

Knowledge, Attitude, Practice and Choice of Family Planning Methods among Non-Literate Married Women in Ile- Ife, Osun State

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Abstract

The study investigated the knowledge, attitude, practice and methods of family planning mostly adopted by non-literate married women in Ile-Ife. It also examined the influence of some personal variables on the choice of family planning method with a view to situate the practice and challenges of family planning methods among them. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population for the study comprised all non-literate married women in Ile-Ife, Osun State. One hundred non-literate married women were sampled by convenience sampling technique. A self- designed questionnaire (in Yoruba language) was used to elicit information from the respondents. Data collected for the study was analyzed using frequency counts and percentage, RSI, mean rating and chi-square statistics. The results showed majority of the non-literate women (73%) had low knowledge of different available family planning methods, 21% of them had moderate knowledge while 6% of them were found to possess adequate knowledge of different available family planning methods. Likewise, 46% of the non-literate women were found to possess indifferent attitude towards the use of family planning, 41% had negative attitude while 13% had positive attitude towards the use of family planning. It was observed that most of the non-literate women lack adequate knowledge about the use of family planning and they are yet to cultivate positive attitude towards its use. Results also revealed the usage of the various methods which are in this order: abstinence method RSI 0.57, injection method RSI 0.51, pill method RSI 0.50, intrauterine device (IUD) RSI 0.45. It was also found that none of the non-literate married women used such family planning methods as charms, norplant implants and diaphragm. Furthermore, results showed that only family type had significant influence on abstinence method ($\chi^2= 3.877$, $df= 1$; $p=.049$), while religion, age, economic status and number of children had no significant influence on the use of the method. It was also shown that none of the variables had significant influence on the use of douching, pills, sterilization, Lactational Amenorrhoea Method (LAM), injection, counting of safe period and withdrawal methods. Variables such as family type, religion and number of children had no significant influence on the use of intrauterine device (IUD) but age and economic status were found to significantly influence the use of IUD ($\chi^2= 17.305$, $df=5$; $p=.004$, $\chi^2= 10.349$, $df=2$; $p=.006$) respectively. It was concluded that majority of the non-literate married women are not well informed about family planning methods, therefore this has affected their attitude, practice and choice of birth control method.

Keywords: Non-literate, Family Planning, Contraceptives, Knowledge and Attitude

Introduction

Family planning is primarily the use of birth control methods to choose the number and timing of children born into a family. This opinion is not comprehensive enough as it does not include those outside family setting that may need to practice safe sexual relationship especially for the unmarried.

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Thus family planning extends to techniques commonly used to actualize sexuality education, prevention and management of sexually transmitted diseases, pre-conception counseling, management and infertility management (Clifford, 1999). However, family planning is usually used as synonym for the use of birth control. It is mostly adopted by couples who wish to limit the number of children they want to have and control the timing of pregnancy, which is also known as spacing of children (Clifford, 1999). Family planning may encompass sterilization, as well as pregnancy termination. It also includes raising a child with methods that require significant amount of resources such as time, social, financial and environmental considerations. Family planning measures are designed to regulate the number and spacing of children within a family, largely to curb population growth and ensure each family has access to limited resources. Today, many countries have established national policies and encouraged the use of public family services.

The concept of informed choice in family planning can be applied to a wide range of sexual and reproductive health decisions. It focuses on whether to seek, to avoid pregnancy, whether to space one's childbearing, whether to use contraception, what family methods to be used, and whether or when to continue or switch methods. The term family planning choice could also refer to the family decision making. The Nigerian population is the highest in Africa at over 150 million, with a growth rate of 2.9 and a total fertility rate of 5.7 (Population Council, 2011; World Bank, 2009, Federal Government of Nigeria, 2004; National Population Commission (NPC) 2009). The NDHS report of 2008 shows that only 14.6% of currently married women aged 15-49 in Nigeria use any method of contraception (Nigerian Population Commission, 2008). This is in spite of the existence of the national policy on population and sustainable development which encourages voluntary limitation of births to 4 children per woman as well as various family planning programmes that have been carried out in the country (Federal Government of Nigeria 2004). Traditionally, most Nigerian cultures are highly patriarchal, value high fertility and male child preference. A report on reproductive motivation and family size preferences among Nigerian men concludes that the characteristic male dominant and patrilineal traditions support large family sizes and that men's reproductive motivation to a large extent, affect the reproductive behaviour of their wives. These cultural values could have a negative impact on the utilization of family planning services. Most family planning programmes in the past have focused on women as the primary target group due to high levels of maternal mortality and morbidity. However, this outlook does not take into consideration the role of men in family planning decision making.

A national survey carried out to ascertain the interaction between family planning attitudes and use in Nigeria by Odimegwu (1999) showed that while almost 75% of women registered a high level of support for men playing a role in family planning, only about 30% of the men did. Other studies carried out in various sections of the country support this finding, such as Duze and Mohammed (2006) whose work on men in Northern Nigeria shows a highly negative attitude towards family planning. A 1998 study carried out among married women in Ibadan Oyo state of Nigeria, 54% of the women surveyed perceived husband's opposition as a constraint to using a family planning method but one is not sure of the educational or literacy status of these women.(Obisesan 1998). Oni and McCarthy (1991) found that men in Ilorin Kwara State of Nigeria feel they should have a major role in the decision to limit fertility but that the responsibility for actual use of contraceptives lies predominantly with women. Onwuzurike and Ugochukwu (2001) found that 91% of non use of family planning methods among married women in a community in Enugu State of Nigeria was as a result of their husband being against it. An earlier study by Ukaegbu (1977) in rural eastern (present South-Eastern) Nigeria also indicated that among married women who wished to attend family planning clinics, only one third of them would be allowed to attend by their husband.

Odimegwu (1999) in his book 'The health and happiness of women' said that from the time a girl sees her first period until she reaches menopause that there are between 400- 500 months during which pregnancy could occur. Even if she is married or having a sexual relationship for twenty- five years, she could still produce a large number of children which can only be managed with a reliable contraceptive method in which she can be confident. Without family planning, the enjoyment of her sexual relationship would be spoiled and the arrival of each monthly period would be anxiously awaited. These fears may lead to stress which could affect her mental and physical health and in turn the happiness of her husband and children. The need for contraception becomes especially important if a woman suffers from some illness which might be exacerbated by pregnancy.

As a result of the increase in population of Nigeria accompanied with a high fertility and growth rate, the end result of all activities surrounding family planning should be towards reducing the population growth. Non-learned women comprise a particularly vulnerable section of the community who may lack empowerment or are unable to voice their choice with respect to contraceptive use possibly because of man dominance, and also lack of access to health services. However, their lack of literacy may be compensated if their partners are literate. Contraceptive use of such women may be higher than that of illiterate women whose partners too are illiterates. Nevertheless it has been observed that women with more education usually have smaller and healthier families (World Population Bureau, 2001). Similarly, earlier report of UN (1997) indicated that in developing countries, women with no schooling have twice as many children as do women with ten or more years of schooling. Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1997) have also shown that women with lower education and lower income have the highest fertility, experience early entry into motherhood, frequent pregnancies and a continuous cycle of illiteracy and poverty. These research reports seem to explain why in some Nigerian rural communities, the people have concerned themselves with procreation and increase in birth rate especially where there is high level of illiteracy. It is therefore asserted that literacy is associated with birth rate or otherwise. This is premised on the assumption that people who are not educated or literate might lack the knowledge, the attitude required to practice family planning methods correctly. This study therefore is concerned with finding out the knowledge, attitude, practice and the choice of family planning methods of the non-literate women in Ile-Ife, an ancient town in Osun state, Nigeria, Obafemi Awolowo University is situated in this town but just like other towns, it has suburbs that could be classified as slums where many non-literate women dwell. The curiosity of the researchers is to empirically establish the behavioural dispositions of these women towards their family planning methods and other variables that informed their disposition on it.

Overpopulation is a big problem in most countries of the world especially in Nigeria which is a threat to good living and education as a result of limited facilities. Government has intensified campaign for population control through family planning education, yet there is increase in the population at high rate and educated people seem to be conforming. Growth increase seems to be associated with people living in the slum where most illiterate women dwell. It might be that uneducated women lack knowledge or good practice of family planning method, or due to the negative effect it had on their fellow married women, or its acceptability due to religious beliefs, age, family type, and economic challenges. A continuous practice of this may lead to unregulated child bearing which portend problem for the nation's economic challenges, the health of the woman and well being of the children given birth to. It is therefore necessary to actually situate the knowledge and choice of family planning methods used by these illiterate women and also their attitude towards family planning method generally.

Specifically, this study was designed to:

1. determine the knowledge and attitude of illiterate married women towards the use of family planning methods;
2. identify the family planning methods used by illiterate married women;
3. examine the family planning methods used by non-literate married women based on their marriage type (polygamous or monogamous marital type);
4. investigate the influence of economic status, religion, and age on the use of the family planning method; and
5. ascertain if number and sex of children a non-literate married woman has will significantly influence her choice of family planning method.

Methodology: The study adopted descriptive survey research design in which subject's perception, beliefs and opinions on their knowledge, attitude, practice and choice of family planning methods was sought. The means of getting this information was a questionnaire (in Yoruba language- the local language) which was administered by the researcher as well as an interview in order to get the necessary data selection from non-literate married women in Ile-Ife, Osun State. The population for the study comprised non-literate married women within Ile-Ife, Osun State. Accidental and convenience sampling techniques were used to select one hundred (100) non-literate married women that constitute the sample for the study. There was no age limit. Participants include those who are married with children because it is assumed that such non-literate married women must have practiced family planning at one time or the other. A structured questionnaire (with Yoruba language version) was used as an instrument for the study. It was used to find out the family planning methods used, knowledge, attitude and practice by non-literate married women within Ile-Ife, Osun State.

Data collected for the study were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages, RSI, mean rating and chi-square analysis. Specifically frequency counts and percentage, RSI, mean rating was used to answer research questions while chi-square was used to test the stated hypothesis.

Results: what are the knowledge and attitudes of non-literate married women towards the use of family planning methods? The result is presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Knowledge and Attitude of Non-Literate married women towards the use of family planning methods.

Knowledge	F	%	Attitude	F	%
Low	21	21.0	Negative	41	41.0
Partial	73	73.0	Indifferent	46	46.0
Adequate	6	6.0	Positive	13	13.0
Total	100	100.0	Total	100	100.0

Table 1 above shows non-literate women knowledge and attitudes to the use of family planning. It can be observed that majority of the non-literate women (73%) had partial knowledge of different available family planning methods, 21% of them had low knowledge while 6% of them were found to possess adequate knowledge of different available family planning methods. Likewise, 46% of non-literate women were found to possess indifferent attitude towards the use of family planning, 41% had negative attitude while 13% had positive attitude towards the use of family planning. It can be observed from the table that most of the non-literate lack adequate knowledge about the use of family planning and they are yet to cultivate positive attitude towards its use.

What are the families planning methods used by non-literate women?

To answer this research question, participant's responses to items in section D of the questionnaire were scored such that most of the time response was allotted 3, sometimes response (2) while never response was scored 1. The respective scores were then subjected to descriptive analysis. In addition, the respective Relative Significant Index (RSI) and Rank were calculated to indicate the most popular family planning methods among the non-literate married women. The result is presented in table 2 below:

Table 2: Different Family Planning Methods used by Non-Literate Married Women

S/N	Items	Most of the time		Sometimes		Never		RSI	RAN K
		F	%	F	%	f	%		
1	Condoms(rubber applied over shaft of the penis after erection and the female condom which is inserted into the vagina)	4	4.0	22	22.0	74	74.0	0.43	5
2	Abstinence (the avoidance of sexual intercourse)	13	13.0	45	45.0	42	42.0	0.57	1
3	Douching (using lime or hot water to wash the sperm immediately after sex)	3	3.0	21	21.0	76	76.0	0.42	6
4	Pills (tablets taken daily in order to prevent pregnancy)	16	16.0	19	19.0	65	65.0	0.50	3
5	IUD (intrauterine device) metal with a loop inserted into the uterus to prevent pregnancy	16	16.0	4	4.0	80	80.0	0.45	4
6	Charms (rings, waist bands, pendants and armlets worn during sexual intercourse)	-	-	-	-	100	100.0	0.33	11
7	Norplant implants (six capsules placed under the skin at the upper arm)	-	-	-	-	100	100.0	0.33	11
8	Sterilization (tying of the fallopian tube to prevent pregnancy)	1	1.0	-	-	99	99.0	0.34	10
9	Diaphragm/ cap methods (rubber- shaped cap inserted into the vagina prior to intercourse)	-	-	-	-	100	100.0	0.33	11
10	LAM (Lactational Amenorrhoea Method). Intensive breast feeding to prevent pregnancy	3	3.0	5	5.0	92	92.0	0.37	9
11	Injection Method	21	21.0	10	10.0	69	69.0	0.51	2
12	Counting Save Period Using The Calendar Method	5	5.0	12	12.0	83	83.0	0.41	7
13	Withdrawal Method	3	3.0	8	8.0	89	89.0	0.38	8

Table 2 above shows different family planning methods available for use of non-literate married women. It is shown in the table that abstinence as form of family planning method was identified as the most popular family planning method used by non-literate married women. This method has the highest RSI value of 0.57 which was ranked as 1 on the table. It can be seen that from the table that 13% of the non-literate married women indicated that they use it most of the time, 45% of them sometimes use it while 42% of them indicated that they do not use it at all. The family planning methods that still enjoy usage among the non-literate married women sampled was injection method. This method has the second highest RSI value of 0.51 and ranked 2. Statistic also shows that 21% of the participants indicated that they use it most of the time, 10% sometimes used it while 69% of them indicated they do not use it at all. Pill is another family planning method next to injection as this method has the third highest RSI value (0.50) and ranked 3 on the table. It is shown in the table that 16% of the respondents used it most of the time, 19% sometimes use it while 65% do not use it at all. IUD as family planning method was ranked 4 with RSI value of 0.45. The table also revealed that none of the non-literate married women use such family methods as charms, norplant implants and Diaphragm. It can be concluded from the result that abstinence, injection and pills were the three methods of family planning that enjoy popular usage among the non-literate married women.

Research Hypothesis: Socio-demographic variables such as family type, religion, age, economic status and number of children of the non-literate women will have no significant influence on their choice of family planning methods. To test this hypothesis, socio-demographic variables of the non-literate women were cross tabulated with their respective family planning methods. The result is presented in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Influence of socio-demographic variables of the non-literate married women on the choice of the family planning methods.

Socio-demographic Variables	Family Methods	Planning	Chi-Square Values	Df	P-value	Decision
Family Type	Condom		.592	1	.442	Not Sig
Religion			.828	2	.661	Not Sig
Age			4.035	5	.544	Not Sig
Economic status			1.461	2	.482	Not Sig
No of Children			3.324	2	.190	Not Sig
Family Type	Abstinence		3.877	1	.049	Sig
Religion			1.501	2	.472	Not Sig
Age			5.885	5	.318	Not Sig
Economic status			3.717	2	.156	Not Sig
No of Children			4.505	2	.105	Not Sig
Family Type	Douching		.305	1	.581	Not Sig
Religion			1.101	2	.577	Not Sig
Age			6.396	5	.270	Not Sig
Economic status			3.926	2	.140	Not Sig
No of Children			2.024	2	.363	Not Sig
Family Type	Pills		1.004	1	.316	Not Sig
Religion			1.630	2	.443	Not Sig
Age			3.920	5	.561	Not Sig
Economic status			3.078	2	.215	Not Sig
No of Children			1.360	2	.507	Not Sig
Family Type	IUD		.837	1	.360	Not Sig
Religion			4.253	2	.119	Not Sig
Age			17.305	5	.004	Sig
Economic status			10.349	2	.006	Sig
No of Children			1.142	2	.565	Not Sig
Family Type	Sterilization		.702	1	.402	Not Sig
Religion			2.146	2	.342	Not Sig
Age			4.306	5	.506	Not Sig
Economic status			.302	2	.860	Not Sig

No of Children		4.932	2	.085	Not Sig
Family Type	LAM	.291	1	.589	Not Sig
Religion		.303	2	.859	Not Sig
Age		8.816	5	.117	Not Sig
Economic status		.245	2	.885	Not Sig
No of Children		.720	2	.698	Not Sig
Family Type	Injection	3.557	1	.059	Not Sig
Religion		.661	2	.719	Not Sig
Age		5.951	5	.311	Not Sig
Economic status		1.034	2	.596	Not Sig
No of Children		.036	2	.982	Not Sig
Family Type	Counting safe period	.276	1	.600	Not Sig
Religion		.287	2	.866	Not Sig
Age		4.945	5	.423	Not Sig
Economic status		.596	2	.742	Not Sig
No of Children		1.310	2	.519	Not Sig
Family Type	Withdrawal	.963	1	.326	Not Sig
Religion		.270	2	.874	Not Sig
Age		3.529	5	.619	Not Sig
Economic status		.508	2	.776	Not Sig
No of Children		1.507	2	.471	Not Sig

Table 3 above shows the influence of socio-demographic variables such as family type, religion, age, economic status and number of children on the methods of family planning adopted by the non-literate women. It can be observed that none of such variables has significant influence on those using condom as family planning methods since all the p-values were greater than 0.05. It can also be observed from the table that only family type has significant influence on those adopted abstinence ($\chi^2 = 3.877$, $df = 1$; $p = .049$) while religion, age, economic status and number of children have no significant influence on the use of abstinence as family planning method. It is also shown that none of the variables has significant influence on the use of douching, pills, sterilization, Lactational Amenorrhoea method (LAM), injection, counting of safe period and withdrawal methods. While variables such as family type, religion and number of children have no significant influence on the use of intrauterine device (IUD), age and economic status were found to significantly influence the use of IUD. For age and the use of IUD ($\chi^2 = 17.305$, $df = 5$; $p = .004$) while economic status and the use of IUD ($\chi^2 = 10.349$, $df = 2$; $p = .006$). The result concludes that only the family type significantly influenced the use of abstinence while age and economic status have significant influence on the use of IUD. Apart from the aforementioned variables and their influence on the respective family planning methods, none of the variables has significant influence on any other family planning methods examined.

Discussion

It can be observed from the findings of this study that most of the non-literate lack adequate knowledge about the use of family planning and they lack positive attitude towards its use. The knowledge level of the respondents of family planning was low may be due to illiteracy and their level of exposure. It may also be as a result of lack of accessibility to information, limited availability and access to modern contraceptive, poor family planning services, insufficient numbers of trained service providers, poor interpersonal skills on the part of providers and limited essential equipment. As a result of their partial knowledge on family planning, this might have led to their negative attitude towards the use of family planning method and because of the myths, rumors on the use of it, misconception/ doubt or wrong notion that it has a negative side effect to the health of women. This obvious in that some of the women in this study believed that washing off sperm after sex could prevent pregnancy. This contradicts the findings of Community and Family Study Center (CFSC, 1999) in a survey carried out on the attitude of the citizens towards the use of family planning methods. Most of the citizens had a complete and strong acceptance of the idea of family planning under any circumstance. The results of the second research question indicated that abstinence was a method well favoured by non-literate married women.

This could be due to the fact that non-literate married women know the importance of spacing children; they may also not have much time for sexual intercourse due to the stress of their business, thereby making it easy for them to abstain. It was also observed from the study that injection was popular among non-literate married women. This may be due to the fact that the method is inexpensive and once they are injected; there is no need for further attention. With these advantages over other methods, non-literate married women found it convenient to use. Also majority of the non-literate married women were also used to pills method to plan their families. This means that they use pill daily beginning on the fifth day of the menstrual cycle day 25. Therefore it is necessary for the non-literate to be educated on the use of pills properly and not missing any day out without taking the pills.

This result supports the findings of Cuekovich and Grate (1981), Luker (1975) and Hofmanns (1984) that the pills which require preparation in the form of a clinic or doctors visit is most accepted and recognized. It was also observed from the study that IUD was also popular among non-literate married women this may be due to the fact that the method is in expensive and once inserted it requires no further attention provided it remains in place. Some of the respondents also make use of condom and douching methods. This may be due to availability and easy administration of these methods. Again using the work of Cuekovich and Grate (1981) Hofmann (1984) and Luker (1975) which states that condom which requires no advance preparation for intercourse on the women's part was been used more. This correlate with the findings of this study that the use of male condom was very popular family method among non-literate married women. It was also observed that the least family planning methods among the non-literate married women revealed that none of the non-literate married women use such family methods as charms, norplant implants and Diaphragm. This is surprising but may be because of civilization causing a shift from traditional approach. This study further revealed that only the family type significantly influenced the use of abstinence while age and economic status have significant influence on the use of IUD. This corroborates the findings of Lesthaeghe (1989) and Caldwell (1992) which submitted that lack of improvement in the economic status of the women may likely affect their choice of family planning methods. Also this contradicts the findings of Olakojo (2012), which says that family type has no significant influence on the use of family planning methods. Apart from the aforementioned variables and their influence on the respective family planning methods, none of the variables has significant influence on any other family planning methods examined. This may be as a result of non-literate married women not making use of other family planning methods, beliefs and perception or as a result of their level of education.

Conclusion: The study therefore concluded that majority of the non-literate married women are not well informed about family planning methods, therefore this has affected their attitude, practice and choice of birth control methods.

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