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FACTORS INFLUENCING CHOICE OF FAMILY PLANNING AMONG WOMEN OF CHILDBEARING AGE IN ILORIN EAST LGA, KWARA STATE

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Abstract

The study examined factors influencing the choice of family planning among women of childbearing age in Ilorin East LGA, Kwara State. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. A total of 120 respondents formed the sample size for the study. Researchers' structured questionnaire which was validated by experts from the related field was used as instrument for the study. The instrument was administered on the respondents and data were analysed using percentages and frequent counts for demographic data while inferential statistics of chi-square was used to analyse the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. The findings from this study revealed that: age was a factor influencing the choice of family planning with calc chi-square value of 176.4 and table value 21.03 with 12df at 0.05 alpha level; Culture was a factor influencing the choice of family planning with calc chi-square value of 117.86 and table value of 21.03 with 12df; and Religion was a factor influencing the choice of family planning among women of childbearing age with calc chi-square value of 96.84 and table value of 21.03 with 12df. Based on the findings of this study, the conclusion indicated that age, culture and religion are factors influencing the choice of family planning among women of childbearing age among the population studied. The researchers recommended among others that the health educator should carry out enlightenment campaign through mass media that will educate women of childbearing age on the need to ignore cultural practices that discourage them to use family planning services.

Keywords: Family Planning, Choice, Childbearing Age, Women.

Introduction

In recent times, there has been a heightened campaign for the adoption of family planning among women of childbearing age. This is especially so in developing and underdeveloped countries where incidence of childbirth is still considerably high. In the developed nations of the world, high level of enlightenment, improved healthcare, technological advancement, and a positive change in orientation has made family planning successful, thereby reducing the number of child birth among women of childbearing age. This is, however, not the case in many underdeveloped and developing nation where childbearing act is influenced by several factors. Shehu and Kinta (2011) explained that family planning is the name given to ways in which couples attempt to control their fertility. Olayinka (2010) sees family planning as a device to safeguard the interest of the wife by preventing detrimental effects of giving births to children in quick succession. Family planning is a decision-making process in which one determines the size of one's family, spacing of births, and also a means of regulating reproduction. National Primary Health Care Development Agency (2012) pointed out that men constitute approximately half of every population. Taking cognizance of their gender serotypes as leaders and decision makers at households, community and policy levels, they have an important role to play in the promotion and success of their own reproductive health as well as the reproductive health of their female partners/wives and young people. They also require information and knowledge to deal with their own reproductive health issues.

Birth control is an umbrella term that refers to all the procedures used to prevent the birth of a child. Birth control includes all available contraceptive measures as well as sterilization, abortion procedures, and perhaps the use of intrauterine device (IUD). Contraceptive is a much more specific term for any procedure used to prevent the fertilization of an ovum. Contraceptive measures vary widely in mechanism used to accomplish the task, and vary in method of use and their rate of success in preventing contraception (Dale & Wayne, 2003). National Primary Health Care Development Agency (2017) opined that the world health Organization recommended that mothers should wait for an interval of at least 24 months before attempting next pregnancy. Family planning/child spacing methods are categorized into four major types viz: natural family planning or fertility awareness methods, short-term methods, long-acting methods and permanent methods. Agbonifoh and Onobumeh (2018) explained that fertility control method is the means by which individuals and married couples space the process of contraception, pregnancy, and childbirth which is mutually determined by both partners in order to have the numbers of children that they can conveniently provide and care for. Fertility control methods allow spacing of pregnancies by married couples and can delay pregnancies in young and unmarried women and decrease risk of pregnancy related problems and death from early child bearing.

National Population Policy (2009), and Agbonifoh and Onobumch (2018) explained that increase in population is a situation whereby the population of a family, community, state and nation is more than the resources of that family, community, state and nation, or the resources cannot adequately sustain them. Increase in population can be attributed to so many factors such as increase in fertility rate, and decline in death rate and migration. The highest population growth occurs in developing countries like Nigeria with over 167 million people with a growth rate of 2.9 and total fertility rate of 5.7.

Women are more sexually active at certain age group than others, and it has also been shown that women in the age group 23 to 35 years use family planning methods more than those in the age group 15 – 22 years and 36 – 49 years. Koetsawang (2006) pointed out that utilization of family planning is influenced by the interaction of many factors at individual, social and service delivery levels. Individually, parity, education, knowledge about contraception do influence the utilization of family planning. Socially, cultural norms such as designated gender roles, age of sexual onset, and the demand for bigger families influence the individual's conception choices. Also, peer pressure, religious teaching, and policy influence freedom of choice of family planning method. Furthermore, family planning service delivery, factors such as attitudes and skills of the providers, method-specific side effects, ease of use and access of community members to family planning centre do act directly or indirectly to influence utilization of family planning. The result of a study conducted by Obwoya, Wulifan and Kalolo (2018) on factors influencing contraceptive use among women in the Juba city of South Sudan involving 380 women aged 15 – 49 years using a population-based cross-sectional study, revealed that the factors that significantly influence family planning methods used in the study area are parity, age, level of education and attitudes. Also, the finding of a research carried out by Williams and Wheeler (2017) on a study conducted on contextual influences on modern contraceptive use among women irrespective of their health status in six countries in Sub-Saharan Africa showed that younger age, especially age group 20 – 29 years, was more likely to be associated with the use of modern contraceptives when compared to age group 15 – 19 years and age group 40 – 49 years.

Culture is a pattern or way of life of community members. Although, culture is dynamic, it is the accumulated and developed experience in certain environment over many generations. The culture of a particular people has a deep influence on their behaviour. Each culture has its own special way of doing things and beliefs about why things should be done in that way. Agbonifoh and Onobemueh (2018) observed that culture is the total way of life of a people. Culture is therefore significant in understanding human fertility. In area of fertility control, most groups, especially in sub-Saharan and developing countries have similar cultural undertones. For instance, the Hebrew culture views many children as evidence of

divine approval and blessings. It is also seen as a way of obeying God's injunction to Adam to be fruitful and multiply. Nigeria and most other countries in Africa share in these various beliefs that children are gifts from God and should therefore be readily accepted. However, certain cultural practices and customs in Nigeria violate reproductive rights and are harmful to the reproductive health of an individual.

Religious affiliations may have impact on the use of contraceptives due to differing beliefs regarding birth control. According to Eggesa (2010), Christian churches had, in the past, generally believed that using birth control opposes God's word that people should be fruitful and multiply. Given that reproduction is one of the primary goals of marriage, believers were opposed to the use of contraceptives as they see such act as contradictory to the very essence of marriage. However, the promotion of high birth rate dates back to eras when high fertility could mean the difference between the survival or death of a community. Nowadays, there is little or no condemnation for using birth control in most major religions. According to Dixon-Muller (2009), religious believers or observers might choose to avoid certain methods of family planning, such as birth control pill, in an effort to live their lives according to the teachings of their religion.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the efforts of government and nongovernmental organizations to teach the benefits associated with the utilization of family planning services in the study area, it has been noticed that some couples in the area under study still do not utilize family planning services because they see it as a programme that contradicts the rules and regulations of their culture and religion. As a result of this, some couples experience difficulties in providing for the needs of their family because they have more family members than what their family income can cater for in term of feeding, education and provision of other family needs. Consequently, the rate of malnutrition, divorce, unwanted pregnancy, abortion and death among community members is on the increase, while children and women of childbearing age bear the highest effects. In spite of these obvious negative effects of not utilizing family planning services, a casual observation in the community under survey still show low patronage for such services. It is on this note that this study is set to investigate the factors influencing choice of family planning among women of childbearing age in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State.

Research Questions

The followings research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. Will age influence the choice of family planning among women of childbearing age in Ilorin East LGA, Kwara State?
2. Will culture influence the choice of family planning among women of

childbearing age in Ilorin East LGA, Kwara State?

3. Will religious background influence the choice of family planning among women of childbearing age in Ilorin East LGA, Kwara State?

Research Hypotheses

The followings research hypotheses formulated for the study:

1. Age will not significantly influence the choice of family planning among women of childbearing age in Ilorin East LGA, Kwara State
2. Culture will not significantly influence the choice of family planning among women of childbearing age in Ilorin East LGA, Kwara State
3. Religious background will not significantly influence the choice of family planning among women of childbearing age in Ilorin East LGA, Kwara State.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population of the study comprised all the women of childbearing age attending antenatal care in Ilorin East LGA of Kwara State. A sample of one hundred and twenty respondents was selected for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select one health centre with the highest number of registered women attending antenatal care from each of the twelve wards in the study area. This gives a total of twelve health centres selected. Simple random sampling procedure was used to select ten women from each of the selected centre, giving one hundred and twenty respondents who participated in the study. Researchers structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The validity of the instrument was ascertained by subjecting it to thorough scrutiny by three experts in the related fields. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using a split-half method. A reliability coefficient of 0.74 was obtained which showed that the instrument was reliable. The researchers administered the instrument with the aid of three trained research assistants. The data collected were collated, coded and analyzed using inferential statistics involving chi-square, testing the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level.

Results

Hypotheses Testing

Ho1: Age will not significantly influence the choice of family planning among women of childbearing age in Ilorin East LGA, Kwara State.

Table 1: Chi-square analysis of age and choice of family planning

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Row Total	Cal. Value	Df	Table Value	Remark
1	Family member of nursing mothers do recommend family planning method to them based on their experience	89 (74.2%)	25 (20.8%)	4 (3.3%)	2 (1.7%)	120				
2	Nursing mother sampled opinions of others on best family planning method they used	20 (16.7%)	85 (70.8%)	6 (5.0%)	9 (7.5%)	120				
3	Nursing mothers do chose family planning method that is in vogue among their age mate	32 (26.7%)	61 (50.8%)	0 (0.0%)	27 (22.5%)	120	176.4	12	21.03	Ho1 Rejected
4	Old nursing mothers that intend to stop giving birth choose family planning method that will prevent them from conceiving.	34 (28.3%)	52 (43.3%)	15 (12.5%)	19 (15.8%)	120				
5	Young nursing mothers choose family planning method that enable them space child so as to be able to cater for their kids	15 (12.5%)	64 (53.3%)	12 (10.0%)	29 (24.2%)	120				

p < 0.05 alpha level

Table 1 indicated a calculated Chi-square value of 176.4 and a table value of 21.03 with the degree of freedom of 12 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated value is greater than the table value, the null hypothesis 1 was rejected. This implies that age was a significant factor influencing the choice of family planning among women of childbearing age in Ilorin East LGA, Kwara State.

Ho2: Culture will not significantly influence the choice of family planning among women of childbearing age in Ilorin East LGA, Kwara State.

Table 2: Chi-square analysis of culture and choice of family planning

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Row Total	Cal. Value	df	Table Value	Remark
6	My cultural belief influence the use of family planning	17 (14.2%)	49 (40.8%)	45 (37.5%)	9 (7.5%)	120				
7	Cultural pride derived from having many children influence family planning method used by nursing mothers	39 (32.5%)	62 (51.8%)	14 (11.7%)	5 (4.2%)	120				
8	Educated nursing mothers do ignore cultural belief and choose family planning method that suit them	41 (34.2%)	64 (53.3%)	8 (6.7%)	7 (5.8%)	120	117.86	12	21.03	Ho2 Rejected
9	Fear of being discriminated by cultural members can influence choice of family planning	65 (54.2%)	45 (37.5%)	6 (5.0%)	4 (3.3%)	120				
10	Honorary title or role of nursing mothers in their culture can determine the family planning method they use	65 (54.2%)	46 (38.3%)	5 (4.2%)	4 (3.3%)	120				

$P < 0.05$ alpha level

Table 2 showed a calculated Chi-square value of 117.86 and a table value of 21.03 with a degree of freedom of 12 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated value is greater than the table value, the null hypothesis 2 is rejected. This implies that culture was a significant factor influencing the choice of family planning among women of childbearing age in Ilorin East LGA, Kwara State.

Ho3: Religious background will not significantly influence the choice of family planning among women of childbearing age in Ilorin East LGA, Kwara State

Table 3: Chi-square analysis of religious factors and choice of family planning

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Row Total	Cal. Value	df	Table Value	Remark
16	Contraceptive pills to prevent pregnancy would be adopted as family planning method irrespective of their religious belief	44 (36.7%)	58 (48.3%)	7 (5.8%)	11 (9.2%)	120				
17	Couples will choose family planning method that is not against their religious belief	25 (20.8%)	81 (67.5%)	5 (4.2%)	9 (7.5%)	120				
18	Long spacing of child birth would be adopted by nursing mothers irrespective of their religion	18 (15.0%)	78 (65.0%)	17 (14.2%)	7 (5.8%)	120	96.84	12	21.03	Ho3 Rejected
19	Nursing mother only choose family method that is against their belief when their health is at risk	16 (13.3%)	43 (35.8%)	44 (36.7%)	17 (14.2%)	120				
20	Religion family planning method for exceptional cases are available for nursing mother	34 (28.3%)	57 (47.5%)	25 (20.8%)	4 (3.3%)	120				

$P < 0.05$ alpha level

Table 3 indicated a calculated Chi-square value of 96.84 and a table value of 21.03 with a degree of freedom of 12 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated value is greater than the table value, the null hypothesis 3 is rejected. This implies that religion background was a significant factor influencing the choice of family planning among women of childbearing age in Ilorin East LGA, Kwara State.

Discussion of Findings

The results of this study have shown that age, culture, and religious background all have significant influence on choice of family planning among women of childbearing age in Ilorin East LGA, Kwara State. Results obtained from the study indicated that age is significant factor influencing the choice of family planning among women of childbearing age among the target population. This finding is line with the finding of Williams and Wheeler (2017) from a study conducted on contextual influences on modern contraceptive use among women

irrespective of their health status, in six countries in sub-Saharan Africa which included Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, and Ghana. Their results showed that younger age, especially age group 20 – 29 years was more likely to be associated with use of modern contraceptives when compared to age group (15 – 19) years and age group (40 – 49) years.

The result of this study also showed that culture was a significant factor influencing the choice of family planning among women of childbearing age in Ilorin East LGA, Kwara State. The result of this study supports the assertion of Agbonifoh and Onobumeh (2018) which opined that culture is the total way of life of a people, and as such, is significant in understanding human fertility. This is also supported by the position of Olaitan (2009), who stated that some forms of cultural norms also prescribe how much autonomy an individual has in making family planning decisions. The larger the differences in reproductive intentions within a tribe, the more likely the tribe norms support individual choices. Household and cultural influence can be so powerful that they can obscure the line between individual desires and tribe norms. For instance, in some culture, many women reject contraception because bearing and raising children is the path to respect and dignity in the society.

Furthermore, the result of this study revealed that religious background was a significant factor influencing the choice of family planning among women of childbearing age in Ilorin East LGA, Kwara State. This result is in line with the assertion of Shehu and Kinta (2011) who opined that there are conflicting views on Islamic ethics with regard to contraception. Some sources report that Islam forbids using an external substance to prevent pregnancy. However, condoms, pilling methods and in some instances, IUCDs are acceptable. In addition, views on hormonal contraceptives are changing in recent times. Also, Olaitan (2009), claimed that in some northern part of Nigeria, especially the Islamic religion, there is the belief that bearing more children is an indication of level of affluence. This tends to prompt believers to resist the use of family planning services.

Conclusion

Based on the finding of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Age was a factor influencing the choice of family planning among women of childbearing age in Ilorin East LGA, Kwara State.
2. Culture was a factor influencing the choice of family among women of childbearing age in Ilorin East LGA, Kwara State.
3. Religious factor was a factor influencing the choice of family among women of childbearing age in Ilorin East LGA, Kwara State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Health practitioners should educate women of child bearing age during antenatal on the value of using family planning methods suitable for them based on their age.
2. The health educator should carry out enlightenment campaign through mass media that will educate women of childbearing age on the need to ignore cultural practices that discourage the use of family planning services.
3. Religious leaders should encourage their followers on the need to choose family planning that won't affect their religious beliefs so as to enable them enjoy the benefits involved in family planning services.

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