

THE ATTITUDE OF MARRIED MEN AND WOMEN TOWARDS FAMILY PLANNING PRACTICES IN EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *The study investigated attitude of married men and women towards family planning practices and the relationship between attitude and family planning practices in Ekiti State. Descriptive research of the survey design was used. The population for the study included all the married men and women in the 16 local Government Areas of Ekiti State. With the use of multistage sample procedure, a total of 1200 respondents were selected from the 16 local Government Areas of Ekiti State. A self-designed instrument was used for the study. The instrument was titled “Knowledge, Attitude and Family Planning Practices Questionnaire” (KAFPPQ). The instrument was validated by the researcher’s supervisor and experts in the field of English Language, Guidance and Counselling and Tests, Measurement and Evaluation. Split-half reliability method was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. A reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained and this is high enough to judge the instrument reliable. The instrument was administered by the researcher and trained research assistants in the Local Government Areas selected. The data generated were analysed using frequency counts, percentages and correlation analysis. It was discovered from the study that the attitude of married men and women towards family planning practices in Ekiti state is positive. The result further shows no significant relationship between attitude and family planning practices among married men and women in Ekiti State. The result showed significant relationship between religion and attitude towards family planning practice among married men and women in Ekiti State. Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that the attitude of married men and women towards family planning practices in Ekiti state is positive. It was recommended that Nigeria government should encourage the establishment of daycare centres within public and private service areas so that married men and women will have the convenience of going to get contraceptives.*

KEYWORDS: Attitude, Family Planning, Practice, Married Men, Women

INTRODUCTION

Information, education and communications campaigns were launched during 1992 – 1993 specifically to change Nigerians’ attitudes toward family planning so as to increase their contraceptive use (Delano, 2008). The campaign was based on evidence that family planning messages can influence contraceptive behaviour. The development of a nation appears to depend largely on high fertility rate leading to the rapid growth of country’s population. Family planning is the means by which individuals or married men and women space the process of conception, pregnancy and childbirth at intervals mutually determined by both husband and wife in order to have the desired number of children that they can conveniently maintain. Family planning studies appear to have identified a number of factors as significant variables in married men and women’s decision about family size with the more common variables being degrees of communication between married men and women, married men and women’s educational level and whether they are resident in urban or rural area. While such factors are

likely to influence family planning decisions universally, there are culture-specific factors such as adherence to traditional ideals like number of living children and male child preference, expectations which, in the case of several African groups, may override the universal variables. The use of contraceptives appears to have been seen as undermining their roles as household heads or as likely to encourage promiscuity.

Traditional values appear to feature prominently in both knowledge, attitude and family planning practices among married men and women because the cultural valuation of children is evident in studies which vindicate that among Nigerians as it is popularly believed that having fewer than five surviving children may negatively affect the use of family planning. Such inverse relationship may derive from traditional valuation of children not only as economic and political assets, but as indicators of status relative to other members of a community. It was discovered that though people have desire for fertility regulation in nearly all societies, achieved family size is greater than desired family size.

Attitudes toward family planning determine whether or not it is practiced. It has been estimated that about 100 million married women have unmet needs for family planning worldwide. In a number of surveys, many married women with unmet needs cited husbands' disapproval as the principal reason that they do not use contraception (Khorram and Wells, 2007). In a study conducted by Casterline and Sinding, (2010), husband's opposition was identified as a major reason for non-use of contraceptives. Similar findings were noted by Worku and Fantahun (2016). Other reasons mentioned in this study included inadequate knowledge and lack of couple communication. In the 2001 – 2002 Zambia Demographic and Health Survey (ZDHS), it was found that about two thirds of married women believed their husbands approved of family planning, with 16% reporting that their husbands disapproved of family planning. Many surveys in Africa have revealed that men generally approve of family planning. However, men's approval rates are usually lower than women's. Research suggests that in many regions, men view family planning favourably and can have a strong influence on the use of contraception (Worku and Fantahun, 2016). The Ankole Fertility Survey, conducted in 1984 in South-Western Uganda, showed that men had a positive attitude towards family planning despite their extremely low level of contraceptive use. Similarly, researchers observed that although low contraceptive prevalence was reportedly attributable to men's opposition to family planning, men expressed positive attitude towards fertility – regulating methods. This observation was supported by studies conducted by Lawoyin (2012), despite the positive findings from recent studies, it is a woman's perception of her husband's attitude towards family planning that strongly influences whether she will use family planning methods. If a woman thinks that her husband approves of family planning, she is much more likely to use it. Ideal family size is a good indicator of men's and women's attitude toward child bearing, even though actual reproductive behaviour may differ from stated desires. Studies have shown that African men generally desire larger families than do their wives (Worku and Fantahun, 2016). This is because men think they gain socially and economically from a large number of children.

The various methods of family planning can be categorized as; the traditional methods, which involves the use of native objects such as charms, amulets, rings, keys, fluid from dead bodies and others, while the modern methods involve the introduction and uses of contraceptives such as pills, injectable, intrauterine devices, implants and others for family planning purposes (Delano, 2008). Other classifications may include barrier, chemical, natural or surgical. Modern methods such as pills, condoms, injectable, intrauterine devices, implants, etc. appear to be the commonest and mainly advertised form of family planning, but it appears that most

Nigerian married men and women are non-contraceptive users. Some of the reasons for the low rate of contraceptive practice according to Ikechebelu, Ikechebelu and Obiajulu, (2005), range from factors such as “the fear of side effects, husband’s objection, religious and cultural prohibitions, etc.”

Attitudes towards fertility regulation, knowledge of birth-control methods, access to the means of fertility regulation and communication between husband and wife about desired family size seems to be very essential for effective family planning.

Religious affiliation also appears to affect the knowledge of contraceptive use. Religions differ in their stand on fertility regulation and among the major world religions, Catholicism and Islam are widely regarded as pronatalist in their ideology. However, the relationship between religion and contraceptive use is much more complex than expected (Yeatman and Trinitapoli, 2011). In one study conducted in India, it was discovered that even though the average number of children born to a Muslim or Christian couple is higher than that born to a Hindu couple, the acceptance of sterilization to limit family size was greater among Muslims and Christians than Hindus. The strength of one’s religiosity or degree of one’s adherence to the norms of a given religion may exert an influence on one’s mode of life including knowledge of reproductive behaviour. Social, cultural and religious unacceptability of contraception may frequently emerge as an obstacle to use of contraception.

Research Rationale

The need for the knowledge about the practice of family planning for married men and women is of paramount importance. Sexual health of married men and women in Ekiti State appears to be affected by poor knowledge of the available methods and religion of married men and women. Many married men and women appear to have a low level of information and many of them are shy to express themselves appropriately on the issues that relate to sex. These problems inevitably lead to a lower quality of care in sexual health. Most maternal death in Ekiti State and any other part of Nigeria appears to have been associated with unsafe abortions resulting from unwanted pregnancies, high rate of infant and childhood mortality, miscarriages or foetal wastages are problems associated with short birth interval. The poor attitude of most married men and women appears to have led to their lack of adequate skills to practice them effectively in fertility regulation in Ekiti State. So, married men and women must be educated about the types of family planning available and how to practice them for effective fertility regulation. The issue of religion appears to be one major factor affecting the attitude of married men and women towards family planning practices in Ekiti State. This study therefore set to examine the Attitude of Married Men and Women towards Family Planning Practices in Ekiti State, Nigeria

METHOD

The design used was a descriptive research design of the survey type. The population for the study comprised all the married men and women in the 16 local government areas of Ekiti State with respect to location. The sample used for the study comprised 1200 respondents that were selected from the 16 local government areas of Ekiti State. Multistage sampling technique was used in selecting the respondents. At the first stage, balloting technique was used to select six local government areas out of the 16 local government areas. This was done by writing each

local government in a sheet of paper, squeezing the paper and after thorough mixing; one was picked at a time until the total of 6 Local Governments were picked. At the second stage, simple random sampling technique was used to select four towns or villages from each of the 6 selected Local Government areas. Stratified random sampling technique was used at the third stage to select married men and women based on religion. Only married men and women were selected to participate in the study.

A self-designed questionnaire titled “Knowledge, Attitude and Family Planning Practices Questionnaire” (KAFPQ). The instrument has two sections, A and B. Section A provided bio-data information. Section B contained items that give a measure of the variables that possibly influence the use of family planning by married men and women. Respondents were asked to respond to items by choosing Yes or No. Their responses thereafter were scored 1 and 2 respectively. The respondents were asked to respond to other items in accordance with the options provided by the researcher. The scores obtained by each respondent were totaled to measure the knowledge of family planning practices by married men and women in Ekiti State. The instrument was given to experts in English Language, Guidance and Counselling and Tests, Measurement and Evaluation to ascertain the validity of the instrument. Split-half reliability method was used to ensure the reliability of the instrument. This was done by administering 40 copies of the instrument on respondents in another Local Government different from the six Local Government areas selected. The scores generated were divided into odd and even, and the two halves were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis and later subjected to Spearman Brown Prophecy formula. A reliability coefficient of 0.82 obtained at 0.05 level of significance showed that the instrument is reliable. The Instrument was administered by the researcher and other research assistants that were trained by the researcher in the Local Government Areas that were selected. The data generated were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages were used to answer the research question while hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Question: What are the attitudes of married men and women towards the family planning practices in Ekiti state? Responses on the attitudes of married men and women towards family planning practices in Ekiti state were obtained and subjected to statistical analysis involving frequency counts and percentages as presented in Table 1:

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Attitudes of Married men and women towards Family Planning Practices in Ekiti State (N=1200)

Questions	Reponses	Freq.	%
Do you like the use of family planning methods?	Yes	873	72.8
	No	327	27.3
Do you approve the use of family planning methods?	Yes	982	81.8
	No	218	18.2
Do you discuss family planning with peers or relations?	Yes	1091	90.9
	No	109	9.1
Do you discuss family planning and other reproductive health matters with your spouse?	Yes	873	72.8
	No	327	27.3
Who is the major decision maker for you on how children are spaced in the family?	Husband	109	9.1
	Wife	764	63.7
	Inlaw	327	27.3
Did you feel embarrassed when discussing family planning with your husband/wife?	Yes	272	22.7
	No	928	77.3
Was your husband/wife attitude positive whenever you discussed family planning issues?	Yes	873	72.8
	No	327	27.3
If you need to do family planning now, where do you prefer to go?	Health centre	763	63.6
	Gynaecologist	219	18.3
	Pharmacy	109	9.1
	No where	109	9.1
Sometimes husbands oppose wife use of contraceptive because they think she does not want to give birth and instead she has an intention to go for another man”.	Yes	654	54.5
	No	546	45.5

Table 1 presents the attitudes of married men and women towards the practices of family planning in Ekiti State. The result showed that in 72.8% of the respondents like the use of family planning methods, 81.8% approved the use family planning methods while 90.9% discuss family with peers or relations. Also, the result revealed that 72.8% of the respondents discuss family planning and other reproductive health matters with their spouses while 9.1%, 63.7% and 27.3% respective agreed that husband, wife and in-law respectively have the major decision on how children are spaced in the family. Furthermore, 77.3% were not embarrassed when discussing family planning with their spouses while 72.8% claimed that their spouses are positive whenever family planning issues are raised. Likewise, 63.6% preferred health centres to access family planning, 18.3% preferred going to gynecologist, 9.1% respectively preferred going to pharmacy and nowhere. However, 54.5% claimed that sometimes husbands oppose wife use of contraceptive because they think she does not want to give birth and instead she has an intention to go for another man while 45.5% disagreed.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between attitude and family planning practices among married men and women in Ekiti State.

In order to test the hypothesis, scores on attitude and family planning practices were computed and subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis Showing Relationship between Attitude and Family Planning Practices among Married Men and Women in Ekiti State.

Variable	N	Mean	S.D	r-cal	r-tab	p-value	Result
Attitude	1200	1.479	.193	0.035	0.073	.223	Not Significant
Family planning Practice	1200	1.443	.154				

$P > 0.05$

Table 2 showed that 'r' calculated value (0.035) was less than the table value (0.073) at 0.05 alpha level. The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected. This implies that negative attitude toward family planning simultaneously do not increase the practice of family planning among married men and women in Ekiti State. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between attitude and family planning practices among married men and women in Ekiti State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between religion and the attitude to family planning practices among married men and women in Ekiti State.

In order to test the hypothesis, scores on religion and the attitude to family planning practices were computed and subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis Showing Relation between Religion and the Attitude to Family Planning Practices among Married Men and Women in Ekiti State

Variable	N	Mean	S.D	r-cal	r-tab	p-value	Result
Religion	1200	1.25	.432	.093*	0.073	.001	Significant
Attitude	1200	1.479	.193				

* $P < 0.05$

Table 3 showed that 'r' calculated value (0.093) was greater than the table value (0.073) at 0.05 alpha level. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This implies that increase or decrease in married men and women's religious belief simultaneously brings about positive or negative attitude towards family planning practice among married men and women in Ekiti state. Therefore, there is significant relationship between religion and attitude towards family planning practice among married men and women in Ekiti State

DISCUSSION

It was discovered from the study that the attitude of married men and women towards family planning practices in Ekiti state is positive. Married men and women in Ekiti State like the use of family planning, they approve the use of family planning and at the same time discuss family planning with peers or relations. Although, married men and women may approve family planning practices but may be constraint from practicing it due to various factors. These findings are similar to past studies in Zaria (Isuigo Abanihe, 2003) which identified, culture, religion and lack of understanding of use of family planning as hindrances towards the effective practices of family planning among married men and women.

The result further shows no significant relationship between attitude and family planning practices among married men and women in Ekiti State. The study results show that most of the respondents approve the practice of family planning maybe because they find it safer and convenient. But the positive or negative attitude towards family planning practices does not guarantee actual usage among married men and women. The implication of this is that married men and women may approve the use of family planning but may be constrained from practicing it due to many factors. These finding supports the finding of Isuigo-Abanihe, (2003) who identified culture, religion and lack of understanding of use of family planning methods as hindrances towards the effective practices of family planning among married men and women.

The result showed significant relationship between religion and attitude towards family planning practice among married men and women in Ekiti State. Increase or decrease in married men and women's religious belief may simultaneously bring about positive or negative attitude towards family planning practice among married men and women in Ekiti State. Yeatman and Trinitapoli (2011) found that acceptance of sterilization to limit family size was greater among Muslims and Christians than Hindus. The strength of one's religiosity or degree of one's adherence to the norms of a given religion may exert an influence on ones' mode of life including reproductive behaviour. Social, cultural and religious unacceptability of contraception may frequently emerge as an obstacle to use of contraception.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that the attitude of married men and women towards family planning practices in Ekiti state is positive. Married men and women in Ekiti Sate like the use of family planning, they approve the use of family planning and at the same time discuss family planning with peers or relations, religion plays a significant role in the attitude of married men and women towards family planning in Ekiti State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Nigeria government should encourage the establishment of daycare centres within public and private service areas so that married men and women will have the convenience of going to get contraceptives.
2. Community programmes should be organized for friends/relations where forums of free discussions on family planning methods can be held for a better understanding for the use of family planning methods.
3. More sensitization programmes should be carried out in the religious houses where married men and women learn about family planning methods, the Nigeria government should improve on the existing strategies in propagating the practice of family planning among married men and women.

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