*=2.84); I use female sterilization to avoid pregnancy (*Mean*=2.06); Health education is important for women who want to use contraception (*Mean*=3.57); Contraceptive pills do not guarantee 100% protection (*Mean*=3.36); and I have used condoms to prevent STIs before (*Mean*=2.87). The mean average of the whole items in table 2 is 2.99. Since the mean (2.99) is above the criterion mean score of 2.50, then it can therefore be concluded that the level of knowledge of family planning among married women in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State is high.

Research Question 2: What is the attitude of married women towards family planning methods in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria?

Table 3 showing the attitude of married women towards family planning methods in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1.	Contraceptives should be used to limit my number of children	28 19.6%	30 20.9%	19 13.3%	66 46.2%	2.14	Rejected
2.	Contraceptives benefit my husband too.	34 23.8%	21 14.7%	56 39.2%	32 22.4%	2.39	Rejected
3.	I prefer to go by withdrawal method instead of using contraceptive	12 8.4%	25 167.5%	16 11.2%	90 62.9%	1.71	Rejected
4.	I like to use contraceptives during sex	27 18.9%	23 16.1%	42 29.4%	51 35.6%	2.18	Rejected
5.	I feel comfortable using contraceptives	30 20.9%	28 19.6%	62 43.4%	23 16.1%	2.45	Rejected
6.	Contraceptives make me feel save	44 30.8%	11 7.7%	41 28.7%	47 32.8%	2.36	Rejected
7.	Change in male attitudes on contraceptives may improve contraceptive use	79 55.2%	39 27.3%	12 8.4%	13 9.1%	3.29	Accepted
Weighted average mean						2.36	

The item is accepted if the mean is above the criterion mean score of 2.50 but rejected if it is below. Table 3 showed the view of respondents on the attitude of married women towards family planning methods in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria as follows: Contraceptives should be used to limit my number of children (*Mean*=2.14); Contraceptives benefit my husband too (*Mean*=2.39); I prefer to go by withdrawal method instead of using contraceptive (*Mean*=1.71); I like to use contraceptives during sex (*Mean*=2.18); I feel comfortable using contraceptives (*Mean*=2.45); Contraceptives make me feel save (*Mean*=2.36); and change in male attitudes on contraceptives may improve contraceptive use (*Mean*=3.29). The mean average of the whole items in table 3 is 2.36. Since the mean average (2.36) is below the criterion mean score of 2.50, then it can therefore be deduced that the attitude of married women towards family planning in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria is negative.

Research Question 3: To what extent is the practice of family planning methods among married women in Akinyele Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria?

Table 4 showing the practice of family planning methods among married women in Akinyele Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1.	I visit the hospital once in year for family planning services	37 25.9%	14 9.8%	18 12.6%	74 51.7%	2.09	Rejected
2.	I use contraceptives to prevent unplanned pregnancy	25 17.5%	33 23.1%	42 29.4%	43 30.1%	2.28	Rejected
3.	I use contraceptives every time when I do not intend to get pregnant	26 18.2%	21 14.7%	21 14.7%	75 52.4%	1.99	Rejected
4.	I use different types of contraceptives	34 23.8%	15 10.5%	70 48.9%	24 16.8%	2.41	Rejected
5.	My current method of contraceptive changes from time to time	23 16.2%	20 13.9%	25 17.5%	75 52.4%	1.94	Rejected
6.	Do you practice any traditional contraceptive methods including withdrawal, infertility period, herbal and breast feeding if you were not using any contraceptive?	38 26.6%	17 11.9%	36 25.2%	52 36.3%	2.28	Rejected
7.	I feel comfortable using condom as a method of birth control	19 13.3%	35 24.5%	32 22.4%	57 39.9%	2.11	Rejected
						1.86	

Responses of the respondents on the practice of family planning methods among married women in Akinyele Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria are as shown below: I visit the hospital once in year for family planning services (*Mean*=2.09); I use contraceptives to prevent unplanned pregnancy (*Mean*=2.28); I use contraceptives every time when I do not intend to get pregnant (*Mean*=1.99); I use different types of contraceptives (*Mean*=2.41); My current method of contraceptive changes from time to time (*Mean*=1.94); Do you practice any traditional contraceptive methods including withdrawal, infertility period, herbal and breast feeding if you were not using any contraceptive? (*Mean*=2.28); and I feel comfortable using condom as a method of birth control (*Mean*=2.11). The mean average of the whole items in table 4 is 1.86. Since the

mean (1.86) is below the criterion mean score of 2.50, then it can therefore be concluded that the practice of family planning methods among married women in Akinyele Local Government Area, Oyo State is poor.

Discussion of Findings

The result on Table 2 showed that there is high level of knowledge of family planning among married women. This high level of awareness has been similarly reported by Anyanwu (2015). This was also corroborated by Gbalahan (2015) in their study carried out in south western Nigeria. This is also in line with the findings of Mgbe, Mgbe, Nwali and Odenigbo (2018) that the knowledge of family planning methods among married couples in Abakpa is high. They therefore concluded that this pattern should be expected in light of much enlightenment that is on-going on the issue of family planning in the country. Similarly, findings from the study conducted by Apuke (2017) further revealed that, most of the married women have been married for at least 5-10 years and therefore they are aware of family planning. These findings are in contrast with the finding of Kasa, Tarekegn and Embiale (2018). they found in their study that the level of knowledge towards family planning was relatively low in comparison with many studies.

The result on Table 3 revealed that the attitude of married women on family planning is negative. This finding is supported by the finding of the study conducted by Kasa, Tarekegn and Embiale (2018) that the attitude towards family planning was relatively low and the level of family planning utilization was quite low in comparison with many studies. However, it was found in a study conducted by Mgbe, Mgbe, Nwali and Odenigbo (2018) that most of the respondents were favourably disposed towards contraception with more than four-fifths having a positive attitude towards contraception. This implies that substantial proportion of married couples had positive attitude towards modern contraceptives. Similarly, Babatunde, Olusola and Osakinle (2019) found in their study that the attitude of married men and women towards family planning practices in Oyo state is positive.

The result on Table 4 showed that the practice of family planning among married women is poor. This finding is in line with a study conducted by Apuke (2017) which revealed that most of the married women in Jalingo metropolis do not practice family planning because their husbands are not in support of family planning. His study revealed key reasons for not practicing contraception which are traceable to cultural imperatives, ignorance and religious belief.

Conclusion

The practice of family planning has called for global attention because of its importance in decision making on population growth and issues of development. Childbearing and the use of contraceptives are some of the most important decisions on reproduction that could be taken by couples to curtail the number of children they want to have. Therefore, the issue of family planning and its methods has led many married women to either accept family planning or reject it. Though the knowledge of family planning methods was high among the women in this study, their use was relatively poor.

Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions, the following recommendations were made;

1. The government should endeavour to increase the level of awareness on the importance of family.
2. The mass media should also be encouraged to do more in terms of enlightening the public on the benefits of modern contraceptive methods as this will help married couples to portray positive attitude towards the use of family planning.
3. Furthermore, campaigns to empower women such as emphasis on their education, encouraging gender balance by changing community attitude towards position/status of women in a household and in a society as a whole should be strengthened. This would improve their participation in household decisions including those related to fertility and contraceptive use.
4. More education/counselling services to women on how to handle/deal with side effects associated with various modern contraceptives methods should be given due weight and campaigns against myths and misbeliefs that negatively affect use of modern contraceptive in the study population should be initiated.

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