



MOTHERS' MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT EFFECTIVE FAMILY PLANNING USAGE IN IJEBU ODE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OGUN STATE

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ABSTRACT

This research looked at mothers' misconceptions about effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State. The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional survey research design using a simple random sampling technique in selecting 300 randomly selected mothers from 10 political wards in the Ijebu-Ode Local Government of Ogun State. Mean and Standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance. A researcher-developed and validated questionnaire was used to obtain data. Findings indicated that premature menopause contraceptive failure, decreased libido, permanent infertility and amenorrhea were significantly perceived as misconceptions of mothers about effective family planning usage. The study recommended that there is a need for information, communication, and education for women about family planning. Women-friendly programmes on premature menopause and family planning usage should be put in place to address the issue of mothers' misconceptions about family planning usage. Women's motivation projects should be undertaken to convince women that the correct use of family planning services does not decrease libido and that family planning usage is not only for women but men as well.

Keywords: *Misconceptions, Family Planning Usage, Contraceptive, Menopause*

INTRODUCTION

Family planning constitutes a fundamental aspect of reproductive health, empowering individuals and couples to make informed decisions about the number and spacing of their children. Family planning is as old as mankind's idea of social order. It might be argued that it serves as an alternative to using disease, conflict, or other natural or man-made disasters to regulate populations. When the societal ramifications of abandoned newborns, evidence of an illegal abortion, and the issue of outsized poor families started to substantially trouble the minds of sociologists, health professionals, and governments, the term "family planning" was applied to this timeless phenomenon. The continuing growth of the world population has become an urgent global problem as family planning is a concept that has received attention due to its significance in decisions on issues of population increase and development. In this regard, the rapid increase in population growth not just in

Nigeria but also in other emerging nations around the world is of public health concern (Lawrie *et al.*, 2011). Although Nigeria has a large population due to high marital fertility among women of childbearing age and inadequate access to family planning services. Nonetheless, due to cultural and social influences, the use of family planning is low. For example, child-bearing and upbringing, as well as the number and gender of offspring, establish a woman's value and standing in her community (Ugwu, 2019). Cleland *et al.* (2006) opined that because infertile women emphasize the significance of having children to the point where a barren woman seeks out a wife for her husband to bear children on her behalf or a wife abandons her marital home to have children (with or without her husband's consent in cases of infertility on the man's side) as a way to preserve the family's existence and significance in the community (Yao *et al.*, 2018).

According to Agasti *et al.* (2017), family planning is a practice that aids individuals or couples in achieving a variety of goals, including preventing unintended pregnancies and

births, regulating the time between pregnancies, managing the timing of contraception procedures concerning the parental ages, and deciding the number of children to have in the family. According to Nanda (2020), family planning programs have prevented 3 million unintended pregnancies worldwide, saving the lives of many mothers by preventing high-risk pregnancies and unsafe abortions. As more women and men opt to have fewer children and can have smaller families using birth control technologies, the population growth rate has slowed in developed nations around the world. There is also an awareness that spacing out children between two and three years before each birth will benefit both the mother's health and that of each child (Cleland *et al.*, 2012).

Many people especially women perceive family planning in different ways. While some take it as a female license for promiscuity, some take it to be a stop to childbearing (Ajayi *et al.*, 2018), but Wani *et al.* (2019), opined that to enhance the health and welfare of the family unit and contribute to the social development of the nation, family planning is a way of thinking and living that is embraced voluntarily by people and couples based on knowledge, attitude, and responsible decision. Contrary to popular belief, family planning information helps women do more than only limit their number of children. Throughout history, family planning has evolved as a proactive means to regulate population growth, moving away from practices driven by disease, conflict, or natural disasters. Its significance becomes particularly evident when considering societal concerns such as abandoned newborns, illegal abortions, and the challenges posed by oversized families. In the global context, family planning is recognised as a key strategy to address the urgent issue of population growth, with implications not only for individual well-being but also for broader social and economic development. Despite the widespread availability of effective family planning methods and benefits, there is a growing body of evidence indicating that certain misconceptions persist among mothers (Gueye *et al.*, 2015). These misconceptions may range from misunderstandings about contraceptive methods to cultural beliefs surrounding fertility and family dynamics.

The fear of premature menopause is one of the misconceptions that significantly influences attitudes towards family planning. Misconceptions about the association between contraceptive use, especially oral and hormonal contraceptives, and early menopause contribute to hesitancy and discontinuation of contraceptive methods (Manzer *et al.*, 2023). The fear of premature menopause stands as a pervasive misconception that exerts a substantial impact on individuals' perspectives toward family planning (Nagle-Yang *et al.*, 2022). This apprehension often leads to hesitancy and discontinuation of contraceptive methods, particularly oral and hormonal contraceptives. The misbelief surrounding the link between these contraceptives and early-onset menopause not only influences personal decisions but also has broader implications for reproductive health and contraceptive failure (Thwaites *et al.*, 2022).

Contraceptive failure holds a pivotal role in shaping perceptions and decisions regarding family planning. The anxiety surrounding the prospect of contraceptive failure often stems from prevalent misconceptions about the

efficacy of different methods. Research indicates that individuals commonly overestimate the failure rates of contraceptives, fostering unnecessary apprehension and scepticism. A study conducted by Hapgood (2020), uncovered those participants inaccurately perceived the failure rates of widely-used contraceptives, such as oral contraceptives and condoms.

These misconceptions exert a tangible impact on reproductive decision-making. Fears of contraceptive failure can lead individuals or couples to opt for less effective methods or engage in inconsistent usage due to perceived inefficacy, consequently resulting in unintended pregnancies (Memon *et al.*, 2023). This phenomenon is particularly pronounced in regions with limited access to comprehensive reproductive health education and resources. Bertotti *et al.* (2021) and Sigdel *et al.* (2023) demonstrated in their studies that in low-income settings where misconceptions prevail, there is a higher likelihood of discontinuation or inconsistent use of contraceptives, contributing to elevated rates of unintended pregnancies.

The perception of decreased libido as a potential side effect of contraceptives constitutes a significant variable that can sway decisions related to family planning. Misconceptions surrounding the impact of contraceptives on libido may contribute to hesitancy or reluctance to adopt these methods for birth control. Research and anecdotal evidence often highlight concerns among individuals and couples regarding the potential negative effects of contraceptives on sexual desire. While various contraceptive methods, such as hormonal contraceptives (e.g., birth control pills, patches, or injections), are highly effective in preventing pregnancies, there exists a common perception that they may lead to a decrease in libido or sexual interest. Studies have explored the relationship between hormonal contraceptives and sexual function, with findings indicating that a subset of individuals may experience changes in libido as a side effect. For instance, research by (Caruso *et al.*, 2022) found that hormonal contraceptives could be associated with alterations in sexual desire in some users. However, it is crucial to note that these effects can vary widely among individuals, and not everyone using contraceptives will necessarily experience a decline in sexual desire.

The fear of permanent infertility stands as a significant variable that strongly influences attitudes towards family planning and the adoption of contraceptive methods. This apprehension can be rooted in various factors such as a lack of accurate information, cultural beliefs, and societal norms that contribute to concerns regarding the perceived long-term consequences of using certain family planning methods. Individuals and couples often grapple with the fear that certain contraceptive methods may lead to permanent infertility. Misinformation or a lack of comprehensive education on the reversibility of different family planning options can contribute to this anxiety. Cultural beliefs and societal norms may further amplify these concerns, shaping perceptions that adopting specific contraceptive methods might irreversibly impact one's ability to conceive in the future. Studies have highlighted how the fear of permanent infertility influences decision-making in family planning. For example, research conducted found that individuals who

harboured concerns about the potential long-term impact on fertility were more likely to choose contraceptive methods perceived as having a lower risk of causing permanent infertility.

Concerns surrounding irregular menstrual periods and the potential for irreversible infertility, particularly linked to family planning methods such as amenorrhea, significantly contribute to misconceptions and hesitancy in adopting these methods (DeMaria *et al.*, 2019). These apprehensions are rooted in a complex interplay of factors, including misinformation, cultural beliefs, and the desire for reproductive control. Amenorrhea, the absence of menstrual periods, is a phenomenon associated with certain contraceptive methods, particularly hormonal contraceptives like long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs) and intrauterine devices (IUDs) (Kibonire & Mphuthi, 2023). The fear of irregular menstrual cycles and, by extension, potentially irreversible infertility can deter individuals and couples from considering or continuing the use of these contraceptive methods. Misinformation plays a crucial role in shaping these concerns. There may be misconceptions about the link between irregular menstrual periods and infertility, with individuals fearing that disruptions in the menstrual cycle indicate long-term reproductive harm. In reality, amenorrhea associated with some contraceptive methods is often temporary and does not necessarily indicate infertility. Cultural beliefs and societal norms further contribute to the hesitancy surrounding amenorrhea and family planning (Stevens *et al.*, 2023). Cultures that place a strong emphasis on fertility and regular menstrual cycles may view irregular periods as a cause for concern, leading to apprehensions about the perceived long-term impact on women's reproductive health.

Statement of the Problem

Contraception is becoming more widely used around the world, giving couples the freedom to determine the spacing as well as the number of their children, which has significant lifesaving benefits. Despite the impressive gains, the utilization of family planning by mothers in Ijebu Ode is still low. The utilization of family planning encounters various challenges shaped by the socio-cultural context of society. These obstacles include factors such as poverty, low income, and unemployment, which can limit access. Additionally, the level of education, cultural and societal pressures on women, and a frequent inclination for unprotected sex contribute to the complexity. Unmet family needs, interference from family members, and gender role inequalities further impede effective family planning. Religious beliefs of couples, deference to familial or physician authority, and adherence to societal norms also play significant roles. Furthermore, there is a misconception that the use of contraception is linked to sexual promiscuity. These diverse factors collectively hinder the widespread adoption of family planning within the community. These are among the most important factors determining the social and cultural status of family planning. It is against this background that the study examined misconceptions of mothers about effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State.

Research Questions

1. Will Fear of premature menopause be perceived as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State?
2. Will Contraceptive failure be perceived as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State?
3. Will Decreased libido be perceived as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State?
4. Will Fear of permanent infertility be perceived as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State?
5. Will Amenorrhea be perceived as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State?

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant relationship between (Fear of premature menopause, Contraceptive failure, decreased libido, fear of permanent infertility and Amenorrhea) and perceived misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional survey design.

Population and Sample of the Study

The population for this study comprised all mothers in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 300 respondents from ten political wards in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State.

Research Instrument

The research instrument for this study was a self-developed questionnaire. The questionnaire contained two sections: A and B, Section A focused on the demographic data of the respondents while Section B sought information on the variables selected for the study. The questionnaire was a close-ended Likert scale summation of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Validity and Reliability

The research instrument was subjected to face and content validity which was verified by three experts in the field of Health Education, Measurement and Evaluation, at Tai Solarin University of Education, Ogun State, Nigeria.

Method for Data Analysis

The data gathered from the administered instrument were analyzed using descriptive statistics (Mean and Standard deviation) to answer the research questions and inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation to test the hypothesis stated at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question one

Will Fear of premature menopause be perceived as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State?

Table 1: The descriptive statistics of perceived premature menopause as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning.

Statements	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	S. D	Remark
1. I am afraid of experiencing premature menopause	99	71	61	69	300	2.67	1.160	Accepted
2. Premature menopause is a concern for me in terms of family planning.	98	105	33	64	300	2.79	1.118	Accepted
3. I believe premature menopause can impact my ability to effectively plan my family.	119	92	51	38	300	2.97	1.037	Accepted
4. I think premature menopause is a misconception that affects women's family planning decisions.	107	97	50	46	300	2.88	1.062	Accepted
5. I am currently using family planning methods.	94	105	49	62	300	2.80	1.065	Accepted
6. My fear of premature menopause has influenced my choice of family planning methods.	79	77	82	62	300	2.58	1.090	Accepted

Table 1 revealed that the mean benchmark of 2.5 is obtained by finding the mean of coded four-point structured questionnaires anchored on a continuum of strongly agreed (SA) as 4 points, and agree (AG) as 3 points. Disagreed (DA) as 2 points and strongly disagree (SD) as 1 point. From Table 1, the mean of all the items responded to is more than the mean benchmark of 2.5. It can then be concluded that fear of

premature menopause will significantly be perceived as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State.

Research Question two

Will Contraceptive failure be perceived as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State?

Table 2: The descriptive statistics of perceived Contraceptive failure as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning.

Statements	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	S. D	Remark
1. I believe contraceptive methods are highly effective.	123	100	33	44	300	3.01	1.054	Accepted
2. I think contraceptive failure is a common occurrence.	104	98	37	61	300	2.82	1.120	Accepted
3. I believe misconceptions about contraceptive failure can lead to unwanted pregnancies.	87	119	57	37	300	2.85	0.977	Accepted
4. I am well-informed about the causes of contraceptive failure.	77	168	14	41	300	2.94	0.921	Accepted
5. I am satisfied with my current family planning method.	116	147	22	15	300	3.21	0.785	Accepted
6. I have encountered challenges in using my chosen family planning method.	94	161	30	15	300	3.11	0.776	Accepted

The means and standard deviations of perceived Contraceptive failure as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State are presented in Table 2. The mean of all the items is greater than the mean benchmark of 2.5. Hence it is concluded that contraceptive failure will be perceived as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State.

Research Question three

Will Decreased libido be perceived as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State?

Table 3: The descriptive statistics of perceived decreased libido as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning.

Statements	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	S.D	Remark
1. I believe that family planning methods can lead to decreased libido.	119	104	47	30	300	23.04	0.977	Accepted
2. Misconceptions about decreased libido discourage me from using family planning.	103	116	57	24	300	2.99	0.925	Accepted
3. I have discussed concerns about decreased libido with my partner or healthcare provider.	72	60	70	78	300	2.59	1.120	Accepted
4. I believe that decreased libido is a common side effect of family planning methods.	112	90	50	48	300	2.89	1.082	Accepted
5. Education and awareness campaigns can help dispel misconceptions about family planning and libido.	122	113	45	20	300	3.12	0.900	Accepted
6. Decreased libido is a significant concern for me when considering family planning options.	107	96	37	60	300	2.83	1.121	Accepted

The means and standard deviations of perceived Decreased libido as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State is presented in Table 3. The mean of all the items is greater than the mean benchmark of 2.5. Hence it is concluded that Decreased libido will be perceived as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State.

Research Question four

Will Fear of permanent infertility be perceived as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State?

Table 4: The descriptive statistics of perceived Fear of permanent infertility as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning.

Statements	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	S.D	Remark
1. The fear of permanent infertility significantly influences mothers' decisions regarding family planning.	153	60	47	40	300	2.85	1.106	Accepted
2. I have encountered mothers who express concerns about permanent infertility as a barrier to adopting family planning methods.	201	72	17	10	300	3.05	1.009	Accepted
3. Religious beliefs significantly influence perceptions of permanent infertility and family planning	200	53	35	12	300	3.25	0.926	Accepted
4. Community initiatives or support systems in place effectively address misconceptions and concerns related to family planning and permanent infertility.	106	80	89	25	300	2.89	0.987	Accepted
5. Misconceptions about family planning and permanent infertility exist in my community.	185	55	50	10	300	3.38	0.879	Accepted
6. Mothers in Ijebu Ode are well-informed about the actual risks of permanent infertility related to family planning.	98	115	48	39	300	2.91	0.879	Accepted

The means and standard deviations of perceived Fear of permanent infertility as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State is presented in Table 5. The mean of all the items is greater than the mean benchmark of 2.5. Hence it is concluded that Fear of permanent infertility will be perceived as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State.

Research Question five

Will Amenorrhoea be perceived as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State?

Table 5: The descriptive statistics of perceived Amenorrhoea as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning.

Statements	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	S. D	Remark
1. I Have heard about amenorrhoea before.	72	158	42	28	300	2.91	0.865	Accepted
2. I believe that amenorrhoea can affect a woman's ability to conceive.	101	98	68	38	300	2.88	1.016	Accepted
3. I think amenorrhoea can be a barrier to effective family planning.	150	100	38	12	300	3.29	0.838	Accepted
4. There are cultural beliefs or practices in your community related to amenorrhoea and family planning.	60	181	50	19	300	2.87	0.757	Accepted
5. I have heard that amenorrhoea can be a misconception affecting mothers' perceptions of effective family planning.	64	92	84	60	300	2.53	1.039	Accepted
6. I believe that mothers in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area may associate amenorrhoea with ineffective family planning.	156	82	34	28	300	3.22	0.961	Accepted

The means and standard deviations of perceived Amenorrhoea as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State is presented in Table 5. The mean of all the items is greater than the mean benchmark of 2.5. Hence it is concluded that Amenorrhoea will be perceived as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant relationship between (Fear of premature menopause, Contraceptive failure, decreased libido, fear of permanent infertility and Amenorrhoea) and perceived misconception of

mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State.

Table 6: Correlation Matrix of Fear of Premature menopause, Contraceptive Failure, decreased Libido, fear of permanent infertility and Amenorrhoea with their family planning usage.

Variables	Family planning usage	Fear of premature menopause	Contraceptive failure	decreased libido	fear of permanent infertility	Amenorrhoea
Family planning usage	1					
Fear of premature menopause	0.250*	1				
Contraceptive failure	0.084*	0.195*	1			
decreased libido	0.337*	0.111	0.349*	1		
fear of permanent infertility	0.220*	0.208*	0.388*	0.575*	1	
Amenorrhoea	0.267*	0.502*	0.187*	0.180*	0.320*	1

* = significant at 0.05 level

The correlation between the Fear of premature menopause, Contraceptive failure, decreased libido, fear of permanent infertility and Amenorrhoea with their family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State is shown in Table 6. Data in Table 6 revealed a positive significant relationship between Fear of premature menopause, Contraceptive failure, decreased libido, fear of permanent infertility and Amenorrhoea with their family planning usage. It is then concluded that there is a significant relationship between (Fear of premature menopause, Contraceptive failure, decreased libido, fear of permanent infertility and Amenorrhoea) and perceived misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State.

Discussion of Findings

The fear of premature menopause was perceived as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State. The result of this finding agrees with Gele *et al.* (2020) that inadequate knowledge of modern contraceptives and fear of early method uptake and usage of family planning services by women have been correlated with menopause. Alayande *et al.* (2023) are also of the opinion that, in places where there is a lot of awareness about family planning, Premature menopause myths are linked with lower demand and usage of family planning. Family planning myths and beliefs have been positively linked to women's unmet needs as a result of discontinuing contraception

The research question in which it was mentioned that contraceptive failure will not be perceived as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State was accepted. This means that contraceptive failure was

significantly perceived as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State. This outcome of this finding is in affirmation with Babalola and John (2012) who posit that a substantial proportion of mothers discontinued the use of family planning due to concern over adverse effects such as premature menopause, contraceptive failure, permanent infertility etc. However, if mothers are aware of these adverse effects beforehand, they are more likely to accept them and adhere with the procedure or change to a different one rather than stop using it.

The research question that decreased libido will not be perceived as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State was accepted. This means that decreased libido was significantly perceived as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State. This result agrees with the study of Davis and Castaño (2004) who affirmed that according to research on the link between libido and birth control, women who used an oral contraceptive had less sex desire than those who took a placebo.

The research question which stated that fear of permanent infertility will not be perceived as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State was accepted. This means that fear of permanent infertility was significantly perceived as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State. This result of the finding agrees with Campbell et al. (2006) who claimed that most women believed using the pill carried significant health hazards, and many mothers were concerned that the pill and injection could result in long-term infertility.

The research question which stated that amenorrhea will not be perceived as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State was accepted. This means that amenorrhea was significantly perceived as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State. This result of the finding agrees with Gargus et al. (2018) who stated that family planning usage among women has negative effects such as irregular monthly periods of early menopause, lowered libido, contraceptive failure, and irreversible infertility

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is concluded that the fear of premature menopause, contraceptive failure, decreased libido, fear of permanent infertility, and amenorrhea was significantly perceived as a misconception of mothers to effective family planning usage in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State

Based on the conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

1. Women need a lot more family planning information, communication, and education. Women-friendly interventions on premature menopause and family planning usage should be

made available in place to address the issue of mothers' misconceptions about family planning usage.

2. Family planning should be included in tertiary institution curricula as a measure of reaching the youth
3. It is important to carry out women's motivation programs to persuade them that family planning is not just for women; men can also utilize family planning services, and that doing so correctly does not reduce libido.
4. To allay the worry of long-term infertility, the government should establish a policy on family planning to direct the community and healthcare providers on its usage
5. To ensure that the few children that are delivered will survive after birth, more measures must be taken to boost the child's survival rate.
6. The government should strengthen the monitoring and evaluation system and provide integrated regular supporting supervision on contraceptive failure, irregular menstrual flow, and other family planning issues at all levels.

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