

AWARENESS OF FAMILY PLANNING TECHNIQUES AND ITS IMPACT ON NATALITY AMONG THE ALMAJIRIS IN ILORIN METROPOLIS

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Abstract

The growing population has been a serious concern to the local and even the international community. This has impacted on the resources, thereby overstressing the few available resources. It has been observed that family planning may reduce the population drastically. The Almajiris who are known for migration and displacement seem to be at a disadvantage. Hence, the need to find out their awareness level of family planning techniques and its impact on natality among the Almajiris in Ilorin who are vulnerable and susceptible. The study found out that since Islam is not opposed to child birth, the almajiris hold the belief that child birth is limitless. Therefore, it was recommended that measures are needed to enhance awareness about family planning should be created.

Keyword: Awareness, Natality, Family Planning, Almajiris' Impact

Introduction

The world population has been on the increase in recent times and of great concern. The present population of the world in 2023 is 8,045,311,447, a 0.88% increase from 2022 which stood at 7,975,105,156. Production of goods and services most especially food shortage has impacted the population a great deal (Population Report, 2016). The effort to raise incomes and living standard is falling in many countries like Nigeria, particularly where population is growing most rapidly and where family planning is not fully practiced. Nigeria used to enjoy oil boom in the seventies and the large composition of the family did not pose any hardship as things were cheap and affordable.

The current realization that large population can hold back socio-economic development and health for all programmes has led to the quest for information on family planning and other related reproductive health problems in Nigeria. Planned parenthood programmes have become necessary in Nigeria because of the prevailing socio-economy and psychological factors that affect both parents and children.

However, in recent years economic situations changed and caring for children brings both psychological and economic strains on both parents and children. Therefore, there is need for family planning either natural or artificial, traditional or modern trend. The traditional methods include prolonged breast feeding, post-partum, the use of ring, waist band, wooden doll, the use of black soap and salt to be dissolved and taken immediately after sex. Other contemporary methods include the use of contraceptive such as pill, IUCD (Intra Uterine Contraceptive Device), condom, implant, and vasectomy. For clarification, the new modern method is broken down into three categories, which includes Temporary modern methods and examples are pills, injectable, condom. Permanent new modern method include vasectomy, tubectomy and Natural methods which involves withdrawal method and rhythm (Ayeni, 2012). Family planning is a way of maintaining reasonable interval in childbearing practice. That is letting a woman rest after giving the first birth before another birth. Family planning also embraces a way of preventing unwanted pregnancy, and a means of sexual gratification. Nwangoro (2019) defined family planning as an organized effort to assist people to have the number of children they want and to space them as they choose.

Additionally, family planning is available to help individuals and couples to choose if and when they will have a child or to choose the number of children that they will have. The choices depend on a complicated mixture of social, cultural and psychological influences; and lately for the first time in history, men and women

have had reliable methods to enable them to make that choice freely and relatively easily. This principle of choice is important as it includes not only the choice of using family planning, but the choice of the birth control method most suited to the particular circumstance of the couple. But neither the man nor the woman can make an informed choice until each has a basic knowledge of the different methods, their efficiency in protection against pregnancy and their advantages and disadvantages.

In Nigeria like in most developing countries, the story of family planning services is not successful because of a number of factors, such as culture of the people and academic status of women (Coleman, 2014). Other factors include lack of education and understanding about health related issues, the ability of women to command resources and make independent decisions about their fertility and birth control knowledge (Nwakeze, 2013). Location, religion and social class, lack of cooperation from spouse, cost, perceived difficulty with the method and lack of knowledge about contraceptive methods. (World Bank, 2014). Moreover, in Nigeria, the provision of health services is more in the urban areas than in the rural areas (Dobie, 2018). Where family planning services are located in rural areas, access is low due to lack of proximity, bad road network and the nearest urban centre, where such clinic is available, it may not provide adequate care because of lack of properly trained staff and equipment (Quedraogo, 2015). Other factors include lack of proper family planning function dissemination; inadequate motivation to seek actively, access and regularly use contraceptives.

It has also been hypothesized that there is a positive correlation between contraceptive use and level of education (Saleem, 2015). Other things being equal, the higher the level of education; the higher contraceptive use is expected to be. Although, education of both the wife and husband is important and there appears to be a consensus that the former is more important than the latter (Hakim, 2015).

The observed variation in contraceptive use by place of residence may be attributed to differences in the availability of such social services as education, information about family planning, access to family planning and health care services. Religious affiliation also affects contraceptive use (Audu, Yahya, Geidama, Abdu Salam, Takai & Kyari, 2018). Religions differ in their stand on fertility regulation and among the major world religions, Catholicism and Islam widely promote child birth in their ideology (Jejeebhoy, 2011). However, the relationship between religion and contraceptive use is much more complex than expected. In one study conducted in India, it was discovered that even though the average number of children born to a Muslim or Christian couple is higher than that born to a Hindu couple, the acceptance of sterilization to limit family size was greater among Muslims and Christians than Hindus (Jejeebhoy, 2011). A study of contraceptive use in Bangladesh found that Muslim women here were less likely to use contraception than Hindu women (Ullah, 2013). The strength of one's religiosity or degree of one's adherence to the norms of a given religion may exert an influence on one's mode of life including reproductive behaviour. Furthermore, studies in developing countries such as Thailand, Indonesia, Australia, etc. revealed that social, cultural and religious unacceptability of contraception frequently emerged as an obstacle to use contraception (Al Riyam, 2014).

The work status of women has also been linked to knowledge and use of contraceptives. Women who work outside the home have higher rate of use than women who do not work outside home (Black, Yang, Wen, Lalonde, Guilbert & Fisher, 2019) Working women, particularly, those who earn cash incomes are assumed to have greater control over household decisions and increased awareness of the world outside home. Consequently, they have more control over reproductive decisions. Some studies also add that paid work also provides alternative satisfactions for women, which may compete with bearing and rearing children and may promote contraceptive use (Moursund, 2013).

The Almajiri people due to their nature seems to have maintained continual reproductive activities. The word Almajiri was etymologically acquired from Arabic word 'Al-Muhajir' which means a migrant. Its root stems from the Hijrah of Prophet Mohammed from Mecca to Medina. The disciples who relocated with the prophet to Medina were called '*Al-Muhajirrun*', which means migrants. However, within the context of Nigeria the word signifies a seeker of knowledge; it is therefore use to describe those who migrated from their domicile to other

places in search of Islamic knowledge (Usman, 2018). The system of learning and teaching the Qur'an and Arabic began from the Northern Nigeria where the Mallam relied on "zakat" (alms) which as at then was collected and managed by the state. As observed by Fafunwa this arrangement which underscore the early phase of the advancement of Islamic Education in northern Nigeria unfortunately diminished the status of the Mallams (teachers in Almajiri school system) to mere beggars who live at the mercy of the community. Colonialism and its attack collapsed the almajiri arrangement and made the education a religious affair instead of a state programme. With the loss of government funding the Almajiri system begins to undergo a system decline, which gradually transformed it into dilapidated and ramshackle institution with no significance in the eyes of the government in spite of the fact that the populace patronized it much more than its western counterpart called the "*Karatum Boko*", i.e. the western education which was recognized and financed by the state (AbdulQadir, 2013). This invariably transformed the students of the Almajiri schools together with their Mallams into mere beggars and menial laborers which was invariably the genesis of the predicaments of the Almajiri system today (Taiwo, 2013).

Subsequently begging becomes synonymous with Almajiri in the contemporary Nigerian state. This is a serious anathema because the Islamic religion discourages begging in any form as it diminishes a Muslim's self-regard and nobility. A typical Almajiri cannot afford meal, he does not have capacity to meet up with unexpected expenses, he does not have proper shelter, he does not have good sanitary facilities and he does not have access to formal education. Ruefully many parents in northern Nigeria especially from the country side prefer to send their kids mostly at the age of seven to experience this awful condition due to cultural resistance, poverty and government negligence.

Method

The research design that was adopted for this study is descriptive survey of the correlation type. The population of this study consisted all child bearing women among the Almajiris in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. Therefore, the researcher through grab sampling technique selected one hundred (100) children bearing women among the Almajiris in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. A researcher's designed questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection titled "awareness of family planning as a correlate of child natality Questionnaire. It consisted of two sections: Section A and Section B. Section A sought for the demographic data of the respondents while Section B collects information on questions drawn on the awareness of family planning as a correlate of child natality among the Almajiris in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State.

The questionnaire was of 4- Likert rating scales of Strongly Agree (SA) – 4 points, Agree (A)- 3 points, Disagree (D)- 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD)- 1 point respectively. The instrument was validated by experts in measurement and evaluation. Test re-test method was used to ascertain reliability of the instrument by administering twenty (20) copies of the questionnaire twice to the same respondents at the interval of two weeks outside the area of study and the result of the two administrations was correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistical analysis. The correlation co-efficient of 0.83 was obtained as the reliability co-efficient, which means the instrument was reliable. Descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentage was used to analyse the demography, mean and standard deviation statistics for answering the research questions while inferential statistic of Pearson correlation statistics was used to test the postulated hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level of significance

Research Questions

The following research questions will be raised to guide the study:

- i. what is the awareness level of the Almajiris on family planning?
- ii. what is the frequency of child bearing by the Almagiris?
- iii. does knowledge of family planning of the Almagiris correlate with natality rate?

Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between awareness level about family planning and natality rate of the Almajiris.

Result

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Groups	Gender	Frequency (%)	Sub-Total
Religion	Muslim	79 (79.0%)	100
	Christian	21 (21.0%)	
Age Range	21-30	10 (10.0%)	100
	30-40	28 (28.0%)	
	41-50	46 (46.0%)	
	50 years& above	20 (20.0%)	
	No education		
Education Qualification	Primary		100
	0'Level	96 (96.0%)	
	OND/ND/B.Sc	4 (4.0%)	
Total	PG	-	

Table 1 shows the demographic distribution of the respondents. 79 representing (79.0%) of the respondents were Muslim while 21 representing (21.0%) were Christians. 10 representing (10.0%) were within 21-30 years, 28 representing 28.0% were within 30-40, 46 representing 46.0% were within 41-50 years while 20 representing (20.0%) were 50 years and above. 96 representing 96.0% have no education while 4 representing (4.0%) only had primary school certificate

Answering of Research Questions

Research Question One: *What is the awareness level of the almagiri on family planning?*

Table 1: Awareness level of the almagiri on family planning

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Awareness on need for limiting the rate of Population	2.40	1.48	Not aware
2	Awareness about the importance of family planning	2.43	1.43	Not aware
3	Awareness about family planning procedure	2.38	1.23	Not aware
4	Awareness of the consequences of family planning	2.43	1.43	Not aware
5	Awareness of religious position on family planning	2.23	1.47	Aware

Table shows the knowledge level of the almagiri on family planning. Criterion mean of 2.50 was set to determine positive and negative response from the respondents with items possessing mean above the set benchmark considered as positive (Aware) and items possessing mean below the set benchmark considered as negative (not aware). As shown on the table, the almagiris are not aware of the need for limiting the rate of Population, the importance of family planning, family planning procedure, consequences of family planning and knowledge about the need to bend religious rules on family planning

Research Question Two: *What is the frequency of child birth among the almagiri?*

Table 2: Frequency of Child Birth among the Almagiri

S/N	Frequency of child birth among the almagiri	Mean	S.D	Rank
1	Since islam does not oppose child birth, the almagiri believed that child birth is limitless	2.91	.967	2 nd
2	The almagiri due to religious fate believe that limiting child birth is dangerous	2.59	.986	4 th
3	The almagiri give birth to as much as 20 and above	2.91	1.14	2 nd
4	In spite of the rate of poverty, the almagiri believed that they have to give birth continuously	2.69	.956	5 th
5	Societal norm does not guide the almagiri on the extent of child birth	3.03	.848	1 st

Table shows the frequency of child birth among the almajiri. Criterion mean of 2.50 was set to determine positive and negative response from the respondents with items possessing mean above the set benchmark considered as positive and items possessing mean below the set benchmark considered as negative. As shown on the table, the frequency of child birth include Since Islam does not oppose child birth, the almajiri believed that child birth is limitless. The almajiris, due to their religious faith; believe that limiting child birth is dangerous, the almajiri give birth to as much as 20 and above, In spite of the rate of poverty, the almajiri believed that they have to give birth continuously and the societal norm does not guide the almajiri on the extent of child birth.

Table 3: Hypothesis Testing

Nativity	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest	100	65.00	77.00	71.9231	2.75569

Research Question Three: Does knowledge of family planning correlate with the child bearing of the almajiris

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between knowledge of family planning and child bearing of the almajiris

Table 4: Relationship between awareness of family planning and natality of the almajiris

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Pearson correlation	p-value	Decision
Awareness of family planning	100	3.02	0.89	0.484	0.000	Ho Rejected
Child-bearing	100	2.68	0.87			

Table 4 shows the calculated correlation value (0.484) while the p-value (0.000) is less than the (0.05) which is the significance level. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between knowledge of family planning and child bearing of the almajiris was rejected. This shows that there was relationship between knowledge of family planning and child bearing of the almajiris

Summary of Findings

- The almajiris are not aware of the need for limiting the rate of population, the importance of family planning, family planning procedure, consequences of family planning and knowledge about the need to bend religious rules on family planning
- The frequency of child birth include since islam does not oppose child birth, the almajiri believed that child birth is limitless, The almajiri due to religious fate believe that limiting child birth is dangerous, The almajiri give birth to as much as 20 and above, In spite of the rate of poverty, the almajiri believed that they have to give birth continuously and Societal norm does not guide the almajiri on the extent of child birth.
- There was significant relationship between awareness of family planning and child bearing of the almajiris.

Discussion of the Findings

The study assessed the knowledge of family planning as a correlate of child bearing among the Almajiris in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. The finding of the study showed that almajiris are not aware of the need for limiting the rate of population, the importance of family planning, family planning procedure, consequences of family planning and knowledge about the need to bend religious rules on family planning. This result is in line with that of Okeke (2016) whose study investigated awareness about family planning among the almajiri and revealed low level of awareness about family planning among the almajiris in the northern parts of Nigeria

The findings of this study also revealed that the frequency of child birth include “since Islam does not oppose to child birth, the almajiris hold the belief that child birth is limitless. Therefore, due to their religious

faith, the Almajiris believe that limiting child birth is dangerous. The almajiri give birth to as many as they can born, in spite of the rate of poverty, the almajiri believed that they have to give birth continuously and societal norm does not guide the almajiri on the extent of child birth result. This finding corroborates that of Olaitan (2019) whose study focused on Family planning and its influence on societal development. His finding revealed a high level of ignorance about population control among Nigerians, and specifically among the almajiris.

On the research question three, it was revealed that the knowledge about family planning by the almajiri and the extent of their child bearing show that the almajiris are not really aware of family planning and this serves as the reason for their continuous birth. It is believed that having many children indicates how wealthy one is by the almajiri. The Almajiris never go for family planning, they are scared of engaging in family planning because of the perceived side effects of family planning which hinder the almajiris' participation in family planning. This finding is in line with that of James (2018) whose study focused on the consequences of family planning and revealed that most individuals are scared of engaging in family planning because of the fear of the unknown

In conclusion, the result of the raised hypothesis revealed that there was relationship between knowledge of family planning and child bearing of the almajiris. This finding is in line with that of Akinsola (2014) whose study focused on the level of awareness about family planning in western Nigeria. However, the study of Atkinson (2016) opposes the finding of this study, as there was no positive correlation between the knowledge of family planning and rates of child birth in the United States of America.

Conclusion

Based on the finding of the study, the researcher concluded that the respondents believed the almajiri are not aware of the need to limit the rate of population, there is no awareness about family from the almajiri, the almajiri never know the family planning procedures, the almajiri are not aware of the consequences of family planning; the frequency of child birth includes "since Islam does not oppose child birth, the almajiri believed that child birth is limitless, The almajiri due to religious fate believe that limiting child birth is dangerous, The almajiri give birth to as much as many as they can. In spite of the rate of poverty, the almajiri believed that they have to give birth continuously and societal norm does not guide the almajiri on the extent of child birth result.; the Knowledge of family planning of the almajiri and the extent of their child bearing include "the almajiri are not really aware of family planning and this serve as the need for their continuous birth, It is believed that having many children indicates how wealthy one is by the almajiri, The Almajiri never go for family planning, The almajiri are scared of engaging in family planning and Fear of side effects of family planning may hinders the almajiri participation in family planning and that there was relationship between knowledge of family planning and child bearing of the almajiris

Recommendations

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

- i. Measures needed to enhance awareness about family planning should be created.
- ii. The challenges related to family planning should be addressed in schools.
- iii. There should be more outreach to the rural areas and cities where *almajiris* are located.

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