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Utilization of Family Planning Methods among Rural Farmers in Abia State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT
The study assessed the utilization of family planning methods among rural farmers in Abia State, Nigeria. Purposive and multi-stage random sampling techniques were used to select a sample size of 144 respondents. The study employed questionnaire for data collection. Data analyses were by the use of descriptive statistics and factor analysis. The results showed that the majority (60%) of respondents used traditional method than the modern method. The most popular method used was the condom and a very good number of traditional methods like the abstinence, rhythm and withdrawal. The major factors militating against the utilization of family planning methods were grouped into three factors to include; financial, social and infrastructural. The major variables that affected the utilization of family planning methods under financial factor included; prohibition by custom (0.34087), cost (0.41153) and dislike of methods (0.49389). Variables under social factor included; negative effects on health (0.42234) and religious belief (0.46234). Variables under infrastructural factors included; inadequate information (0.30743), and long distance to source (0.37550). Based on the findings, it was concluded that the utilization of family planning methods was moderate. The study, therefore, recommended among others, to increase the number of community health workers with expertise on family planning to educate the farmers on family planning methods.
Keywords: Utilization, family planning methods, rural farmers

INTRODUCTION

Family planning is a process of conception, pregnancy and childbirth, in order to have desired number of children that can be conveniently maintained (Olaitan, 2011). Family planning is sometimes used interchangeably with the term, birth control. Although there are some differences between the two terms (Obasi, 2005). Birth control is something anybody can use to delay pregnancy while family planning is used by couples to delay pregnancy (Anyanwu, 2015). Family Planning may encompass sterilization, as well as pregnancy termination. It also includes raising a child with methods that require significant amount of resources like time, social, finance among others. It is also used to prevent unwanted pregnancies and regulate the number and spacing of children to curb population growth and ensure access to limited resources (Alemayehu,2012).

Methods of preventing family planning are traditional methods and modern methods. Traditional methods include, induced abortion, withdrawal, rhythm/calendar, herbs and roots, charms, prolonged breastfeeding and abstinence. Modern methods include: condom, diaphragm, virginal cream, oral contraceptives or pills, Intra-Uterine Device (IUD), implant, injection and sterilization, (Nwachukwu and Obasi, 2008). Family planning conjures a serious population problem. This is seen in rapid population growth and over population which have remained topical issues of great concern to many National and International Governments (Okezie *et.al*, 2010). Fertility in the country remains high with a total fertility rate of 5.28 and population growth rate of 2.54% (Central Intelligence Agency, 2014). Many farmers in Nigeria have been faced with poor opportunity for education on family planning methods, traditional norms that restrict their physical mobility and autonomy to accept and use contraceptives, inadequate personnel providing family planning services, the inadequate availability of infrastructural facilities for family planning services, inadequate information on family planning methods and the resultant low utilization of family planning methods in the country. In Abia State, some religious organizations such as Catholicism, have restrictions on contraceptive use based on their belief. (Ministry of Health, 2013) Finally, family planning utilization methods in Nigeria has remained low despite increase in knowledge and many decades of programmes implementation (Nwachukwu, and Obasi, 2008; Population Reference Bureau, 2008 and Nwokedike, 2012). Specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

i ascertain the utilization of family planning methods
ii. ascertain the factors affecting their utilization.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Abia State. Abia State of Nigeria, with Umuahia as Capital was created on 27'" August, 1991 out of the old Imo State. It is one of the five states in the Southeast geo-political zone of Nigeria. Agriculture occupies the prime position, not only because of the industry of the people but also because of the widespread existence of rich soil in most parts of the state. There are three agricultural zones in the State: Ohafia, Umuahia and Aba. Crops like oil palm, cocoa, rubber, coffee and coconut are cultivated in large quantities in Abia State. The population of the study comprised of all the farmers (male and female) between the ages of 15 and 50 who are in their sexually active/ reproductive age bracket. In Abia State of Nigeria. A sample size of one hundred and forty-four (144) respondents from a sample frame of 350 farmers was selected from the population and was used for the study, which included seventy-two (72) males, seventy-two (72) female farmers. This was realized using multi-stage random sampling technique as follows; three LGAs were selected each from three agricultural zones of Abia State, i.e Isialangwa South, Obingwa and Osisioma Ngwa (Aba zone), Bende, Isiukwuato and Ohafia (Ohafia zone), Ikwuano, Umuahia South and Umuahia North (Umuahia zone), two rural communities were selected each from the LGAs, eight respondents were selected each from the rural communities (four males, four females) making a sample size of one hundred and forty-four (144) respondents.

Primary data were used for this study which were obtained using a structured questionnaire which reflected on the specific objectives of the study. Descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency distribution and percentages were used to ascertain the utilization of family planning methods and also Varimax-Rotated factors were used to ascertain the factors affecting the utilization of family planning methods among rural farmers in Abia State. Utilization in this study entails to put to use; turn to profitable account. The action of making practical and effective use of something. The constant utilization of the traditional and modern methods of family planning can help in the control of child birth. To ascertain the utilization of family planning methods or activities, the respondents were asked to tick the family planning methods that they have been using and still in use, and after that, the results was analyzed using tables, frequency count and percentages and mean.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Distribution of Respondents According to Farmer's Utilization of Family Planning Methods

Table 1 shows that family planning methods studied were both the modern and traditional methods. The modern methods studied were the use of oral contraceptive (pills), female sterilization (Tubal ligation), intra-uterine device (IUD), norplant implant, condoms, birth control pills, injectable, and vasectomy. The traditional methods studied were; withdrawal, abstinence, rhythm, herbs and roots, prolonged breast feeding, bracelet, taking of hot drinks. Results from Table 1 showed that in modern family planning methods, the most popular methods used were condom 75.0% in Aba, 72.9% in Ohafia and 75.0% in Umuahia zones. This was followed by injectables, 31.3% in Aba, 20.8% in Ohafia and 25.0% in Umuahia zones. Other modern methods that were significantly used included, oral contraceptive (pills) 18.8% in Aba, 16.7% in Ohafia and 16.7% in Umuahia zones. For female sterilization (tubal ligation) 18.8% in Aba, 10.4% Ohafia and 20.8% in Umuahia zones. The result also revealed that in the traditional method, the most commonly used were, abstinence, 89.6% in Aba, 72.9% in Ohafia and 83.3% in Umuahia zones. Rhythm which is also known as the calendar method were, 89.6% in Aba, 83.3% in Ohafia and 79.2% in Umuahia zones. Prolonged breast feeding was 77.1% in Aba, 62.5% in Umuahia and 58.3 in Umuahia zones. Withdrawal method was 52.1% in Aba, 43.8% in Ohafia and 62.5% in Umuahia zones. Taking of local dry gin 41.7% in Aba, 37.5% in Ohafia and 43.8% in Umuahia zones.

Other traditional methods recorded were the use of bracelet and herbs and roots which were in good use in the three zones studied. In addition, they also reported that the rhythm method has helped the female in predicting the days which a woman is most fertile thereby cannot engage in any sexual activity unprotected. The implication of this result means that the level of usage of family planning methods was very low in the three agricultural zones studied. There was high rate of traditional methods usage, in spite of their high failure rates, this result is in agreement with Nwachukwu and Obasi (2008). The high rate of condom use in the zones studied was likely to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDs in the area. Although majority of the respondents had moderate level of awareness of the existence of family planning methods. This did not seem to have been correspondingly reflected in the usage. Perhaps, this is why Church and Geller (1998) in Obasi (2005) stressed that just knowing that any method of family planning exists, may not be enough information for many women. In-depth studies show that many women may be aware of at least one method, and often several contraceptives; but they often do not know how the methods work, what their side effects are, how to obtain them, how much they cost, whether their use can be kept private, and other aspects that may affect decision to use contraception.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to percentage utilization of family planning methods

S/N	Modern Methods	Aba Zone		Ohafia Zone		Umuahia Zone	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
I	Oral Contraceptives (pills)	9	18.8	8	16.7	8	16.7
2	Female Sterilization (Tubal ligation)	9	18.8	5	10.4	10	20.8
3	Intra-Uterine Device (IUD)	4	8.3	3	6.3	6	12.5
4	Norplant Implant	4	8.3	1	2.1	9	18.8
5	Condoms	36	75.0	35	72.9	36	75.0
6	Birth control pills	3	6.3	3	6.3	8	16.7
7	Injectables	15	31.3	10	20.8	12	25.0
8	Vasectomy	00	00	00	00	00	00
	Traditional Methods						
9	Withdrawal	25	52.1	21	43.8	30	62.5
10	Abstinence	43	89.6	35	72.9	40	83.3
11	Rhythm	43	89.6	40	83.3	38	79.2
12	Herbs and roots	17	35.4	15	31.3	18	37.5
13	Prolonged breast feeding	37	77.1	30	62.5	28	58.3
14	Bracelet	11	22.9	4	8.3	9	18.8
15	Taking of local gin	20	41.7	18	37.5	21	43.8

Source: Field Survey Data, 2015. Multiple Responses Recorded

Distribution of respondents according to choice and regularity in the utilization of family planning methods

Table 2 revealed that from the three zones; Aba, Umuahia and Ohafia that 54.9% of the respondents used the family planning methods for more than two years and regularly to prevent pregnancy. From the three agricultural zones, the farmers were making use of the traditional methods mainly such as the rhythm, abstinence, as well as the withdrawal methods; Aba zone having the highest number of respondents with 60.4%, 42.4% of the respondents in the zone were using only one method as indicated in Table 2, in which they mentioned the traditional methods specifically, this may be due to the lack of the complete information about the use effects of the modern methods. In Table 3, 22.2% of the respondents indicated that they have been using both methods and will continue to use them because they do not want to have more children.

Table 2 Distribution of respondents according to choice in the utilization of family planning methods

Variables	Aba Zone (48)		Ohafia Zone (48)		Umuahia Zone (48)		Total (144)	
	Freq.	**%**	**Freq.**	**%**	**Freq.**	**%**	**Freq.**	**%**
I use only one method	18	37.5	23	47.9	20	41.7	61	42.4
I use more than one method	22	45.8	21	43.6	18	37.5	61	42.5
I don't use any method and will never use any	8	16.7	4	8.3	10	20.8	22	15.3
Total	**48**	**100**	**48**	**100**	**48**	**100**	**144**	**100**

Source: Field Survey data, 2015

Table 3 Distribution of respondents according to regularity in the utilization of family planning methods

Variables	Aba Zone (48)		Ohafia Zone (48)		Umuahia Zone (48)		Total (144)	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
I have been using it regularly for 2 years and above	29	60.4	23	47.9	27	56.1	79	54.9
I have been using it regularly for less than 2 years	00	00	13	27.1	6	12.5	19	13.2
I have been and are still using it	13	27.1	11	22.9	8	16.7	32	22.2
I was using it but have stopped using it at the moment	6	12.5	1	2.1	7	14.6	14	9.7
Total	**48**	**100**	**48**	**100**	**48**	**100**	**48**	**100**

Source: Field Survey data, 2015

Respondent's perception on who should be involvement in receiving family planning methods lessons

The Table revealed that man and woman (couple) 56.3% (Aba zone), 50% (Ohafia Zone) and 62.5% (Umuahia zone) were more involved in receiving family planning methods lessons against woman 41.0% and man 2.8%. This meant that both man and the woman should have an agreement on child bearing, the number and specification by year to enable them space out the children for healthy living. This result is in agreement with Olaitan (2011) who said that the agreement and involvement of partners is very important or crucial when choosing any method of family planning among couples. Also, family planning methods should not be one sided, both couples should be involved when taking decision on any family planning method.

Table 4 Distribution of respondents' perception on who should be more involved in receiving family planning methods lessons

	Variables	Aba Zone (48)		Ohafia Zone (48)		Umuahia Zone (48)		Total (144)	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1	The Man	1	2.1	2	4.2	1	2.1	4	2.8
2	The Woman	20	41.7	22	45.8	17	35.4	59	41.0
3	Couple								
		27	56.3	24	50.0	30	62.5	81	56.3
	Total	**48**	**100**	**48**	**100**	**48**	**100**	**48**	**100**

Source: Field Survey data, 2015

Respondents Involvement in Receiving Family Planning Methods Lesson

The results on the respondent's involvement showed that in Aba zone, the couple with the mean of 4.08 was more involved in receiving family planning lessons followed by woman with the mean of 3.52 and the man with 3.31. This means that their level of involvement was high.

Also, in Ohafia Zone, the couple was with the average mean of 3.76, while the woman with the mean of 3.60 and man 3.21. In Umuahia Zone, the couple has an average mean of 3.83, while the woman has mean of 3.32 and the man 2.83 respectively.

Table 5 Respondents involvement in receiving family planning methods lesson

Variable	Most involved	More involved	Undecided	Less involved	Not involved	Mean
			Aba Zone			
Man	6	22	5	11	4	**3.31**
Woman	14	19	00	8	7	**3.52**
Couple	19	21	3	3	2	**4.08**
			Ohafia Zone			
Man	4	20	10	10	4	**3.21**
Woman	15	15	6	8	4	**3.60**
Couple	20	15	2	6	5	**3.76**
			Umuahia Zone			
Man	2	16	10	12	8	**2.83**
Woman	8	20	5	10	5	**3.32**
Couple	17	20	2	4	5	**3.83**

Source: Field Survey, 2014. Mean Decision: 3.00

Distribution of respondents according Varimax-Rotated factors affecting the utilization of family planning methods among rural farmers In Abia State

Results from Table 6 revealed the factors that militated against the utilization of family planning methods in the three agricultural zones of Abia State. The Table revealed some factors affecting the use of family planning to include; negative effects on health, religious belief, prohibition by custom, cost, spouse disapproval, shyness, inadequate information, long distance to source, poor service of family planning clinics, dislike of method, condom reduces sexual desire. The Table presents the varimax-rotated factors militating against family planning methods utilization in Abia State, Nigeria. Three (3) factors were extracted based on the response of the respondents.

Only variables with factor loading of 0.30 and above and 10% overlapping variance (Ashley, Amber, and Anthony, 2006) were used in naming the factors. Variables with factor loading less than 0.30 were not used (Enete and Amusa, 2010). In naming the factors, Kessler (2006) stated that each factor is giving a denomination based on set of variables or characteristics it is composed of. This procedure was adopted in grouping the variables into three major factors as: Financial-factor 1, Social- factor 2 and Infrastructural-factor 3.

Under factor 1 (financial), the specific variable affecting the utilization of family planning methods in Abia State were: prohibition by custom (0.34087); cost (0.41143) and dislike method (0.49389). Cost which was high by the respondents said that some of the methods were high in amount to procure, that they do not have the finance to take care of such methods. This is in agreement with Olaitan (2011) that some forms of contraception, such as minor surgery like (vasectomy, tubal ligation) carry fairly significant amount of one's time and are very costly as compared to other methods like the rhythm, condom which are less expensive; hence, couples engage in them.
Variables that loaded under factor 2 (social), the specific variables affecting the utilization include; negative effect on health (0.42234), religious belief (0.46234).

Negative effect on health is in agreement with Tweedie et.al (1996), that the nature and magnitude of reactions experienced would naturally vary with the types, the individual users, the conditions under which the method were used and of course, the skills of the providers. Research works have reported religious opposition to family planning, with Roman Catholicism said to be the most vehement in this direction. Highlighting the relationship between religion and modern family planning methods, Imo (2002) noted that Catholicism prohibited all artificial means of family planning methods but advocated the traditional methods. Yet, the traditional methods have been reported to have high failure rates. She also opined that although leaders of many religious groups are opposed to artificial birth controls only the Roman Catholicism Church has made official doctrine of such a stand. Factor 3 (Infrastructural), the variables include; inadequate information (0.30743); and long distance to source (0.37550).

Table 6 Varimax-rotated factors affecting the utilization of family planning methods among rural farmers in Abia State.

S/N	Variables	Factor 1 (Financial)	Factor 2 (Social)	Factor 3 (Infrastructural)
1	Negative effect on health	-0.21076	0.42234	- 0.05961
2	Religious belief	-0.13521	0.46234	0.03439
3	Prohibition by custom	0.34087	-0.21916	- 0.03749
4	Cost	0.41143	0.14924	- 0.04711
5	Spouse disapproval	0.08756	-0.13198	0.23178
6	Shyness	0.29799	0.16657	- 0.17835
7	Inadequate information	0.16522	- 0.06666	0.30743
8	Long distance of source	-0.02043	0.14581	0.37550
9	Poor service of family planning clinics	0.25775	0.03484	0.05803
10	Dislike of methods	0.49389	-0.04806	- 0.12620
11	Condom reduces sexual desire	0.19129	0.02038	0.28118

Source: Survey data, 2015. *N.B: Factor loading of 0.30 was used at 10% overlapping variance. Variables with factor of less than 0.30 were not used. Figures on bold were more than 0.30 and therefore was used.*

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the work, it was concluded that:

1) Majority of the respondents used traditional method more than the modern methods.
2) The respondents in the study area used traditional methods such as the abstinence, rhythm, and withdrawal more, compared to the modern methods where condom was commonly used.
3) The rate by which the respondents used family planning methods was still moderate in the communities studied.
4) Some of the modern methods of family planning was expensive such as those involving surgery

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

1) There should be an increase in the number of community health workers with expertise on family planning to educate the farmers on family planning methods.
2) NGOs, Individuals as well as government should ensure that there are more primary health centres, with strong family planning facilities which should be made available to the rural communities for effective utilization.
3) Individual, governments and NGOs should help in creation of more awareness and the teaching on the importance of utilization on issues relating to family planning methods
4) Family planning methods should be subsidized to enable every farmer to have access to them.

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