

## Correlates of Family Planning Among Married People in Lagos State

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**Abstract:** The study investigated the correlates of family planning among married people in Lagos State. Therefore, the descriptive research design of the survey type was used and the population was all married people in Lagos state. The sample comprised 519 married people selected through stratified random sampling. The instrument was a self constructed questionnaire titled perception of family planning among married people questionnaire. One hypothesis was formulated to guide the study. This was tested at 0.05 level of significant. The data collected were analysed using correlation matrix. The result of the analysis showed there are significant relationships among all the variables and family planning. It was therefore recommended that efforts must unanimously be made by religious leaders to encourage family planning methods that could not abort also health professionals involved in reproductive health programmes should introduce educational and service initiatives designed for couples to overcome fears on the usage of all the methods.

**Key words:** Correlates, family planning, hypothesis, unanimously, initiatives, investigative

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### INTRODUCTION

Family planning refers to practices that help couples to avoid unwanted birth, to regulate the intervals between pregnancies and to determine the number of children in the family. It is also the process of controlling the number of children you have by using contraception. According to Bankole *et al.* (2006), the role of contraception is to help women and men reconcile their sexual lives and their desire for children.

Tiakina (2007) believes family planning works to promote a positive view of sexuality and to enable people to make informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health and well-being. Also, the World Health Organisation according to National Training Manual (2005) views family planning as a way of thinking and living that is adopted voluntarily upon the basis of knowledge, attitudes and responsible decisions by individuals and couples in order to promote health and welfare of the family group and this contribute effectively to the social development of the country.

Researches have shown that family planning has been with us for a long time and the practice has had tremendous effect in the lives of family members and communities at large. This is traditional method. Nnaocha (2002) observed that traditional ways to prevent pregnancy in the olden days which is family planning include prolong lactation, post-natal and sexual abstinence and polygamy that is husband pressure for intercourse is reduced because of too many wives. Complimenting this, National Training Manual (2005) noted that before the advent of scientific methods, the

forefathers were aware of the need for child spacing. This was done through traditional methods which include abstinence, prolonged lactation, withdrawal method, charms/armlets and herbs.

Family planning could be influenced by a number of factors. In religious point of view, Ugorji (2000) asserted that in the unbroken process of the development of human life from conception till death each stage is as important as the other and has to be respected accordingly. To buttress this, Nnaocha (2002) believes that sexuality is life-wire power and that it is the union between man and woman that the development of new life begins.

To this effect, every stage of life formation or process is very important because if sexual act or intercourse is hampered through contraception, life will not be formed. Contrary to this, the Bible according to Christian Journal, does not condemn birth control but the choice is left for the couple. If a married couple decides to practice birth control, their choice of contraceptive is a personal matter.

However, the method of birth control a Christian couple chooses should be governed by a respect for the sanctity of life and since the Bible indicates that a person's life begins at conception. Christians should avoid contraceptive methods that abort or end the life of the developing child (Holy Bible- Exodus 21 verses 22 and 23, Jeremiah 1 verse 5).

Muslims on the other hand believe that the Prophet said they should give birth to the number of children they want as to increase the number of his followers. Effects of family planning methods and failure rates could frighten some married people from considering its usage.

Researches have indicated that there are two types of family planning as stated by Nnaocha (2002). These are natural and artificial planning methods. According to him, it is the only method that is universally acceptable. To Lahaye and Lahaye (1998), it is the least effective method. This method depends on counting the days after menses and before the next one is expected, in order to find out when the woman is fertile that is the duration of her fertility period. Contrary to the effect of the above method, billing method or ovulation mucus has no side effect if a woman is well trained according to Staywell Foundation.

Withdrawal method is also a family planning method. In this method, according to Muorah (1994), the male seed is ejaculated and the sperm is deposited outside the vagina. This is the commonest and the oldest method of contraception. At times, this method may not be effective because the male does not always withdraw quickly.

In artificial family planning methods, they are usually based on the use of chemical or physical drugs or instruments. IPPFAR (1996) listed some forms of artificial family planning which include male and female condom, pills, diaphragm, the sponge, spermicides, injectable intra-uterine device and sterilization among others.

Various researchers have proved that none is 100% reliable. Male condoms have no side effect as stated by Staywell Foundation Resource but the effectiveness rate for men is 88-89 and 79-91% for women. Similarly, Hewelbyn-Jones (1998) reported that the diaphragm is completely without side effects but the effectiveness rate is 94%.

The pill is the most effective method of family planning to Lahaye and Lahaye (1998) and the effectiveness rate is 97% with side effects of weight gain, nausea and tumour of the liver. The female sterilization method seems to be the most effective. Effectiveness rate is 99% (Population reports, 1990).

Evidence has shown that the risk of maternal or infant illness and death is highest in some specific types of pregnancy that is pregnancy before 18 years, pregnancy after 35 years and pregnancy <2 years apart (Diete-Spiff, 1985).

In other words, pregnancies can be considered to be at high risk if the mothers are too young, too old or might have had too many children or frequent pregnancies. Thus, family planning can be used to ensure that women produce children only during the biologically most efficient and least risky periods in their fertile lives. To probe further into some of these factors that can enhance the use of planning methods among married couples, one research hypothesis was raised.

**Research hypothesis:** There is no significant relationship among family planning and the factors that can influence the perception of family planning among married women in Lagos state.

## MATERIALS AND METHOD

**Research design:** Descriptive research design of the survey type was used. It is considered appropriate because it focuses on the observations and perception of existing situation.

**Population, sample and sample procedure:** The population for this study comprised all literate married people in Lagos state at the period the research was carried out in Lagos state.

Five local governments were selected by simple random technique while 600 subjects consisting of male and female married people were selected using stratified random sampling from churches, mosques, hospitals, local government offices and schools. About 519 copies of questionnaire were returned for analysis in all.

**Research instrument:** One instrument was used for this study. This was designed by the researcher and titled Perception of Family Planning among Married People questionnaire (PERFPAMP). It has two sections, A and B. Section A comprised of eight items which sort information from the subjects about their personal data. Section B consisted of forty items generated from extensive literature reviewed.

Experts determined the appropriateness of the instrument in measuring what is supposed to measure and the clarity of the instrument. A test re-test method was used for the reliability of the instrument.

The instrument was administered on 20 married people which were not part of the samples used in Ekiti state twice at the interval of 2 weeks. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Formula was used to analyse the result and 0.77 reliability coefficient was obtained which was found to be stable and reliable.

**Data analysis:** The data collected were analysed using inferential statistics of correlation matrix.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Research hypothesis:** There is no significant relationship among family planning and factors that can influence the perception of family planning among married people in Lagos state. The hypothesis was tested using correlation matrix as shown in Table 1. The hypothesis states there is no significant relationship among family planning and

Table 1: Correlation matrix

Factors	Family planning	Religion	Failure rate	Effect	Health ground
Family planning	1.000				
Religion	0.797*	1.000			
Failure rate	0.775*	0.595*	1.000		
Effect	0.779*	0.730*	0.580*	1.000	
Health ground	0.626*	0.385*	0.360*	0.351*	1.000

factors that can influence the perception of family planning. The result negates the findings. From the analysis, it has shown that family planning correlates with all the variables that is religion, health, effect and failure rate of family planning methods.

Possible explanation could be due to some researches which have indicated that family planning could be influenced by a number of factors. In religious point of view, Nnaocha (2002) believes that sexuality is life-wire power and it is the union between man and woman that the development of new life begins.

To this effect, every stage of life-formation or process is very important because if sexual act or intercourse is hampered through contraception, life will not be formed. Contrary to this, the bible according to Christian journal, does not condemn birth control but the choice is left for the couple.

However, the journal agreed with the later that the method of birth control a christian couple chooses should be governed by a respect for the sanctity of life.

Failure rates and effects of family planning could also be significant factors in family planning. Various researches have proved that none is 100% reliable. Male condoms have no side effect as stated by Stay well Foundation Resource but the effectiveness rate for men is 88-89 and 79-91% for women.

Similarly, Hewel lyn-Jones (1998) reported that the diaphragm is completely without side effects but the effectiveness rate is 94%. The pill is the most effective method of family planning to Lahaye and Lahaye (1998) and the effectiveness rate is 97% with side effects of weight gain, nausea and tumour of the liver. The female sterilization method seems to be the most effective. Effectiveness rate is 99% (Population reports, 1990).

It has also been revealed that family planning could be chosen on health ground judging from the significant relationship of the result. This may be due to the fact that pregnancies can be considered to be at high risk if the mothers are too young too old or might have had too many children or frequent pregnancies.

To buttress this, Diete-Spiff (1985) found out that the risk of maternal or infant illness and death is the highest in some specific types of pregnancy that is pregnancy

before 18 years after 35 years and <2 years apart. Thus, family planning can be used to ensure that women produce children only during the biologically most efficient and least risky periods in their fertile lives.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the finding, it has clearly shown that all the factors have significant influence on family planning. From all indications, religion, health, effect and failure rate of family planning methods influenced the perception of family planning among married people in Lagos state.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made. Efforts must unanimously be made by religious leaders to encourage family planning methods that could not abort. This is to further enhance the uses of family planning.

Health professionals involved in reproductive health programmes should introduce educational and service initiatives designed for couples to overcome fears on the usage of all the methods and enlighten them on the need to choose and combine a wide range of methods for effectiveness.

Programmes should also be designed to educate men and women on the need to ensure that women should produce children only during the biologically most efficient and least risky periods in their fertile lives. This is to ensure the health of the women and reduce morbidity rate.

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