

Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Married Women in Nigeria towards Family Planning

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ABSTRACT

This study was to investigate the knowledge, attitudes and practices of married women in Nigeria towards family planning. Specifically, the researcher investigated the differences between married women on the bases of religion, types of family planning and educational status. A questionnaire tagged "knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of family planning" (KAPFP) designed by the researcher was used to obtain data from the respondents. The questionnaire which consisted of 31-items was administered to 246 respondents which were drawn by using simple random sampling technique from the population. Nine null hypotheses were generated to find out significant differences of family planning with respect to knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) of the respondents on the bases of religion, family types and educational status. The data were analyzed using frequency count, simple percentages and inferential statistical procedures, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and t-tests. Based on the findings, three hypotheses were significant while six were not significant. Hence, family planning providers, policy makers, doctors, nurses and administrators should enlighten both married men and women on the importance of family planning.

Keywords: *Knowledge, Attitude, Practices, family planning, married women*

INTRODUCTION

The alarming rate at which the population of the world is increasing demands adequate and immediate attention. This is needed to curb problem of social, ecological, economic and general welfare problems of all individuals. As a matter of fact, the survival of the human race is endangered if population growth is not checked adequately. Family planning according to Omoware (1986) is the practice that helps individuals or couples to attain the objectives to avoid unwanted pregnancy, to bring about wanted birth, to regulate the interval between one pregnancy and another to determine the number of children in the family. Balogun (1986) and Oluruntoba (1987) also buttress this assertion. According to Oluruntoba (1987) family planning is now recognized as a basic human right and it must be seen as part of preventive health. Despite all endeavours to reduce the number of birth through family planning in Nigeria, there are a lot of problems still emanating. Considering the population of Nigeria which was estimated at 100 million in the year 2000 and with a growth rate of over three percent; it was projected that there might be 150 million heads swinging around in the country by the year 2010. This has come to pass. Also, Nigerian's report on the implementation of the Beijing platform for action and common wealth plan of

action by the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs (2004), estimates that Nigeria's population was about 120 million and an annual growth rate of 2.8% spread over 350 ethnic groups and two major religions, Islam and Christianity. It is, however, projected that there may be as many as 174 million heads in the country by the year 2020 and the repercussion of such a growth rate in the nation's economic development and social services call for great concern (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, 2004). Oyeleke (1991) states that African from time of their ancestors is known to bear many children. It was believed that having many children was a pride and a way of boosting one's ego. Providing enough labour and increasing the productivity on the farms.

Fajobi (1987) discovers that another major problem hindering modern family planning in Nigeria is illiteracy, he describes illiterates as the worst offenders of unplanned families. Majority of the married people in the rural areas of the six geo political zones are illiterates and they are ignorant of the importance and necessity of the modern family planning programme and alternatively, they rather prefer to ask their children to stay or live with other family members who are financially capable than themselves. Delano (1988); US Department of Agriculture Centre for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (2007) have pointed out various ways of controlling birth before the modern family planning came into existence and natural traditional method of family planning have been in use before the introduction of contraceptives. Family planning is a vital issue to investigate considering the rapid increase of Nigeria's population. The population of Nigeria today increases tremendously thus, posing problem of survival to the members of individual families. Africans have now advanced to the stage of developing modern family planning devices which are more effective than the method that were adopted in the early years or century. The types of family planning methods used in the old days include: abstinence, polygamy, celibacy, menstruation, douching, oral method, scarification, charms, spiritual power, local herbs in the vagina to stimulate contraction and dilation of the cervix. In the modern times, contraceptives used are: condoms, intrauterine devices (U.I.D) oral, sterilization, injectables, implant; sterilization, Diaphragm and safe period are also used in Nigeria (Delano, 1988).

This study therefore, intends to look at family planning knowledge, attitudes and practices among married women in Nigeria. It also seeks to find out the distorted gossip, and religious beliefs about family planning and the shortcomings in family planning. Planned Parenthood Federation of Nigeria (PPFNN) has been playing significant role in educating people, yet, the people seem to have turned their deaf ears. It must be pointed out that similar researches conducted earlier (Khalifa, 1988; Oyeleke, 1991) are concentrated on knowledge or attitudes or both, and none (if any) had been a full-fledged KAP study. The researcher therefore intended to fill this gap in literature by conducting a survey on all three variables of knowledge of, Attitude towards and Practices of family planning in Nigeria. Hence, the following null hypotheses were formulated for the research questions.

- H₀1: There is no significant difference in the family planning behaviour of married women in Nigeria on the basis of religion
- H₀2: There is no significant difference in the family planning Attitudes of married women in Nigeria on the basis of religion

- H₀3: There is no significant difference in the family planning practices of married women in Nigeria on the basis of religion
- H₀4: There is no significant difference in the family planning knowledge of married women from monogamous and polygamous homes in Nigeria.
- H₀5: There is no significant difference in the family planning attitudes of married women from monogamous and polygamous homes in Nigeria
- H₀6: There is no significant difference in the family planning practices of married women from monogamous and polygamous homes in Nigeria
- H₀7: There is no significant difference in the family planning knowledge of educated and non educated married women in Nigeria.
- H₀8: There is no significant difference in the family planning attitudes of educated and non educated named married women in Nigeria.
- H₀9: There is no significant difference in the family planning practices of educated and non-educated married women in Nigeria.

METHOD

This survey is designed to enable the researcher to gather information and seek the opinion of the population, to deduce the opinion of the entire population from information obtained from the knowledge, attitudes and practices of family planning among married women in Nigeria. The population of this study comprises all the married women in all the 36 States in Nigeria including the Federal Capital Territory. All the States are group into six geopolitical zones as shown on the table below.

Names of Zone	States within the Geopolitical Zone
South-West	Ekiti, Lagos, Osun, Ondo, Ogun, Oyo
South-East	Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo
South-South	Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross-River, Delta, Edo, Rivers
North-Central	Benue, Fct, Kogi Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau.
North-East	Adamawa, Bauch, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, Yobe
North-West	Kaduna, Kastina, Kano, Kebbi, Sokoto, Jigawa, Zamfara

Practically, it was strenuous to collect data from the target population, hence multistage sampling technique was used for data collation while purposive sampling technique was adopted to select two states in each geopolitical zone. Oyo and Lagos in the South-West, Enugu and Imo in the South-East, Rivers and Edo in the South-South, Benue and Kwara, in the North-Central, Adamawa and Taraba in the North-East and Kano and Sokoto in the North-West considering their proximity to one another. The simple random technique was therefore used in selecting 41 respondents from the two States selected from each zone and the total number of 246 respondents were used for the study.

Questionnaire entitled "Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of family planning in Nigeria (KAPFN)" which was divided into four sections (A, B, C and D) was the instrument used for data collation. The first section (A) consisted of the biographical data of the respondents such as: Age, Family type, Number of children, Religion, Ethnic/tribe and Educational status. In section B (knowledge), the respondents were expected to tick the items which demanded their knowledge about family planning. This section also contained

7 different items including yes or no statement. In section C (Attitudes), the respondents were supposed to tick the item on likert type scale using a response format of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) and this section also consisted of 11 items. In section D (Practices), the practices of family planning of the respondents were obtained by asking them to tick the items as applicable to them. It consisted of 13 items including “Yes” or “No”. To ascertain the validity of this instrument, the questionnaire was given to 2 experts in the Counselors Education Department University of Ilorin to vet for content validity. In addition, the researcher gave the questionnaire to two gynecologists of the maternity wing of University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital for vetting and it was confirmed to possess content validity.

The reliability was ascertained, when the researcher administered the questionnaire among 20 respondents in Ogun State who were not part of the study. After five weeks, the researcher also re-administered the same questionnaire among the same 20 respondents, the researcher scored the two tests and having correlated them using Pearson's product co-efficient, it yielded 0.74 at 0.05 significant levels. The administration of questionnaire was carried out by the researchers and the sake of those who have not received formal education, the researcher employed six Research Assistants, one from each zone who really understands their local language to educate the illiterate married women on how to fill the questionnaire. The data collected from the respondents were subjected to frequency counts. For the data analysis the scores from the instrument were computed and mean scores were found. The data collected for this study analyzed using frequency counts and percentage to breakdown the demographic data provided by the respondents and then used analysis of variance (ANOVA) for hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 while t-test statistic was used to find answers to the formulated hypotheses 4-9.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the analysis of data using ANOVA, table 1 reveals that the f-value was 5.815 and the table value was 3.000. Since the calculated value was greater than the table value it was concluded that there was a significant difference. Therefore, hypothesis one which states that there is no significant difference existing among married women in their knowledge of family planning on the basis of religion was rejected. Contrary to the above result, from table 3, the calculated value was less than the table value. Hence, it was concluded that there was no significant difference. Therefore, hypothesis two which stated that there was no significant different among women in their attitudes to family planning on the basis of relation was accepted. From table 4, the calculated F-value was 0.264 and the t-value was 3.000 at 0.05 with df of 244. Since the calculated F-value was less than the table value, it was concluded that there was no significant difference among women in their practices of family planning on the basis of religion was accepted. Table five indicates that the calculated t-value was 2.70, which was greater than the critical t-value which was 1.96 at 0.05 with df of 2.44. Based on this, it was concluded that there was significant difference in the knowledge of family planning. Therefore, hypothesis four was rejected. Table 6

shows that the calculated t-test was 0.2 which was less than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 with df of 244. Based on this it was concluded that there was no significant difference in the attitudes of the women to family planning. Therefore, hypothesis five was accepted. Table 7 indicates that the calculated t-value was 1.65 that was less than the critical t-value which was 1.96 with df of 244. Based on this, it was concluded that there was no significant difference among monogamous and polygamous homes in their practices of family planning. Therefore, hypothesis 6 was accepted. Table 8 shows that the calculated t-value was 4.03, while the table was 1.96 with df of 244. Since the calculated value was greater than the t-value, it was concluded that there was significant difference in the two groups. Therefore, hypothesis seven was rejected. Table 9 shows that the calculated t-value was 1.02 while, the table value was 1.96 with df of 244. Since calculated table value was less than the critical which was 1.02, it was concluded that there was no significant difference in the attitudes of two groups. The hypothesis was therefore accepted. Table 10 indicates that the calculated t-value was 1.96 at 0.05 with df of 244. Since the calculated t-Value was less than the critical t-value, the hypothesis was therefore accepted. There were significant differences in the knowledge of Christians, Muslims and traditionalists in their knowledge of family planning as a result of enlightenment given to the respondents by religious leaders in their churches and mosques, as well as the roles being played by the Planned Parenthood Federation of Nigeria.

It was found that there was no significant difference in the practices of family planning of Christians, Muslims and traditionalists as a result of economic hardship and imbroglia in Nigeria. There were significant differences between respondents from monogamous and polygamous homes in their knowledge of family planning. The level of education of married men who were illiterates would affect married women, since they do not see anything wrong in marrying many wives. Also, there was no significant difference between married women from monogamous and polygamous homes in their attitudes towards family planning. This could be as a result of abilities of those women from both monogamous and polygamous families to rigours of financing their children, and this would be determined by their husbands whom also need to be educated for positive outcome.

There was no significant difference between respondents from polygamous and monogamous homes on their practices of family planning in Nigeria. Both married women from monogamous and polygamous families could face and cope with crises emanating from high cost of living. There was significant difference in the family planning knowledge of educated and non-educated married women in Nigeria. Educated married women are enlightened through mass media like: Television, Radio, Seminars and Workshops. There was no significant difference in the family planning attitudes of respondents of educated and non-educated ones. Educated ones have high knowledge of family planning through mass media and other sources of communication but the non-educated believed that it is a sin. There was no significant difference in the family planning practices of educated and non-educated married women in Nigeria. Both of them used various means of controlling birth. Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusion were drawn:

- (i) The knowledge level of the respondents of family planning was low due to illiteracy on the part of married women in Nigeria.
- (ii) Their attitudes towards family planning was not favourably because of the wrong notion that it was a way of reducing the number of children born by a woman.
- (iii) It was also revealed that many parents given preference to either male or female child or this have probably increased the number of their children.
- (iv) It was discovered that educated married women attached more value to family planning than non-educated ones.

Table 1: Analysis of variance (ANOVA) comparing the family planning knowledge of the respondents on the basis of religion.

Source	Sum of Square	Mean Square	Different	Calculated Value	Table Value
Model	60.108	30.054	2		
Error	1255.912	5.168	244	5.815	3.000
Total	1316.020	246			

Table 2: Analysis of variance (ANOVA) comparing the family planning attitudes on the basis of religion.

Source	Sum of Square	Mean	Different	Calculated Value	Table Value
Model	11.897	5.948	2		
Error	8338.477	34.315	244	0.173	3.000
Total	1316.020	246			

Table 3: Analysis of variance (ANOVA) comparing the family planning practice of the respondents on the basis of religion.

Source	Sum of Square	Mean Square	Different	Calculated Value	Table Value
Model	9.252	4.626	2		
Error	4253.614	17.505	244	0.264	3.000
Total	1316.020	246			

Table 4: Mean, standard deviation and t-test result comparing the knowledge of the respondents on the basis of family type.

Group	No.	X	SD	Df	Calc. Value	Table value
Women from monogamous family	137	16.365	2.050	244	2.70	1.96
Women from polygamous family	109	15.862	2.598			

Table 5: Mean, standard deviation and t-test result comparing the respondents on the basis of family type.

Group	No.	X	SD	Df	Calc. Value	Table Value
Women from monogamous family		137	45.9270	5.806	244	2.70
Women from polygamous family		109	45.9083	5.884		1.96

Table 6: Mean, standard deviation and t-test result comparing the practices of the respondents on the basis of family type.

Group	No.	X	SD	Df	Calc. Value	Table Value
Women from monogamous family	137	21.861	4.173	244	2.70	1.96
Women from polygamous family	109	22.752	4.135			

significant, $p > 1.65$

Table 7: Mean, standard deviation and t-test result comparing the knowledge of married women from educated and non educated homes.

Group	No.	X	SD	Df	Calc. Value	Table Value
Non educated married women	78	15.2949	2.668	244	4.03	1.96
Educated married women	168	16.5337	2.026			

Table 8: Mean, standard deviation and t-test result comparing the attitude of married women from educated

Group	No.	X	SD	Df	Calc. Value	Table Value
Non educated married women	78	47.9487	5.642	244	1.02	1.96
Educated married women	168	44.9762	5.700			

Not significant, $p < 1.02$

Table 9: Mean, standard deviation and t-test result comparing the practices of married women from educated and non educated homes.

Group	No.	X	SD	Df	Calc. Value	Table Value
Non educated married women	78	23.1538	3.828	244	1.24	1.96
Educated married women	168	21.8393	4.268			

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has some relevant implications for school counselors, policy makers, administrators, family planning providers, pastors and other people who may be in need of family planning services. This study would enable the Nation Population Policy to reduce the number of children born by a woman to four or less. Providing necessary information and letting the married women to know the likely side effects of each type of contraceptives. The counselor can also be of help to the clients by making married women comprehend the social, psychological, emotional and other results of an unplanned pregnancy. Based on the result of the findings obtained from the study, it was recommended that medical experts, religious leaders and Planned Parenthood Federation of Nigeria (NPFN) as well as the tiers of government should join hands in reducing reproduction. The family planning providers, policy makers, doctors, nurses and administrators should enlighten both married men and women on the importance of family planning. Counselors should enlighten couples especially non-educated ones of different religious groups to show positive concern of family planning practices.

More people should be trained to visit both remote and rural areas to educate couples about the use of family planning devices. The need for sex education cannot be overlooked in the family planning programme, sex education clubs should be lunched in our post primary schools, since majority of the students are adolescents. The wrong notion that family planning is designed purposely to curb the rapid increase in population should be arrested whereas, married women would benefit from the program physically and socially. Philanthropic organizations should come to the aid of government by sponsoring programmes, buying of equipments and training of more personnel to bring effective and positive change to the live of the couples.

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