

Perception of Men Towards Family Planning Education: The Case of Selected Communities in Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa State

¹Onukwu James
Nwabianke &

²Frank Endure

¹Arts Education Department,
Faculty of Education
Federal University Otuoke,
Bayelsa State

²Department of Educational
Foundations, Faculty of Education
Niger Delta University, Bayelsa
State

Abstract

The act of planning, and making arrangement for the time to have children generally referred to as family planning have been viewed by many as a foreign consideration and not for the African man. This paper, investigated the perception of men towards family planning in selected communities in Ogbia local government area of Bayelsa State. It was a descriptive survey research design. Two research questions were raised to guide the study. The population of the study was 200 married men in selected communities in Ogbia LGA of Bayelsa State. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 20 married men from 10 communities in Ogbia local government area of Bayelsa State (Otuoke, Otuaba, Ewoi, Onuebum, Emeyal, Kolo, Imiringin, Elebele, Ogbia town, and Otuokpoti). The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: Perception of Men Toward Family Planning Questionnaire (PMTFPQ). The questionnaire was designed by the researcher, validated by two experts from Federal University Otuoke Bayelsa State. The sampled population responded to the questionnaire items on Agreed and Disagreed bases. The questionnaire was personally administered by the researcher. The data collected were analyzed using frequency and percentage. A man who maintains a household with a woman in the same house with a minimum of one child was considered married. The study revealed that men's awareness about family planning is high, perception of men towards some family planning measures is positive. The study therefore recommended among others that the Government and civil societies can partner to reach out to traditional rulers, community chiefs and even to conduct health orientation programmes in various communities in Ogbia local government on the importance of family planning.

Keywords:

Perception, Men and
Family Planning

Corresponding Author:

Onukwu James Nwabianke

Background to the Study

There is a global trend of ensuring continuous increase in the standard of living of citizens and even immigrants in different part of the world. Many countries of the world have therefore appreciated the need for family planning among citizen following economic downturns, climate changes and limited resources of various kind. Family planning is an educational concept used to educate married adults of the importance of effectively arranging the number of required individuals that are brought to the world. Many scholars have augured that family planning is used to improve the health and economic status of families. It is also a way of teaching adult's men and women of the ways to freely determine the number, spacing, size and even the sex of their children for better conditions of living. According to Nwangoro (2018), family planning is an organized effort to assist people to have the number of children they want and to space them as they choose. Hoberaft (2000), sees it as the practice of exercising choice about the arrival of the child into the family, taking into consideration, the mother's health, welfare of the children, family happiness and all other prevailing economic circumstances. He explained further that such plans encourage couples to have only those children that they can properly and adequately cater for especially as at such a time when family is ready for them, that is every child should be wanted by choice and not chance.

Family planning is seen as a health/medical talk among married couples that involves the use of different kind of contraceptive measures depending on the choice of the couple. However, men seem to have a different orientation and view about it. In the modern African homes, men are seen as the major decision makers in the family. Many at times their decision is a major guide for the women and children. Practicably, many African men particularly those in Nigeria are of the view that family planning is a foreign and European concept used by the developed countries of the world. It is a new concept in Nigeria which have since been accepted by many especially those who seems to be civilized. According to Eyitope, Olugbenga, Aduayi, Deji, Eyitayo and Olubayo (2017), a survey in Zimbabwe reproductive health as far back as 1984 shows,42% of married women stated that it was the husband's responsibility to decide whether his wife should use family planning method or not. Also in Ethiopia, women at risk of unplanned pregnancies were not using contraceptive methods because of male opposition. As a result, there are still so many unplanned, ill-spaced and unwanted pregnancies with the attendant high risk material, infants and child mortalities and increasing poverty.

Macellina, Titilayo, Kayode, Olusegun, Olapeju and OlaOlorun (2010), assessed men's awareness, attitude, and practice of modern contraceptive methods, determined the level of spousal communication, and investigated the correlates of men's opinion in family planning decision making in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. Quantitative methodology was employed in the cross-sectional descriptive design using a structured household questionnaire to collect information from 402 male study participants. A multistage sampling procedure was employed. Eighty-nine percent of men approved of the use of family planning while only about 11 percent disapproved of it. Eighty percent of men had ever used contraception while 56 percent of them were current users. Spousal

communication about family planning and other family reproductive goals was quite poor. The socio-demographic correlates of men's opinions included religion, marriage type, educational attainment, and occupation ($p < 0.05$). The study concluded that male involvement in family planning decision making was poor and their patronage of family planning services was low. Similarly, Okeowo and Olujide (2014), examined the attitude, knowledge and utilization of family planning methods among rural women in Ogun State. Interview schedule was designed to obtain data from the respondents (rural women).

Data were gathered from 120 rural women selected from the four zones of Ogun State Agricultural Development Programme (OGADEP). The data collected were analyzed using inferential statistics and descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentages and mean. The result shows that majority (80%) of the respondents were married, while most of them (68%) were within the ages of 20-35 years. The respondents' sources of information on family planning were friends and spouses (77%), radio (62%), market place (74%) and health centers (88%). Also 68% of the respondents utilized pills, 48% utilize condoms, while 20% of the respondents utilize prolonged breastfeeding as their family planning methods. Significant relationship existed between respondents' utilization and knowledge of family planning methods. Correlation analysis showed a significant relationship between factors militating against the utilization of family planning methods and knowledge of family planning methods. A related study by Olawande and Fasasi (2016), examine the relationship between family planning perceptions and high fertility rate among married women in Nigeria. They reported that 95.5% of the respondents had heard about family planning while 53.3% stated that they had never used it. A greater percentage of them admitted that they refused to adopt family planning for fear of side effects. About 51% of them stated that money was a barrier to the adoption of family planning while 35% of the respondents claimed that their religion did not support it. Linear regression results revealed that significant relationships existed between the family perceptions ($p < 0.013$), and sustainable development variables. Family planning was seen as an important preventive measure against infant and maternal mortality.

The study concluded that culture, socio-economic factors and poor knowledge about family planning were major determinants of perceptions about family planning. The study recommended increased family planning talks during clinical meetings with mothers, and empowerment of women in decision making about family planning within households. Rajni, Manhas, Kohli and Mushtaq (2010), investigated the attitude of couples towards family-planning in India. The study reported a high prevalence of illiteracy and associated ignorance among rural masses (35%) especially regarding the concepts and measures of family planning ($\chi = 14.24$, Sig. 1%). Majority of rural respondents especially women folk (51%) were unaware of concepts related to family planning. Condoms were by far the most favourable contraceptive measures across both settings (81% males and 77.5% females) followed by birth spacing pills (39%). The appropriate knowledge regarding other measures e.g. Copper-T (13.5%) and male

sterilization was lacking. Further, urban respondent entrusted the contraceptive responsibility on their respective partners (43% males, 44% females), while rural couples (74% females and 64% males) followed the same age-old traditional concept of male dominance and superiority. Television and magazines were found to be the major accessible sources of information. Results from rating scale revealed a major difference ($\chi = 54.66$, Sig. 1%) in the attitude of respondents. Education was found to be significantly associated with the respective attitude of respondents towards family planning. In the same way, Onasoga and Ekanem (2013), assessed the knowledge and attitude of men towards vasectomy as a method of family planning in Okada community, Edo state. Accidental sampling technique was used to select 140 married men and questionnaire was administered. However only 136 of the questionnaire was retrieved and same analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics with level of significance set at 5% (0.05).

The study revealed that majority of the respondents was between the ages of 28 – 37 years and have at least one sexual partner. Despite the respondents' knowledge of at least one form of male family planning methods, majority 85 (62.5%) had no knowledge of vasectomy while out of the 51 (37.5%) who claimed to have knowledge, only 18 (13.2%) had high knowledge the remaining 33(24.3%) had poor few knowledge of vasectomy. Most of the respondents also showed negative attitude towards vasectomy and believed that vasectomy should not be done by men and that females should be responsible for family planning but the decision on the method to use should be demanded from them as the head of the family. Cultural acceptance 112 (82.4%), religious acceptance 98 (72.1%), ignorance 96 (70.6%) and accessibility of family planning clinic 90 (66.2%) were the major factors influencing attitude of men towards vasectomy. The study also revealed that there was no significant association between academic attainment of 2= respondents under study and their attitude towards vasectomy [$X = 3.534$, P-value = 0.171], as well as between marital status and their attitude towards vasectomy [$X = 0.436$ P-value = 0.804], with $p > 0.05$; however, significant association was found between the level of knowledge of respondents 2 under study and their attitude towards vasectomy [$X = 4.918$ P-value = 0.047] with $p < 0.05$.

It was recommended that there is need to design effective information, education and communication strategies to reach men in every part of the federation on the need to actively participate in family planning, as well as intense value clarification and attitude transformation in order to improve men's attitudes towards vasectomy. Eyitope O. A., Olugbenga O.O., Aduayiv. A, Deji S. A., Eyitayo E. E., and Olubayo O. O.(2017) in a study conducted about men's perception and practice of family planning in Ede area of Osun State reported that Male condom was the most commonly known while vasectomy was the least known; 89.5% had good perception of FP while 66.1% had good practice. The most commonly used methods were condom (49.5%), withdrawal (22.5%) and oral contraceptives (19.8%). There was a statistically significant association between religion, educational and occupational status and FP practice and a statistically significant association between religion, educational status and FP practice ($P < .05$)

This study is hinged on the theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) by Fishbein (1975). The theory finds its origins in the field of social psychology. It explained the links between beliefs, perception, norms, intention, and behaviours of individuals. According to this model, a person's perception and attitudes are determined by its behavioural intention to perform it. This intention is itself determined by the person's perception and his subjective norms towards the behaviour. Fishbein defined the subjective norms as "the person's perception that most people who are important to him think he should or should not perform the behaviour in question". According to the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), the perception of a person towards behaviour is determined by his beliefs on the consequences of these beliefs on the consequences of this behaviour, multiplied by his evaluation of these consequences. Beliefs are defined by the person's subjective probability that performing a particular behaviour will produce specific result. This theory therefore suggests that external stimuli influence attitudes by modifying the structure of the person's beliefs. Moreover, behaviour intention is also determined by the subjective norms that are themselves determined by the normative beliefs of individual and by his motivation to comply to the norms.

The relevance of this theory to this study is that social and cultural norms, gender roles, social networks, religion and local beliefs influence people's choice. To a large extent, these community norms determine individual childbearing preferences and sexual and reproductive behaviour. Community and culture affect a person's perception toward family planning, desired sex of children, preferences about family pressures to have children, and whether family planning accord with customs and religious belief. Community norms also prescribe how much autonomy individuals have in making family planning decisions. The larger the differences in reproductive intentions within a community, the more likely that community norms support individual decision. There have been various studies on men's attitude and views about family planning even in Nigeria, however, no study had investigated that of the men in Ogbia local government area of Bayelsa State Nigeria. It is therefore the intention of this study to investigate the perception of men towards family planning in Ogbia local government area of Bayelsa State.

Problem of the Study

The geometric increase in population of Bayelsa State particularly that of Ogbia local government area have placed high demand on basic infrastructure like roads, electricity, hospital, etc. The state and local governments cannot adequately meet up with the demand of Bayelsans in terms of basic amenities as a result of the increased population. This is largely, attributed to number of persons coming into the local government and specifically, the practice of having many children in the various homes and local government areas of the state. It has created a great burden that tends to drain the financial resources and the standard of living of families and brought about economic hardship. Most parents with large families find it difficult to provide the basic need of their children such as food, shelter health and education. This tends to bring psychological and emotional stress on most parents. Family planning is the practice of

exercising choice about the arrival of the child into the family, taking into consideration the mother's health, welfare or the children, family happiness and all the prevailing economic circumstances. It therefore encourages couples to have those children that they can properly and adequately carter for. However, it seems many families are not are aware of the advantages of family planning or could it be possible, that men have negative perception about it. Interaction with some married men in a popular drinking joint in the area indicated that many are not aware or have little knowledge of what family planning entails. This study therefore seeks to find out the awareness level and perception of married men towards family planning in selected communities in Ogbia local government area of Bayelsa State.

Research Questions

Two research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the awareness level among married men towards family planning in Ogbia local government area of Bayelsa State?
2. What is the perception of men towards family planning in Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa State?

Methodology

The study is a descriptive survey research design. This was chosen because the study intends to observe and describe the perception of men towards family planning in selected communities. The population of the study seems indefinite. A purposive sampling was then used to select 200 married men from 10 communities in Ogbia local government area (Otuoke, Otuaba, Ewoi, Onuebum, Emeyal, Kolo, Imiringin, Elebele, Ogbia town, and Otuokpoti). The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: Perception of Men toward Family Planning Questionnaire (PMTFPQ). The questionnaire was designed by the researcher, validated by two experts in Federal University Otuoke Bayelsa State. The sampled population responded to the questionnaire items on Agreed and Disagreed basis. The questionnaire was personally administered by the researcher. The data collected were analyzed using frequency and percentage. Men who maintain a household with a woman in the same house with a minimum of one child was considered married in this study.

Presentation of Results

The result of the findings is presented in table 1 & 2 blow:

Table 1: Awareness level of married men about family planning in selected communities in Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa State

Awareness/Knowledge	Frequency	Percentage
Aware of Family planning Techniques	145	72.5%
Not Aware of Family planning Techniques	55	27.5%
Total	200	100%
Sources of Knowledge:		
Radio	110	55%
School	10	5%
Friends/Relatives	8	4%
Television	40	20%
Place of Work	5	2.5%
Hospital	4	2%
Church	3	1.5%
Books/Newspapers	20	10%
Total	200	100

Table 1 above, revealed a high level of awareness about family planning among men in selected communities in Ogbia local government area of Bayelsa State. It further revealed that 72.5% of respondents in selected communities in Ogbia local government area of Bayelsa State have the knowledge of family planning while 27.5% of the respondents are not aware of any type of family planning. This means that 55 men from the total respondents (200) are not aware and may not be making use of any family planning techniques in their families. 55% of the respondents got the knowledge of family planning from the radio, 5% from school, 4% from friends and relatives, 20% from television, 2.5% from work places, 2% from the hospital, 1.5% from the churches and 10% from reading books and newspapers.

Table 2: Perception of Married men in some selected Communities in Ogbia local government area of Bayelsa State (N= 200)

Perception	Agreed	Disagreed
Both sexes should determine what type of family planning to be adopted	109	91
Family planning should be a joint decision of men and their wife/partners	120	80
Family planning is against my moral and cultural belief	132	68
I know the different types of family planning	145	55
Abstinence can be a good and safe option in family planning	98	102
My culture supports family planning	60	140
Men should use contraceptives	70	130
Family planning is a foreign practice with destructive effects	138	62
Condom reduces sexual satisfaction	120	80
Vasectomy is a desirable practice	40	160

The data in Table 2, revealed that 92 men out of the 200 men that responded to the questionnaire disagreed that both sexes should not determine the type of family planning to be adopted in the family while 109 agreed that both parties should decide, 120 men from the respondents agreed that family planning should be a joint decision of men and women at home, 132 men responded that family planning is against their moral and cultural belief, 145 of the respondents have the knowledge of various types of family planning, 102 of the respondents disagreed that abstinence should not be an option in family planning, 140 disagreed that their culture supports family planning, 130 respondents disagreed that men should use contraceptives, 138 agreed that family planning is a foreign practice. 120 agreed that condom reduces sexual satisfaction while 120 disagreed that vasectomy is a desirable practice.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed high level of awareness about family planning among men in selected communities in Ogbia Local government area of Bayelsa State. However, with the 55(27.5%) of the sample population having no knowledge of family planning is a calls for concern. The illiteracy number about family planning is quite reasonable in relation to the entire population of the area. This study also collaborated the findings of Rajni , Manhas, Kohli and Mushtaq (2010) in india that a high prevalence of illiteracy and associated ignorance exist among rural masses especially regarding the concepts and measures of family planning in the country The findings of this study however disagreed with reports of Olawande and Fasasi (2016), that a relationship exist between family planning perceptions and high fertility rate among married women in Nigeria and reported that a greater percentage of them admitted that they refused to adopt family planning for fear of side effects.

The study also revealed that the decision of family planning should be for a man and his wife. This affirmed the findings of Macellina, Titilayo, Kayode, Olusegun, Olapeju and OlaOlorun (2010), that men's awareness, attitude, and practice of modern contraceptive methods, determined the level of spousal communication, and investigated the correlates of men's opinion in family planning decision making in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. The study also revealed high value and cultural orientation of respondents in the area. This could be interpreted as lack of orientation and inability to appreciate the value and advantages of family planning to modern families. This, as a strong link with the action theory of (1975) According to the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), the perception of a person towards behaviour is determined by his beliefs on the consequences of this belief and that intention is also determined by the subjective norms that are themselves determined by the normative beliefs of individual and by his motivation to comply to the norms.

Recommendations

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

1. There is need to design effective information and education strategy that will ensure that the values and advantages of family planning is appreciated by majority who know nothing about it.

2. The Government and civil societies can partner to reach out to traditional rulers , community chiefs and even to conduct health orientation programme in various communities in Ogbia local government on the importance of family planning
3. There is also need to employ more community health education workers and redesign their job content/specification so as to accommodate family planning orientation across communities to target men.

References

- Eyitope, O. A., Olugbenga, O. O., Aduayiv. A, Deji, S. A., Eyitayo, E. E., & Olubayo O. O. (2017). Men's perception and practice of family planning in Ede South Local Government Area Osun State, Nigeria, *British Journal of Medicine & Medical Research* 20 (8) 1-10
- Hoberaft, J. (2000). *The health rational for family planning: Timing of birth and child survival*. New York: United Nations Department for Economic Social Information and Policy Analysis, Population Division.
- Fishbein, E. (1975). *Group in social work*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Macellina, Y. I., Titilayo, C. A., Kayode, T. I., Olusegun, T. A., Olapeju, A. E., & OlaOlorun F.M.(2010). Male involvement in family planning decision making in Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria. *African Journal of Reproductive Health*, 14 (4), 45-52
- Nwangoro, U. (2018). *Family planning and birth control*, London: Harper and Brothers.
- Okeowo, T. A . & Olujide, M. G (2014). Attitude, knowledge and utilization of family planning methods among rural women in Ogun State, Nigeria, *Agrosearch*, 14 (1),39-53.
- Olawande, T. I. & Fasasi, L. T. (2016). Family planning perceptions and sustainable development in Nigeria, Being paper presented at the 3rd international conference on African development issues, Ogun State, Nigeria. 146-150
- Onasoga, O. A., Edoni, E. E. R. & Ekanem, J. (2013). Knowledge and attitude of men towards vasectomy as a family planning method in Edo State, Nigeria, *Journal of Research in Nursing and Midwifery*, 2 (1), 13-21, retrieved from <http://www.interestjournals.org/JRNM>.
- Rajni, D., Manhas, S., Kohli, N., & Mushtaq, A. (2010). Attitude of couples towards family planning, *J Hum Ecol*, 30 (1), 63-70