

Perception of Married Women Aged 18-45 on the Practice of Family Planning in Ardo Kola Local Government Area of Taraba State of Nigeria

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Abstract

This study is carried out to ascertain the perception and attitude of married women aged 18-45 on the practice of family planning. The study adopted the survey research method with questionnaire as the instrument. The research deployed multi stage technique to select 5 wards out of the 12 wards in Ardo Kola namely Ardo Kola, Jauro-Yinu, Jiru, Lamido-Borno, Mallum and then sets of questionnaire were distributed to 400 respondents that were randomly selected from the 5 wards. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentage, frequency distribution and Microsoft excel chart analysis. The study reveals among other things that married women in Ardo Kola Local government are aware of family planning/method but do not practice family planning because their husbands are not favorably disposed to the practice. The study recommends that Husbands in Ardo Kola should be enlightened properly by health care providers on the benefits derivable from family planning, and the attendant socio-economic and health problems where the practice is ignored.

Keywords: Married Women, Contraceptives, Ardo Kolo, Attitude, Family Planning

INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the Study

The practice of family planning has called for global attention because of its importance in decision making on population growth and issues of development. Child bearing 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. The World Health Organisation (1971) ^[1] defines Family Planning as:

the practice that helps individuals or couples to attain certain objectives such as avoiding unwanted pregnancies, regulating the interval between pregnancies, controlling the time at which birth occurs in relation to the ages of the parents and determining the number of children in the family.

According to Almuam (2007),^[2] family planning is defined as birth spacing, preventing unwanted pregnancies or securing wanted pregnancies. Onokerhoraye (1997) ^[9] sees family planning as “the provision of birth prevention information services and appliances. It also involves teaching men and women about their bodies and teaching them how to prevent births usually with contraceptives but sometimes also with abortion or sterilization”.

Family planning could further entail making decisions on the number of children couples want to have by using different methods to achieve that, ranging from contraceptives to use of condoms, male and female sterilization among others.

There has been a lot of campaign on the use of family planning and reduction of population from country to country especially in Nigeria. Even at that, a study by NPC (2009) indicates that “contraceptive use is still low in many developing countries”. This could be related to lack of adequate information and ignorance as postulated by Adinma & Nwosu (2005) ^[1]. Reshma (2015) ^[10] adds that, other factors such as “culture, low education, poverty and poor access to information on contraceptive are among numerous reasons that have been identified by scholars to militate against the use of family planning methods”.

Traditional values also play a big role in family planning acceptance and decision, as many cultures and traditions support giving birth to as many children as possible. Some see it as a thing of pride. In places like “Jesse” Ethiopie West Local Government Area of Delta state, a man with many children is regarded as a strong and rich man, as such, family planning acceptance is very minimal. “Traditional values feature prominently because the cultural valuation of children is evident in studies which indicate that, among Nigerians, having fewer than five surviving children negatively affected the use of family planning methods” (Lawoyin et al, 2002) ^[4].

Against this backdrop, the study seeks to assess the perception and acceptance of family planning among married women in Ardo Kola Local Government of Taraba State, Nigeria.

2. Statement of the Problem

The acceptance and use of family planning among married women in Nigeria has become a contentious problem. Against this backdrop, married women tend to give birth to many children, forgetting the importance and benefit of family planning. Ignorance, illiteracy, African traditional values and norms, husband dominance among others have come against the practice of family planning among married women. This is a problem, serious problem in that in view of the global economic challenge and that of security, where children that are not catered for by parents turn out to be security threats or wayward.

These problems are not far from the ones experienced in the study area of the research work.

3. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the perception and attitude of married women in Ardo Kola Local Government Area on the acceptance and practice of family planning. The study is guided by the following objectives:

- (i) To examine the sources of awareness creation on family planning among married women in Ardo Kola
- (ii) To determine the knowledge of family planning methods among married women in Ardo Kola
- (iii) To explore the factors militating against married women's acceptance of family planning.

4. Research Questions

The study is guided by the following questions:

- (i) What are the sources of awareness creation on family planning among married women in Ardo Kola?
- (ii) What is the knowledge of family planning methods among married women in Ardo Kola?
- (iii) What are the factors militating against the acceptance of family planning among married women in Ardo Kola ?

5. Literature/Empirical Review

Literature review is a basis upon which a research is built. It seeks to explore other scholars opinion and findings on certain issues or problems. In this review, family planning will be explicated with empirical situations militating against the acceptance of family planning among middle aged women.

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., 2010) [5].

This implies that most women don't want to go into family planning because of its effects 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 et al., 2004) [3].

For example, Onokerhoraye (1997: 106, 168) [9] 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 notes 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.

There exist a lot of factors that militate against family planning from one society to another. Traditional values, ignorance and illiteracy could be a big factor in making women not to accept family planning. Inadequate health care facilities could also hinder women from patronizing health care centres in order to get contraceptives or knowledge on the practice of family planning. Against this backdrop Nwosu, Eke, and Chigbu, (2011) [8] further elaborate on factors that could militate against family planning as follows:

Ignorance about the benefits of modern family planning, resistance to family planning by saying "it is not necessary", husbands negative attitude to modern family planning, quest for lacking gender in the family, quest

for more helping hands (children) in farming, mothers' aspiration for fertility title or honor, religious belief/creed, low level of formal education, peasant subsistence farming, illusory fears about side effects of modern family planning: that it causes infertility, ill-health, damage to reproductive system, delayed menstrual return etc, local customs that permit polygamy and continuation of child bearing till menopause. Family planning commodities not affordable to many rural families, due to poverty.

By implication, high rate of ignorance to modern family planning and husbands dominance, husbands arrogance that they are all in all and low level of formal education works against family planning acceptance and practice.

6. Theoretical Framework

Theories are the philosophy on which the theme of a study is hinged. It seeks to explain why certain phenomenon takes place. The theory suitable for this study is Planned Behavior (TPB)

In this theory, "behavior is explained by behavioral intention, which is influenced by attitudes toward a specific behavior, subjective norms (SNs), i.e. perceived social pressure to perform the behavior and perceived behavioral control (PBC). That is, both internal and external factors can facilitate or hinder behavior" (Montano, Kasprzyk, and Taplin, 1997).^[12]

According to this theory, the strength of others' exerts influence on individuals' behavior making them do what others want them to do and it tends to make them act in accordance with others. This implies that external or internal factors could lead us to take certain decision. People could take certain decision because they feel it is beneficial to them while some take it because others superior to them want them to take such decisions.

The theory is applicable to this study as it looks at the perception and attitude of women on the use of family planning. As the theory suggests, internal and external factors could influence decision making. This could be seen in factors influencing acceptance of family planning such as husband's rejection of family planning, illiteracy, culture and tradition, religious beliefs among others. These factors and many more which could be internal or external influence the perception of women. In African tradition men are like gods and must be totally obeyed. This makes a man to have much strength to influence decision on child birth, as such he decides either for family planning or not thereby influencing the woman's decision and perception. This scenario could be categorized under the external factor and strength of others to influence decision making.

Against this backdrop, the study is planned at assessing the perception of women on the acceptance and utilization of family planning in Ardo Kola Local government area of Taraba State.

7. Methodology

The researchers employed the survey research method for this study with the use of the questionnaire as instrument. The target populations were married women in Ardo Kola Local Government Area between the ages of 18 and 45 years of age. Ardo kola Local Government Area is situated in Taraba State, Nigeria, with its headquarters in Sunkani. It has an area of 2,262km² and a population of 86, 921. (https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ardo_Kola)^[12].

The area has 12 wards, namely: Ardo Kola, Iware, Jauro-Yinu, Jiru, Lamido-Borno, Mallum, Mayo Ranewo, Sarkin-Dutse, Sibre, Sunkani, Tau, Zongon-Kombi. (Nigeriazipcodes.com)^[13].

The researcher employed a multi-stage sampling method to select five wards in Ardo Kola Local Government, namely: Ardo Kola, Jauro-Yinu, Jiru, Lamido-Borno, and Mallum. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 400 respondents i.e 80 respondents from each of the 5 selected wards. Sets of questionnaire were administered by the researchers with the help of 5 other assistants who could translate the questionnaire in to Fulani, Kona and Mumuye language in order to have adequate and accurate data. This was done because these tribes populate the study. There were other respondents who could speak English and that facilitated the process of collation.

Data collected were presented in tables, pie charts and analyzed using simple percentages, frequency distribution and Microsoft excel chart analysis.

8.1 Results of Data Collected and Discussion

Table 1: Educational Background of Respondents

EDUCATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Primary school	93	23.3%
Post primary school	201	50.2%
Tertiary	75	18.7%
No formal education	31	7.8%
Total	400	100

Source: Ardo Kola Field Survey, 2016.

Table 1 above seeks to explore the educational background of the respondents who responded to the questions on family planning. The result shows that most of the respondents are post primary school certificate holders 201(50.2%), while 93(23.3%) are primary school certificate holders, 75(18.7%) hold Tertiary education certificates, whereas 31(7.8%) consented to not having any formal education. This implies that most of the respondents are holders of post primary school certificates.

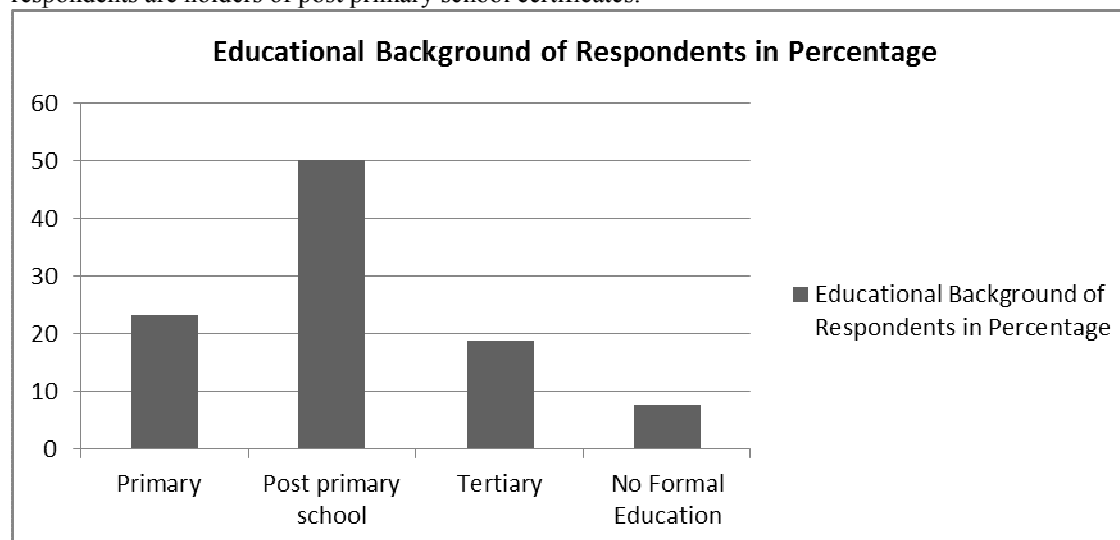


Fig 1:1 Educational background of Respondents shown in percentage

Research Question One: Sources of awareness of family planning among married women in Ardo Kola.

TABLE 2: Awareness of Family: Are you aware of Family planning?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	320	80%
No	80	20%
Total	400	

ARDO KOLA FIELD SURVEY: 2016

As shown in table 2 most of the respondents are aware of family planning as shown by 320(80%) of the respondents who accepted that they were aware of family planning method, while 80 (20%) consented to not knowing the methods of family planning. This reveals that family planning is not a new thing to the respondents as they have heard about it in one way or another.

The next question/table explores the sources from which the respondents have heard about family planning and its method.

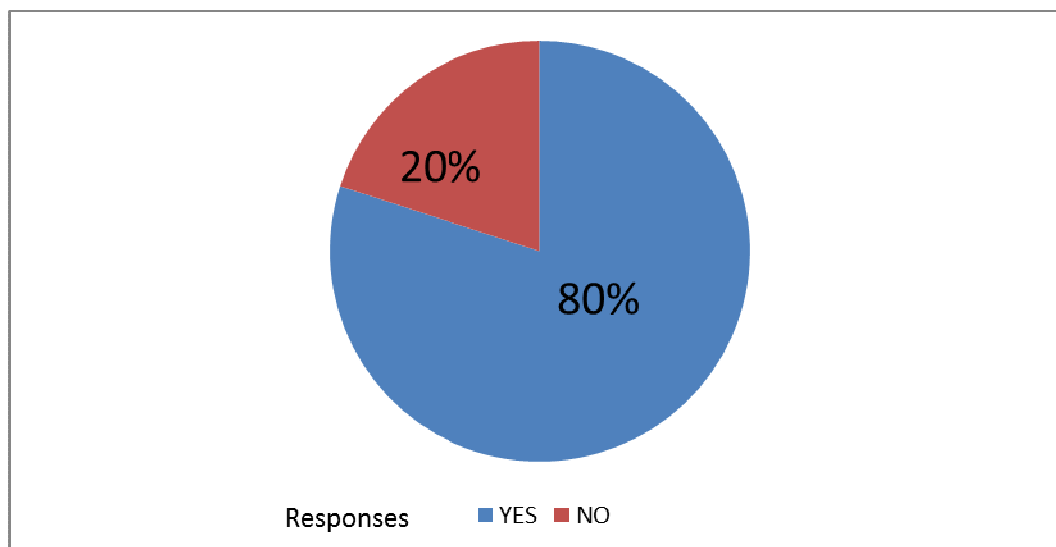


Fig 1:2 Percentage of awareness of family planning by respondents

TABLE 3: Sources of Awareness of Family Planning

SOURCES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Radio/television/newspapers	85	21.3%
Friends/relatives	180	45%
Books	85	21.3%
Health workers	50	12.5%
Total	400	100%

Ardo Kola Field Survey: 2016

Table 3 above seeks to establish the sources of family planning awareness creation by the respondents and this reveals that the majority of the women 180(45%) in the area got the information on family planning through friends/relatives, 85 (21%) agreed to having heard of family planning from Radio/Television/Newspapers, 85(21.3) agreed that they got the information on family planning from books, whereas 50(12.5%) concurred to being informed by health workers on the use of family planning. The study reveals that the highest sources of respondents awareness creation on family planning are from friends/relatives. These responses shows that there is high level of awareness of family planning as postulated on table 2, which seeks to know whether respondents have heard of family planning.

Research question two: What is the knowledge of family planning methods among married women in Ardo Kola?

Research question two seeks ascertain the level of understanding the respondents have on family planning, it further seeks to determine if the respondents practice family planning or not and the type of family planning they are exposed to or aware of.

TABLE 4: Family Planning Practice: Do you practice Family Planning

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	40	10%
No	360	90%
TOTAL		

Ardo Kola Field Survey: 2016

Table 4 seeks to know whether respondents in Ardo kola local government practice family planning. The table reveals that the majority of married women 360(90%) in the area do not practice family planning even though they are aware of family planning practice. Whereas, 40(10%) consented to practicing one form of family planning or another. This reveals that most married women in Ardo kola do not practice family planning method even though they are aware of family planning.

TABLE 5: Family Planning Method: What is your Knowledge of Family planning?

SOURCES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Use of Pills	85	21.3%%
Use of Condoms	185	46.3%
Use of injection	75	18.8%
Use of Withdrawal method	30	7.5%%
Female Sterilization	25	6.3%
TOTAL	400	100%

Ardo Kola Field Survey: 2016

In Table 5 the respondents were asked about their knowledge of family planning that is the forms of family planning they were aware of. The study reveals that the most known family planning method to respondents is the use of condom as consented by 185(46.3) women in the area. While 85(21.3%) said they use pills as the method of family planning. 75(18.8%) agreed that they use injection as the family planning method they are more aware of, whereas 30(7.5%) went for withdrawal method and 25(6.3%) concurred to female sterilization as the method of family planning they are more aware of.

This study reveals that the most acceptable form of family planning that women in Ardo kola Local Government are aware of is the use of condom, followed by the use of pills among others. This revelation points to the fact that women in this area have high knowledge of family planning and its methods.

Research Question 3: What are the factors militating against the acceptance of family planning among married women in Ardo Kola?

Research question 3 seeks to answer the question on factors that hinder women in Ardo Kola from practicing family planning. As mentioned above, women in Ardo Kola are much aware of family planning and the methods but do not practice family planning due to one reason or another. Therefore, the table below explores what hinder the respondents from practicing family planning.

TABLE 6: Factors militating against the practice of family planning?

FACTORS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Fears about side effects of modern family planning	84	21%
Religious belief/Creed,	99	24.8%
Husbands attitude to family planning	165	41.2%%
Ignorance about the benefits of modern family planning	42	10.5%%
Cost of pills	10	2.5%
TOTAL	400	100%

ARDO KOLA FIELD SURVEY: 2016

Table 6 above reveals factors militating against the acceptance of family planning by women in Ardo Kola Local Government Area of Taraba State. The study reveals that husbands attitude to family planning as opined by 165(41.2%) respondents is the major reason why they don't accept family planning method, 99(24.8%) opined that religious beliefs/creed is a strong factor militating against the acceptance of family planning and practice, 84(21%) of the respondents agreed that fear of the side effects of modern family planning is the major constraint to family planning among them. 42(10.5) respondents opted for ignorance about the benefits of modern family planning as the reasons for rejecting family planning, while 10 (2.5%) reveals that the cost of pills hinders them from accepting and practicing family planning method.

Against this backdrop, it could be deduced that the major reason why women in Ardo Kola Local Government don't practice family planning is because their husbands are against it

9. Discussions of Findings

From the data gathered and analyzed, it could be deduced that married women in Ardo Kola Local Government Area are aware of family planning and its method such as pills, injection, use of condoms among others, and most women got the information on family planning from friends and relatives; other media are Radio/Television and books. Findings reveal that although married women in Ardo Kola are aware of family planning, they do not practice it as shown Table 6 above. This finding is in line with the assertion of NPC (2009)^[7] study which states that there has been a lot of campaign on the use of family planning and reduction of population from country to country, especially in Nigeria, even as that study indicates that contraceptive use is still low in many developing countries.

This study reveals that rejection of contraceptive use, husband's not accepting family planning, religious beliefs and creeds among others as the major reasons why women in this area do not practice and accept family planning. This finding is in line with Nwosu, Eke, and Chigbu, (2011)^[8] who point to husbands negative attitude to modern family planning as one of the reasons that prevent women from practicing family planning.

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study explored the perception of married women in Ardo Kola Local Government of Taraba State on family planning. The study reveals that there is a high knowledge of Family planning among women in the study area but they do not practice family planning as they tend to obey their husbands as postulated by the study that Husbands rejection of family planning makes the women to reject family planning. Other factors such as religious belief/creed also play a big part in making women in the area not to accept family planning. Against this backdrop the research seeks to proffer the following recommendations,

- (i) Husbands in Ardo Kola should be enlightened properly by health care providers on the benefits of accepting modern family planning.
- (ii) Contraceptives such as pills should be made available at a cheaper rate by health care providers in order to make women purchase them.
- (iii) Health care providers should properly explicate the side effects of family planning to women in Ardo Kola Local Government Area to enable them make take proper decision that would help them and their family at large.
- (iv) Religious leaders should properly educate their subjects to see the danger associated with producing children that you cannot carter for.

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