

THE ROLE OF MEN IN FAMILY PLANNING DECISION-MAKING IN ILORIN WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KWARA STATE

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INTRODUCTION

Rapid population growth is critical especially in developing countries because rapid population growth is often time not matched with the socio-economic demands of the people. For instance prolonged high fertility rate may lead to a relatively high proportion of children and high dependency burden and eventual poverty and other social vices. Of the three major means by which population size can change, fertility seems to be a bit difficult to influence. For instance family planning methods were adopted as a panacea to reduce the high fertility rates and slow down the rapid rate of population growth, with women as the primary target due to the high level of maternal mortality and morbidity. Population however continues to grow rapidly. For instance, as at today, Nigeria's population 177.50 million people, growth rate of 2.5% per year and total fertility rate of 5.6 is one of the fastest growing population in the world (NPC/FMOH, 2014). With this population size, Nigeria ranks the 7th largest population in the world and will rank 5th with a population of 443 million in 2050 (Undelikwo *et al.*, 2013). Ilorin West Local government Area of Kwara state the study area, also increased from 209,567 (2000) to 365,221 (2006) (NPC, 2010).

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Fertility issues are not only about women. It takes a man and a woman through culture to produce babies. Men are also crucial in influencing fertility level and trends. The need to pay more attention to the role of men (male) in issues of family planning especially in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized. This assertion was also echoed at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and that men need to be integrated into family planning programmes and jointly share the responsibility especially in contraceptive usage. Buttressing this fact, Oni and McCarty (1991) in a study carried out amongst married women, concluded that husbands' objection is the reason for their non-use of contraceptives. As such there is, slow or non-use of contraceptives in some parts of the world. For example in Nigeria the contraceptive prevalence of all methods is 15%, resulting in the persistent rapid population growth rate (Ringheim, 1996; Pop. Ref. Bureau, 2014).

RESEARCH QUESTION

The following research questions are asked in order to contribute to the knowledge needed to encourage and enhance men's understanding regarding the why they should be included/involved in the family planning programmes.

- ❖ What are the men's level of understanding of family planning and its acceptability?
- ❖ Does couples' level of communication affect family planning decision making?
- ❖ Are men responsible for family planning decision?
- ❖ What are the roles of socio-economic characteristics in fertility behaviour among men?
- ❖ To what extent does place of residence influence on family planning practice in the study area?

OBJECTIVES

This research work examines the role of men in decision family planning decision making. Specific objectives are intended to:

- ❖ identify the major determinant of fertility behavior;
- ❖ examine the factors that impact men's adoption of family planning;
- ❖ explain the relationship or effect of spousal communication and family planning practice;
- ❖ examine the effect of socio-economic status of couples on family planning decision making; ascertain the influence of place of residence on family planning practice.

LITERATURE

The fertility rate in Nigeria has been persistently high 5.7%, despite the family planning programme adopted in the national population policy to reduce fertile levels. Probably because the targeting of females was not good enough because in some cultures like the ethnic group in Ilorin, husbands (males) decide when to have children. It is therefore not surprising that Fakeye and Babaniyi (1998) in their study concluded that husband's opposition to family planning programmes is one of the commonest reasons for non-use of contraception in Ilorin. Furthermore, with respect to the wives' involvement in family planning, one-third of all couples using family planning rely on a male method (condom, vasectomy, or withdrawal or no periodic abstinence) which requires full male co-operation (Osagbemi *et al.*, 1998). Islamic religion gives room for polygamy, a source of large family size or more children. Islam however subtly supports family planning in the form of child spacing by ensuring that a woman breastfeeds for two full years. Cultural as well as religious inclination may work against the full co-operation and practice of family planning. Caldwell (1976b) explains that wealth flow (up-down or down-up) is a direct link between family structure and fertility. In other words, in traditional society (Nigeria inclusive), wealth primarily flows upwards; children were sources of wealth and security in old age (to take care of the parent when they are old). This therefore could be one of the reasons for large family size in Nigeria. The traditional family structure therefore shapes individual spousal perception of child related process and affects individual's decision-making and actual fertility behavior.

METHODOLOGY

The Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula was adopted to select 265 males from the 2011 voters list of Ilorin West Local government, the study area. The voters list was used as the sampling frame because majority of voters are expected to be 18 years and above and could be married going by the age of adulthood. This is in addition to the fact that the breaking of the former Ilorin local Government Area into three (Ilorin West, Ilorin East and Ilorin South) is only on paper. And therefore difficult to disaggregate the population figures for the three local government areas. Copies of questionnaire were administered on the sampled respondents to obtain the needed data for the study. Simple descriptive analysis and Multi Regression analysis was employed to explain the relation between the use of family planning methods and spousal communication for the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Men adoption of Family Planning Factors

Majority (68.00%) agreed to be discussing family planning issues with their wives. About 66.40% of the respondents that discussed family planning issues adopted one form of male specific family planning method or the other while 33.60% have not been using. The three common methods of family planning for men include the use of condom (36.40%), vasectomy (20.40%) and natural system (43.18%) as explained by the respondents.

Effectiveness of Spouse Communication on Family Planning

Results indicate that the rate at which men discuss family planning issues with their wives and their visitation to health center for family planning service is positively and moderately correlated ($r = 0.50$) at 95% level of significance. This result may be attributed to the fact that some of the respondents allowed their wives to make use of some form of family planning methods.

Determinant of Fertility Behaviour in Family Planning.

Concerning the determinant of fertility behaviour, the age, employment, occupation, monthly income, duration and age at first marriage were considered as determinants. Duration of marriage contributed the highest contribution (0.633), followed by the age of the respondents. Monthly income (0.346) and age at the first marriage (0.431) also play prominent roles in the determinant of fertility behaviour. The nature of occupation (0.028) has the least contribution among the examined factors.

CONCLUSION

Generally, most family planning policies are targeted against women, however, traditionally, Nigerian men take most decisions affecting the family including the fertility of their women, because they are seen as the dominant source of authority and also as the head, protector and main breadwinner of the family (Osagbemi *et al.*, 1998). Odusola *et al.* (2001) states that other important influences on fertility change include religion, urbanization, sex preference and others. Findings from this study revealed that men's role in family planning decision-making cannot be underscored from religion, cultural and socio-economic lifestyle in society. Even those who use some forms of family planning methods it's the male type (condoms) or traditional which are both controlled by men.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATION

Since men dominate decision making in the family, they should therefore be involved in the planning and implementation of family planning programmes; educate men on the benefits of family planning probably at work place, sports viewing center.

The men will in turn encourage their partners to use contraceptives and therefore reduce the total fertility rate and eventually slow population growth. Consultation with the religious leaders and sensitized husbands about the implication of large number of children on society.

If these suggestions or recommendations are made use of, there will be a major decline in fertility rate and eventual slowing down of population growth, a demographic dividend for Nigeria.