

Relationships among Family Planning, Sexual Fulfillment and Marital Satisfaction of Married People in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract: Family planning helps to improve the quality of life and reproductive health by empowering individual and couples to safe sex. The study, therefore, employed the use of descriptive research design to examine the relationship among family planning, sexual and marital satisfaction among married people in Lagos state. One research question and 3 hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The instrument used was a questionnaire designed by the researcher and administered to 600 married people in Lagos state, 519 copies of questionnaire were returned for analysis. The data collected were analysed using frequency counts, simple percentage, mean and correlation co-efficient. The result of the investigation showed a favourable perception to family planning and significant relationship was established among family planning, sexual fulfillment and marital satisfaction. Based on the findings, it was recommended that family planning services should be made available free or at subsidized rate to encourage people to be more involved in the practice. More family planning clinics can also be built to enable married people have enough access to information and services on family planning.

Key words: Relationship, family planning, married people, marital satisfaction, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Family planning refers to practices that help couples to avoid unwanted children, to regulate the intervals between pregnancies and to determine the number of children in the family. Njoku (1999) perceived family planning as a way of thinking and living that is adopted voluntarily upon the basis of knowledge, attitude and responsible decisions by individuals and couples in order to promote the health and welfare of the family group. Family planning, according to Adima and Okeke (1995), is the use of medically tested procedures in the prevention of unwanted pregnancies. The main goal of family planning counselling, according to Imogen (1997), is to improve the quality of life and reproductive health by empowering individuals and couples to exercise the right to safe sex and to decide when to have children and how many to have with the aid of family planning methods. Family planning has provided opportunities for couples to discuss their circumstances, needs and options in order to help them make informed decisions about contraception, fertility and sexual health.

Marital satisfaction: Marital satisfaction is perceived in different ways by various authors and scholars. Marini

(1976) sees marital satisfaction as a number of pleasurable activities in which married couples participate jointly. On the other hand, Hicks and Platt (1970) explained that feeling of happiness in marriage bears a clear relationship with the extent to which a person is satisfied or frustrated in the relationship aspect of his or her marriage. They state that when a spouse is happy with the relationship aspect of marriage, he or she tends to be happy. They concluded that to a considerable extent, happiness in marriage implies happiness in relationship.

In Nigeria, marital satisfaction is usually based on childbearing. Owuamanam (1997) opined that childbearing is greatly valued and stands out as a major expectation of marriage in Nigeria. She stressed further that many marriages, if not all, appear to be controlled more for childbearing than for other reasons because couples want children who will take over from them when they die but when this expectation fails to be realized, unhappiness comes into the marriage. To buttress this, Goldenson (1970) pointed out that the desire for children facilitated marital happiness and that people who did not want children were generally poor and at marital risks.

However, some researchers have observed that children could also be a source of conflict and unhappiness in a marriage. Felman (1971) found that

childless individuals reported a higher level of marital satisfaction than did people with children. In line with this, Glenn and Weaver (1978) stated that the presence of very young children was distinctly detrimental to the marital happiness of white woman as a whole. Olayinka (1987) is of the opinion that the Chief satisfaction which a couple should seek in marital relationship are the security of an enduring affection and companionship, a satisfying sexual relation and building of a home and family.

Marital satisfaction has also been shown to be positively correlated with higher occupational status, incomes and educational level (Elk, 1974). These factors all seem to be inter-related when higher education results in higher occupational status and this in turn provides a greater income, the net effect is less strain on the marriage. Weiten (1983) on the other hand, remarked that although having ample financial resources did not promote marital satisfaction, poverty could also produce serious problems. He added that without money, families could live in constant dread of financial drains such as illness, lay offs or broken appliances. Orgen (2001) believes that people may be reluctant to admit even to themselves that their children adversely affected them. However, Adesanya (2002) discovered that when the desired children come before the couple is ready for them, values are violated and marital maladjustment results.

Sexual satisfaction: Sexual satisfaction, no doubt, has played an important role in marital satisfaction among couples. Researches have shown that it increases marital pleasure and satisfaction among couples. Adesanya (2002) observed that the biological function of intercourse is to assure perpetuation of the species, but beyond this, in modern marriage, coitus can serve to give the husband and wife a sense of emotional warmth, a release from tension and at times, a delightful diversion, no wonder some couples have taken to family planning methods in order to prevent frequent occurrence of pregnancies.

Sexual relationship among couples was endorsed by God right from the creation of the world. Hamid (1977) and Katu (1986) believed that sexual relationship was created for two closely related reasons, the long time one which is the continuation of human race and the immediate reason which is the sexual intercourse. It is the means of expressing the couple's love for each other in marriage.

Researches have shown that sexual problem is a serious problem in marriage and can cause marriage instability among couples. Abdalat (1991) believed that when a woman has been called to her husband's bed but refused and the husband spends the night angry, the

Angels of God will be cursing her until the morning. She further explained that a husband who is regularly rejected by his wife is likely to feel offended, depressed and frustrated. The husband could suffer in silence thereby getting driven to find unlawful satisfaction elsewhere or taking another wife. This could cause tension and problems within the family and can eventually lead to serious marital disharmony. In line with this finding, Adesanya (2002) observed that when marital partners fail to satisfy each other in a sexual encounter over a long period, problems ensue.

Sexual relationship among couples was endorsed by God from the creation and no doubt plays an important role in marital satisfaction. To enjoy sexual satisfaction in marriages family planning methods should be put in place to prevent married people from over replenishing the earth. Therefore, the researchers share the belief of Adesanya (2002), that when the desired children come before the couples are ready for them, values are violated and marital maladjustment results.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research questions: How do married people in Lagos state perceive family planning?

Research hypotheses:

- There is no significant relationship in the perception of family planning and marital satisfaction among married people in Lagos State.
- There is no significant relationship in the perception of family planning and sexual satisfaction among married people in Lagos State.
- There is no significant relationship in the perception of sexual and marital satisfaction among married people in Lagos State.

Research method

Research design: The descriptive research of the survey type was adopted in this study. This was considered appropriate because it carefully observes and records information as it naturally occurs in any research.

Sample and sampling procedure: There were 20 local Government areas in Lagos State at the period of this research. Five were selected by simple random technique. The selected Local Government areas were from 2 provinces in Lagos State: Lagos Island and Lagos mainland. There are 2 Local Government areas in Lagos Island and eighteen in Lagos Mainland. One was selected from the former and 4 from the latter through simple random sampling.

The stratified random sampling technique was later used to select 600 subjects consisting of male and female married people from churches, mosques, Hospitals, Local Government offices and schools in the five Local Government arrears selected. In all, 519 copies of questionnaire were returned for analysis.

Research instrument: The instrument used for this study was a self designed questionnaire titled “perception of family planning among marriage people “ (PERFPAMP). The questionnaire comprised 2 sections- A and B. Section A consisted of 8 items designed to seek information from the subjects about their personal data. Section B consisted of 40 items which were generated from literature reviewed on family planning, sexual and marital satisfaction. The instrument was judged to have face and content validities by some psychologists and counsellors in the Department of Guidance and Counselling. The reliability was established by administering the instrument to 20 married people in Ekiti which is outside Lagos state twice at the interval of 2 weeks to determine the reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient of 0.77 was obtained through Pearson Product Moment Correlation Formula.

Data analysis: The data collected were analyzed using frequency count, percentages mean and correlation co-efficient.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research question: How do married people in Lagos state perceive family planning?

Table 1 shows that 60.5% of the respondents have favourable perception to family planning while 39.55 have unfavourable perception.

Hypothesis 1: Table 2 shows that there is a significant relationship between family planning and marital satisfaction because the calculated value of 0.74 is greater than the table value of 0.195. The null hypothesis that says there is no significant relationship in the perception of family planning and marital satisfaction among married people is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship in the perception of family planning and sexual satisfaction among married people in Lagos state.

The result of Table 3 shows a significant relationship between family planning and sexual satisfaction because the calculated value which is 0.727 is greater than the table value of 0.195. Therefore, the null-hypothesis that

Table 1: Perception of married people on family planning

Family	Favorable		Unfavorable	
	Frequency	(%)	Frequency	(%)
Percentage of married people	314	60.5	205	39.5
N = 519				

Table 2: There is no significant relationship in the perception of family planning and marital satisfaction among married people in Lagos State

Variable	N	Mean	rc	rt
Family planning	519	99.11	0.74*	0.195
Marital satisfaction	519	30.55		

*Significant, $p < 0.05$

Table 3: Relationship between family planning and sexual satisfaction among married people in Lagos State

Variable	N	Mean	rc	rt
Family planning	519	99.11	0.727*	0.195
Marital satisfaction	519	11.39		

*Significant, $p < 0.05$

Table 4: Relationship between sexual and marital satisfaction among married people in Lagos State

Variable	N	Mean	rc	rt
Sexual satisfaction	519	11.39	0.519*	0.195
Marital satisfaction	519	30.55		

*Significant, $p < 0.05$

says there is no significant relationship between family planning and sexual satisfaction among married people is rejected.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship in the perception of sexual and marital satisfaction among married people in Lagos state.

Table 4 shows there is a significant relationship between sexual and marital satisfaction because the calculated value of 0.516 is greater than the table value 0.195. The null-hypothesis that says there is no significant relationship between sexual and marital satisfaction among married people is rejected.

The findings of the descriptive analysis on the research question raised revealed that majority of the respondents had a favorable perception towards family planning. This could be due to the fact that family planning has provided opportunities for couples to discuss their circumstance, needs and options to help them make informed decisions about contraception, fertility and sexual health (Imogen, 1997). This is also in line with the view of Njoku (1999), who believed that family planning is a way of thinking and living that is adopted voluntarily upon the basis of knowledge, attitude and responsible decision by individual and couples in order to promote the health and welfare of the family group.

It was also revealed in the first hypothesis that there is a relationship between family planning and marital satisfaction among married people in Lagos state.

Owuamanam (1979) opined that childbearing is greatly valued and stands out as a major expectation of marriage in Nigeria, while Adesanya (2002) discovered that when the desired children come before the couple is ready for them, values are violated and marital maladjustment results. To prevent the coming of the desired children to come before the couple is ready for them, family planning should set in, hence, relationship between family planning and marital satisfaction.

A significant relationship between family planning and sexual relationship was also established. This finding agreed with the Hamid (1977) and Katu (1986). They believed that sexual relationship was created for 2 closely relate reasons, the long-term one which is the continuation of human race and the immediate reason, which is the sexual intercourse as a means of expressing the couple's love for each other. There is also a significant relationship between sexual and marital satisfaction among married people. Marital satisfaction is perceived in different ways by various authors and scholars. Marini (1976) sees marital satisfaction as pleasurable activities in which married couples participate jointly and this includes sexual relationship and procreation. Researches have also shown that sexual satisfaction increased marital pleasure and satisfaction among couples. Adesanya (2002) observed that sexual satisfaction gives the husband and wife a sense of emotional warmth, a release from tension and at times, a delightful diversion. No wonder some couples have taken to family planning methods in other to prevent the occurrence of frequent pregnancies.

CONCLUSION

A significant proportion of married people perceived family planning favourably. It is also apparent that there are significant relationships among family planning, sexual fulfillment and marital satisfaction among married people in Lagos state.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, family planning services should be made available free or at subsidized rates to encourage people with favourable perception to be more involved in the practice. Since, the perception is favourable, more family planning clinics can be built to enable married people have enough access to information and services on family planning.

It is established from the findings that there are relationships among family planning, sexual and marital satisfaction. On the basis of this, counsellors, especially

in marital counselling should counsel married people more on the importance of family planning to sexual and marital satisfaction.

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