
**FAMILY PLANNING PRACTICES AND MARITAL STABILITY
IN SOUTHWEST, NIGERIA****¹Adegun .A. O. and ²Fasiku .M. A.**¹Department of Educational Foundation Management
Ekiti State University, Ado - Ekiti, Ekiti State.
Department of Social Studies,²College of Education, Ikere - Ekiti, Ekiti State.
E-mail: mercyfasiku@gmail.com
08062647636

Abstract

This paper focus on the relationship between family planning practices and marital stability among married persons in Southwest, Nigeria. The descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted for this study. The sample consisted of one thousand and two hundred (1,200) married persons. The Multistage random sampling technique was used to select the sample. A self - prepared questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents and the data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The hypotheses postulated were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed that there was significant relationship between family planning practices and marital stability and that family planning practices serves as a predictor for marital stability among married people in Southwest Nigeria. It was therefore recommended that married persons should be encouraged through counselors, public health workers, religious leaders and educators to make considerate and beneficial decision on how to manage their family size through family planning practices and that practice of family planning by married people can predict marital stability

Keywords: Marriage, Family, Family Planning Practices, Marital Stability

Introduction

The place and importance of family in the society cannot be overemphasized. As first point of socialization, it plays vital roles in the upbringing, mentoring and caring of the young ones. A stable family, where members are happy may not be unconnected with the process through which such a family is formed. Precisely, stable marriages are paramount to progressive and peaceful society. Marriage as a social institution has been described as a socially sanctioned sexual relationship involving two or more people of the opposite sex, which is expected to endure beyond the time required for gestation and birth of children (Amiteshwar, 2006). Through marriage, rights, roles and new social relationships are created not only between the spouses but also between the kinsmen of the spouses. That is why John and MacArthur (2003), posit

that marriage is a legal and social commitment that two people make to share their lives and family responsibilities. The society is not static and as such has been attended with all sorts of problems which had gained a prominent place in social studies. One of the problems the society is contending with is marital instability. Marital stability is cardinal to stable society and this explains the various discoveries and inventions that have been developed to find solutions to human problems as regards reproductive health.

Family Planning programme have long been recognized for their importance in improving the health of women, children and in reducing population growth. Oladokun (2003) opined that the current realization of the large population can hold back nation and the need for socio-economic development and health for all

programmes has led to the quest for information on family planning and other - related productive health problems in Nigeria. Family planning is simply a way of maintaining reasonable interval in child bearing process. That is to say a woman should rest after giving the first birth for at least two (2) years before another birth. It is a way of preventing unwanted pregnancy and a means of sexual gratification

In spite of the introduction of family planning services as a means of curbing fertility rate, the population still rises, this may be as a result of the attitudes of the people involved (Olawepo and Okedare, 2003). It is observed that most married people, most especially in the South Western, Nigeria have not given family planning the required attention. This could have an impact on the stability of homes and marriages in our society today. This problem appears to be found everywhere and has not spared some cultures in Nigeria, neither has it spared any particular religion. In fact, some location has not helped either. It appears that the level of one's education seems to have something to do with marital stability, when one considers the victims of marital instability and the rate at which marital crisis appears to have ravaged many homes in Nigeria. Marital stability is therefore the ability of the marriage to stand firm. Marital stability is used to refer to the process whereby marriages consolidate through love, understanding, compromises, tolerance and avoidance of breakdown through separation; desertion or divorce and where relevant, the subsequent re-partnering of the individuals is concerned. (Jesmin and Sarah, 1998). Marital stability can also be the home where there is joy love, peace and mutual understanding.

On this note, there is a pertinent question, to the effect that whether or not family planning practices has influence on marital stability. It is

against this background, that this study is set out to examine the influence of Family Planning practices on marital stability in Southwest, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Family Planning

Adaka (1982), describes Family Planning as part of planned parenthood fertility control, or contraception control in limiting or spacing out pregnancies either for socio-economic, health or population control purposes. In the researcher's point of view, the scholar's citation is very right as it gives the comprehensive meaning of the concept of Family Planning. The World Health Organization (WHO) (2015) defines 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 thus contributing effectively to the social development of the country".

However, Ebele (2006) defines Family Planning as having the number of children at interval, that is suitable for the couples in order to ensure adequate care, as well as using birth control and contraceptive for controlling the number and spacing of children. Family Planning here, is seen as controlling the number of children with the use of birth control and contraceptive measures. Also, it was revealed that Family Planning is an organized effort to assist people to have the number of children they desire, and to space them accordingly as they choose. (Ebele, 2006)

John and MacArthur (2003) saw family planning as an emotionally charged subject. To many, it is the name given to ways in which couples attempt to control their fertility. It is also submitted that, the reality of our lives today, however, demands that we re-assess cultural tenets about children and family size, within the context of today's need and pressure.

It is most usually applied to a couple who wish to limit the number of children they have, or to control the timing of pregnancy. Family planning allows individuals and couples to anticipate and attain their desired number of children, spacing and timing of their birth. This can be achieved through the use of contraceptives and other method such as the use of Condom, Implant, and Injection. IUCD (Internet <http://www.globalhealth.com>).

Delano (2010) saw family planning as a means by which individuals or couples space the process of conception and child birth at interval, mutually determined by both partners, in order to have the desired number of children that they can conveniently maintain. From the above definitions, it can be deduced that family planning is working out a plan with one's partner, on how to deal with procreation within the context of a sexual relationship. This covers many things such as when and why to get pregnant, the number of children that is wanted, how to deal with fertility issues, how to avoid unwanted pregnancy, whether to consider an abortion, if an unwanted pregnancy occurs etc. It also concerns issues of having children that are planned for, and not children conceived by accident or chance.

One can conveniently say that, the whole essence of family planning revolves on the health, survivals, and developments of the family and progress of the entire society. Also working towards making family planning a way of life for all families in social and economic developments, some association advocates and firmly believes that, knowledge and practice of family planning is a basic human right and an essential element of responsible parenthood, stable family life and positive contribution towards social harmony and national development.

Family planning also offers individuals opportunities to plan and space their pregnancies, in order to

achieve personal goals and self-sufficiency. Also, it is observed that it will reduce unintended pregnancies in order to avoid the poor outcomes health, social and economic problems, related to unintended pregnancies. To promote the health of mothers by providing basic reproductive health care to women in needs. (Sweta, 2012).

Family planning is a key part of the commitment to empowering women and improving family. In almost every surroundings, the objectives of family planning commonly highlighted included unwanted pregnancy prevention, extensive population growth reduction and health improvement of women; children and population as a whole.

Family planning benefits the health and well - being of women and families throughout the world. Goals in family planning should include balancing the desire for children with emotional, physical and financial needs, or if you don't wish to have children, it's important to recognize this, and plan accordingly. In the same vein, knowledge and practice of family planning is a basic human right and an essential element of responsible parenthood, stable family life and positive contribution towards social harmony and national development.

Olaitan (2011), highlighted that a myriad of different factors influence a person's personal decisions about what types of family planning method he should use. The factors are as follows: Effectiveness, religion, cost, health risk permanence, partner involvement and some other socio-economic factors. According to him, effectiveness comes in when couples who are not in a financial or emotional situation to have children might opt for the most effective type of family planning in order to avoid Pregnancy whereas couple with casual approach towards parenthood might choose a less certain form of contraception. Another factor is religion, some religions such as Catholicism, have restrictions on

contraception based on the belief that it is God's will to bring children into the world. Dixon-muller & German (2007) was also of the opinion that religious believers might choose to avoid certain methods of family planning such as birth control pill, so as to live their lives according to the teachings of their religion. In this study, one could submit that the author's view is valid in that, religion is one of the factors that could cause marital instability as a result of family planning practices between couples of different religion, that is to say, if the couples are not of the same religious belief, taking a mutual decision may generate problems.

Marital Stability

Grady, Klepinger and Kelson (2000) believe that marital success is usually "marital stability" or "marital satisfaction". However, marital stability is interpreted as when couple in a marriage remains together, instead of separating or divorcing. Marital satisfaction, in contrast, refers to how marital partners evaluate the quality of their marriage. It is a subjective description of whether a marital relationship is good, happy, or satisfying. Various names are used to identify satisfaction in marriage: the most frequently used are marital happiness, marital quality, and marital adjustment. Researchers over the years agree that the key factor determining feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction for both male and females, is the stage of life that they are passing through; more specifically, whether or not they have children, and if those children have left the parental home (Gloria & Keith, 1994).

Children, who experience marital stability, have caregivers who remain constant, consistent, and connected to them over time; caregivers who are mentally healthy and engage in appropriate parenting practices; a cohesive, supportive, and flexible family system; and a nurturing and

stimulating home environment. This definition of marital stability is not offered as a standard by which one evaluates families in the child welfare system, but rather as an essential goal of child welfare intervention with biological, foster, and adoptive families. Gottman's (2000) theory of marital success versus failure reflects a causal process model that specifies alternative paths that satisfied versus dissatisfied married partners take. Specifically, Gottman argues that marital partners' negative message behaviour causes a shift in perceptions of each other that lead to unfavourable beliefs about the partner. In particular, negative message behaviour (e.g., sarcasm, accusations) predicts relational instability; conversely, the ratio of positive-to-negative messages indicates stability. Whereas, stable couples have a 5:1 positive-to-negative message ratio, unstable couples enact a 1:1 positive-to-negative message ratio. Unstable couples, however, exhibit an equal number of positive and negative messages.

Family Planning Practices and Marital Stability

The journey towards marital stability requires that the couples are able to make the necessary transitions towards a suitable relationship. Family stability is used as a definition of success. George (2002) noted that the family's success is often measured in terms of its members' happiness and satisfaction. Hence, where there is happiness and contentment, expressed by family members such a family could be said to be stable. One of the major reasons why some men could be against family planning practices is that they believe that the moment they allow their wives to embrace the practice, it will serve as a license for them to involve in the extra marital sexual relationships. Many marriages may have gone sour in that once a partner indulges in extra-marital sex, that marriage is likely to break. From the researcher's perspective and based on

the study, the fear of the extra-marital sexual relationship or infidelity of the women has served as a deterrent or obstacle for some couples in adopting family planning practice. A marriage is said to be stable when couples see each other as one entity and that what affects one, affects the other. Marriage between two people is a product of so many factors from meeting, mate selection, compatibility and the rest. There will be marital stability when each of the couple performs the marital role and observe marital vow in total love for each other.

It goes with the saying that, there cannot be any society without family or homes and there cannot be sustainable development without stable family or homes. It is however observed that, many homes are not happy. Owuamanam (2008) expressed her concern about this situation when she stated that, instability in marriage is becoming very common nowadays and that no week passes without incidences of separation or divorce. She stressed further that, many couples are not happy with their marital relationship and in spite of the couples pledge to one another on their wedding days marriages still tear apart. It is observed that as a result of family planning practices which are majorly stem some family problems that emanated from the health, socio-economic status, society and culture. Alverguee, Clarke, Lawson, Gurm and Mace (2013) argue in "fertility, parental investment, and early adoption of modern contraception in rural Europa" that an increase in usage of family planning increases birth spacing which consequently decreases infant mortality. "The Economic case for birth control," published in 1967, argues that decreasing the birth rate in countries with high fertility levels is crucial to economic growth. Maciver & Dimkpa (2012) observed that factors influencing marital stability are social factors such as respect and submission by wife to husband, effective communication, behavioural factors such as endurance and

consensus by spouses, domestic factors such as delicious/timely cooking of meals, care for one another, sexual factor such as regular sexual intercourse, petting and kissing, religious factor such as morning devotion, fear of God in doing things and financial facilities such as provision of food, shelter and clothing .

Apart from the above factors, there are other factors that can be responsible for marital stability such as, the age at marriage, educational level of spouses, religious affiliation, income, fertility status and a host of others. From the above, one could see that all the factors must adequately take care of, in order to maintain stable family.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to find out the relationship between family planning practice and marital stability in South West Nigeria and to find out whether family planning practices can predict marital stability.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study.

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between the family planning practices and marital stability among married persons in Southwest Nigeria.

HO₂: Family planning Practices will not significantly predict marital stability among married persons in Southwest, Nigeria

Research Method

The descriptive research design of the survey type would be used for this study. The population for the study consisted of all married persons between the age group 15 to 49 years for women and 15 years and above for men in Southwest, Nigeria. One thousand and two hundred (1200) married persons (male/female) in their reproductive ages were selected

through multistage random sampling technique. Three states were randomly selected from the six states in Southwest, Nigeria after which five Local Government Areas from each of the three states were also randomly selected making fifteen local governments areas in all. State capital of each state was purposively selected as urban location and four local governments outside the state capital were purposively selected as rural location. In each of the local governments Married persons were selected from houses in each street through simple random sampling techniques.

The instrument used was a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher to elicit information from the respondents. The validity of the instrument was ascertained by some experts in Social Science Education, Test, Measurement and Evaluation, Guidance and Counseling, and Social Sciences, the reliability of the instrument was established using test - retest reliability procedure, the scores obtained were subjected to person product moment correlation at 0.05 level of significance. A reliability coefficient of 0.87 was obtained. The two hypotheses raised were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	R	R ²	F
Constant	48.954	1.261		38.806	0.000			
B1	0.838	0.459	0.061	1.824	0.068			
B2	0.025	0.711	0.001	0.035	0.972			
B3	1.397	0.36	0.079	1.671	0.095			
B4	2.243	0.909	0.121	2.467*	0.014			
B5	0.182	0.764	0.010	0.238	0.812			
B6	0.433	0.772	0.023	0.561	0.575			
B7	1.141	0.531	0.077	2.149*	0.032			
B8	2.742	0.719	0.150	3.814*	0.000			
B9	0.457	0.625	0.029	0.731	0.465	0.347	0.120	8.065
B10	1.580	0.600	0.093	2.635*	0.009			
B11	0.711	0.656	0.042	1.084	0.279			
B12	0.770	0.644	0.046	1.196	0.232			
B13	0.098	0.677	0.006	0.144	0.885			
B14	0.278	0.656	0.017	0.424	0.671			
B15	2.669	0.444	0.196	6.011*	0.000			
B16	0.905	0.596	0.056	1.519	0.129			
B17	0.179	0.630	0.011	0.284	0.777			
B18	0.240	0.578	0.016	0.415	0.678			
B19	1.495	0.604	0.098	2.475*	0.013			
B20	0.920	0.570	0.056	1.614	0.107			

Result

The results of the tested hypotheses were presented below.

Family Planning and Marital Stability among Married persons in Southwest, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between the practice of

Table 1: Pearson Correlation of Family Planning and Marital Stability in Southwest, Nigeria

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r _{cal}	r _{table}
Family planning	1200	31.887	12.468	0.457	0.195
Marital stability	1200	56.563	15.941		

* $P < 0.05$

Table 1 shows that r_{cal} (0.457) is greater than r_{table} (0.195) at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between the practice of family planning and marital stability among married persons in Southwest,

Nigeria. Hence, the practice of family planning contributes to marital stability in Southwest, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2

Family planning practices will not significantly predict marital stability among married persons in Southwest, Nigeria.

Table 2: Regression Analysis Showing Predictors of Marital Stability in Southwest, Nigeria**KEY**

B - Unstandardize / raw data base. **Beta** - Refined / processed one. **R** - Coefficient of regression

R² - Joint contribution of all the variables. **B1:** Chance method **B2:** Emergency contraceptive

B3: Contraceptive injection **B4:** Any contraceptive **B5:** Local herbs **B6:** Oral cooked concoction food **B7:** Basal body temperature method **B8:** Cervical mucus method **B9:** Spermicidal cream or foaming tablet **B10:** Symtothermal method (Combined method) **B11:** Norplant method **B12:** Douching method **B13:** Lactational amenorrhoea **B14:** Male vasectomy **B15:** Female tubal ligation **B16:**

P<0.05

Table 2 shows that family planning practices significantly predict marital stability among married persons in Southwest, Nigeria. (F = 8.065, P<0.05). The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that family planning practices will significantly predict marital stability among married persons in Southwest, Nigeria. The effect of family planning practices accounted for about 12% (R²=0.120) of the observed variance in marital stability. The remaining 88% unexplained variation in marital stability is largely due to other variables outside the regression model. The composite relationship between family planning practices and marital stability is positive, moderately low and significant at 0.05 level of significance (R = 0.347, p<0.05).

The single best predictor of marital stability among the family planning practices is contraceptive injection with a beta weight of 0.196 (19.6%). This is closely followed by charm padlock (Beta weight = 0.150; 15%), arm band (Beta weight = 0.121; 12.1%) and emergency contraceptive after sex (Beta weight = 0.098; 9.8%) while douching method constitutes the least predictor of marital stability among married persons in Southwest, Nigeria with a beta weight of 0.001 (1%).

Only the effect of arm band (t=2.467, P<0.05), local herbs (2.149, P<0.05), charm padlock (t=3.814, P<0.05), basal temperature method (t = 2.635,

P<0.05), contraceptive injection (t=6.011, P<0.05) and emergency contraceptive after sex (t=2.475, P<0.05) on marital stability is significant at 0.05 level of significance among family planning practices.

Discussion

The study revealed a significant relationship between family planning practices and marital stability these findings were favourably supported by (Wikipedia, 2005). That using co contraception or other method of family planning can help to avoid unwanted pregnancies and birth spacing project people against sexually transmitted disease (STDs), including HIV/AIDS and provide other health benefits. The resultant effect of negative disposition to the use of contraception will lead to marital instability Delano (2010) also supported the result that paternal maternal health and other benefits were derived from the practices of family planning, this view was equally corroborated by Georg (2002), that family's success is often measured in terms of number's happiness and satisfaction. Hence, where there is happiness and contentment expression by family members especially when they are few, such a family could be said to be stable, this implies that planning family will influence marital stability

Conclusion

This study affirmed that significant relationship exists between the practices of family planning and

marital stability among married person in south west Nigeria. It was submitted that adoption of different methods of family planning among married persons predicts marital stability.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it was recommended that the use of Contraceptive injections which is found to be the best predictor be used by married persons in Southwest, Nigeria. It was also recommended that Married persons should be encouraged by marriage counsellors and religious leaders to make considerate and beneficial decision on how to manage their family size through family planning practices for home stability and Federal, State and Local Government should educate spouses and implement the world declaration for women education, that is, there should be free universal and compulsory education for all.

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