



SOME CULTURAL DILEMMAS TO FAMILY PLANNING DECISIONS IN KANO METROPOLIS, KANO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper explores cultural attitudes on couples' decision toward adoption of family planning in the metropolis of Kano state. The influence of more or greater heirs, and gender roles in the family on their decision to practice or even adopt the family planning strategies were evaluated. Reasons, causes and effects of preferences and choices were identified. The study make use of both quantitative and qualitative data that is the number of sexes, family size; income and ages of parents are quantitative while the preferences and choices of certain sexes are held qualitative. Self-administered Questionnaires and structured interviews are employed in collecting the data for the study. Descriptive statistics like graphs and charts were used. Chi square result shows that there is no significant differences in adoption of family planning between socio-economy and livelihood due to influence of religious culture of the people. The findings show high birth or fertility among couples due to desire to attain certain gender combination. In the study area different livelihood options like, business men and lower salary earners begets more children than the educated elites, low income earners especially traders, primary schools teachers and wealthy individuals abhor more children with preference to sons than daughters. Some of the reasons attached include assistance at home, market and source of security at old age as well as heirs of family continuity. Similarly if the co-wives have many males hence competition often arises each trying to have modal set. Socio-economic and socio-cultural status show some variation in the trend where couples with high level of education have less children and with lesser corresponding sex preferences than uneducated spouses. Preferences of sex and many children are more common to polygamous couples than in monogamous family. The study concludes that gender preferences and competitive birth race in the polygamous homes affect adoption, practice and benefiting the family planning techniques. It is recommended that individual should give birth to sustainable number of children to ensure quality of the population.

Keywords: Livelihood, marginalization, gender, security, competition, elites and masses.



INTRODUCTION

In reproductive health situation, particularly relating to maternal and child health, Nigeria is among the worst in Africa and has not improved substantially and in some areas of the country, has worsened over the past years (Ladipo, 2007). Whoever fail to plan, has plan to fail as an adage goes. Family planning is a strategy of when to have how many children, at what interval and the techniques to implement such plans. Some techniques commonly used include sex education, prevention and management of sexually transmitted infections, pre-conception counseling and management, and fertility management. Family planning is sometimes used as a synonym for the use of birth control, however, it often includes a wide variety of methods, and practices that are not birth control (Ahmed 2017) and (Halima, 2006). It is most usually applied to a female-male couple who wish to limit the number of children they have and/or to control the timing of pregnancy (also known as *spacing of children*). Family planning may encompass sterilization, as well as abortion. Family planning services are defined as educational, comprehensive medical or social activities which enable individuals, including minors, to determine freely the number and spacing of their children and to select the means by which this may be achieved.

Family planning enables couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children, and to have the information and means to do so. It also means that people have ongoing availability of a full range of safe and effective contraceptive methods that enable them to take action according to these decisions. This ability to take action is also based upon the cost of contraceptives, ideas (sometimes correct and sometimes erroneous) people have about the different methods, and the support or lack thereof of the partners, extended family members, and wider community (Akin, 1996, Adetuji 1996, Abdullahi, 2000 and Imam 1998). People are deciding to have families at both younger and older ages, and contraceptive technology is enabling them to do so. It is important that these decisions be made not only freely but also with full information about the long-term consequences for both the parents and the children. Unfortunately, there are still many women in the world who die each year from pregnancy-related services. Quite sizable number of these women want to limit or space their pregnancies but are without the means to do so effectively due to poverty Lambu (2014).

Research on the relationship between gender preference and number of children in a given household shows parity progression ratios or transitional probabilities as a function of the existing sex composition of the family. The basic argument is that, if sex preference influences family decisions, then at any parity, those couples with undesirable sex compositions should be more likely to have another child than those who already have achieved their desired sex composition Musa (2008). Children and sex preference relates to the number of children in many instances because of the fact that if the actual sex set is not in line with the preferred sex set of a couple, the couple may continue to reproduce, until the desired sex set is achieved, leading to an increase in the number of children of a couple.



Culture (especially the religion) is an important variable which regulates human behavior, including marriage and reproduction Lambu (2014). Sometimes, some cultures favour having a particular sex of children over the other. There may be a conflict between a strong sex preference and preference for a small family, and in this case the problem of which will dominate arises, this is because if couple did not achieve their preference they may continue to have birth beyond their desired number. This type of conflict in many cases leads to adoption of polygamy when the couple cannot settle at a point amiably. The existence of sex preference leads naturally to the question of to what degree such preference influence people to either marry another wife, or divorce wife who could not deliver the preferred sex. The treatment given to a wife who always produces a son may be different from that of the other wives because of the number of sons produced certain wife. Similarly a wife who could not bear a son may face serious pressure to the extent that she would keep trying to have another birth with the hope of achieving the preferred gender. Many women face intimidation and harassment from husband's relatives simply because she couldn't deliver a male offspring.

The normative values of people help in understanding the male family role, which sometimes imposes pressure on women to continue to reproduce until when she attend birth security. Whenever the family or husband's preference is not met, the wife or her marriage may suffer a lot of crises. For instance some studies revealed that a male child is important in the stability of marriages else the husbands marry another wife in order to have a male child. Most people when asked about the choice of sex of their children, often and usually reply with, "is up to God" a statement that originate from tongues while the minds have its choice

The social roles and behavior of males and females have differed in all known human societies. Research on tribal societies (Sunday, 1981) as cited in (Musa 2008) indicates that men have tended to be the warriors, hunters, and processors of hard raw materials used for weaponry and tools, whereas women have tended to do the cooking and preparation of vegetable foods as quoted by. As a result of this gender differentiation in the division of labor and the social inequality between sexes, men have been in a better position to acquire and control the valuable resources of their societies. Resources, position of power, privilege, and status have seldom, if at all been shared across males and females on equality basis. Males and females are shaped under socialization process into different sex/gender specific roles by the environment. Most of the biological behaviours of males and females supplement the social roles of men and women through social interaction within the society. These socialization processes have created the basis upon which males and females are ranked, and because males are held superior to females by culture (precisely religion), members of society preferred a son. Variation among Nigerian social groups exist where there are wide differences on gender preference based on values attached to each sex and its roles.



Nigeria has the highest population among all African countries with over 180 million by population projection of 2013, of which over 27 million are under the age of 5. With almost 7 million births in 2013 (3rd highest in the world behind India and China) and a total fertility rate of 5.5, population growth of Nigeria continues to be rapid in absolute terms (NPC, 2003). The 2013 Nigerian Demographic Health Survey (NDHS) revealed that females in the country are sexually active at the age of 15; that median age of women at first birth is 20 years; while Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is about 6 but the average of children per woman ranges from 5 in urban areas to about more than 7 in rural areas. In addition, 23% of females aged 14.5-18.5 are already mothers or have conceived; moreover 52,900 women and girls die every year from pregnancy related causes. The overall Ante Natal access is 61%; and finally that only 36% of women are delivered by skilled birth attendants (UNICEF 2000). In view of the foregoing, it is enough to convince oneself for the cogent need for parallel studies on cultural attitudes toward population, family planning, livelihoods and the likes so as to enhance quality of life and promote sustainable development of the societies and the nation with a view to avoid overshooting event.

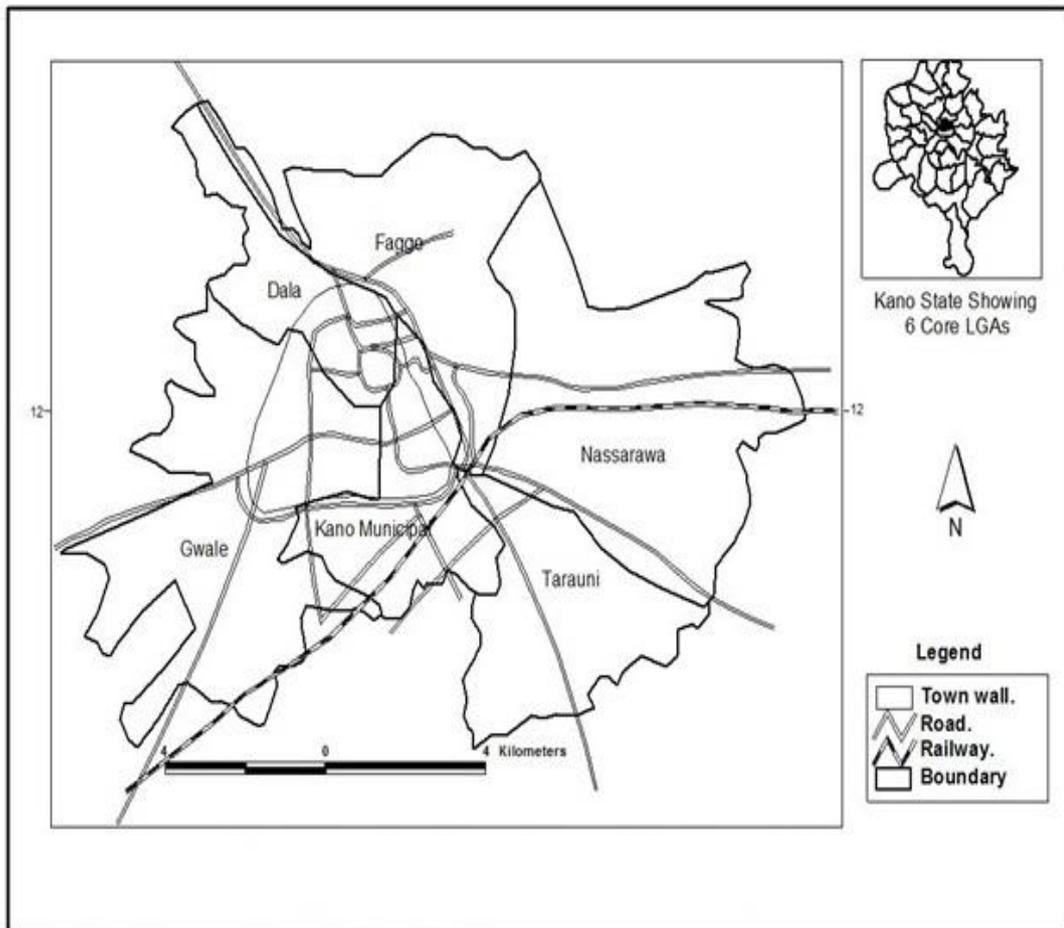
The study area

The history of Kano as a state capital started in 1967 when it was formally established in 1968. Its real genesis as per history remains a controversial issue but as a base line, Kano's existence started from 999 AD when Bagauda the grandson of Bayajidda founder of the Hausa dynasty became its first king. According to Adam (1999) as cited in (Lambu 2013), Kano State falls within the Sudan vegetation zone, the total land area of the State is 20,760km². The study area is made up of six fully urbanized LGAs namely Dala, Fagge, Gwale, Municipal, Nassarawa and Tarauni as shown in figure 1. The minimum and maximum temperature ranges from 15 to 33 degrees Celsius. The predominant ethnic groups in Kano are Hausa and Fulani otherwise referred to as Hausa-Fulani. This reference is due to the indistinguishable features they bear arising from intermarriage. Other ethnic groups found in the State are Yoruba, Igbo, Nupe, etc. Hausa are however, the indigenous population. The city of Kano experiences changes and transformations over time. It is a cosmopolitan and heterogeneous society as a result of its extensive and numerous commercial and industrial activities. People of Kano have many occupations and means of livelihood but were famous for their weaving, gold and blacksmith, dyeing and other handicraft activities. As a result of these, Kano has attracted people from far and wide. Kano State is made up of 44 local government areas, with a total projected population of 10,512,760 (NPC 2003). Currently, civil service, trade and commerce are the major activities. In fact Kano the capital city of the State has been known far and wide as an ancient and important center of commerce and trade. Kano was a major entry port in the Trans-Saharan trade. It is popular and known in the whole of West Africa, Maghreb and as far as Europe as a commercial center trading with Africa and Europe in local and manufactured goods, crafts and other items. This position is facilitated by the existence of modern communications (road networks and rail line) which make Kano accessible.

Population and people

The indigenous population is homogenous in terms of culture, language, religion and ethnicity. Kano is one of the most populated and urbanized states in northern Nigeria, as well as a dominant center of economic activity since the fourteenth century (Ageiyean and Maigadde, 1995 and Fika, 1978 as cited in Lambu 2013). Consequently, commerce and industry in the urban areas and agricultural activities in the rural areas characterize the state. The communities in this part of the country have been exposed to vigorous family planning programs, with the establishment of many government sponsored family planning clinics in Kano State Faruq (2016).

Figure 1: Map of Kano metropolis



Source: Department of Geog. BUK (2012)



Materials and methods

Types and sources of data

The types of data in this research include both the quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative are indices such as number of children, age, and income etc. while the qualitative data in this study are the preferences, choices and decision on sex, composition and adoption of family planning. The sources of data, data collection such as sampling and data analysis. The instruments to be utilized in the study are the questionnaire and structured interviews. The questionnaire was used in collecting quantitative information while the interview was used in collecting the qualitative part of the data.

Population, Sample Size and Sampling Methods

The study is not purely demographic, so the population to this study consists of adults i.e. males and females who are married and fall within children bearing ages which may be variable across cultures and economic status. The study is interested in evaluating causes, reasons and effects of the attitude on decision toward family planning adoption. The study concerns the Hausa/Fulani people because they constitute greater percentage in the study area. The choice of this ethnic group was largely predicated on the traditional character of this patriarchal group and its high fertility within extended family set up. The Hausa people are undergoing rapid socioeconomic changes manifesting various transformations especially in expansion of education and urbanization. Some samples of one thousand (1000) respondents were drawn from Dala and Kano Municipal LGAs. A multistage selection process was adopted involving cluster, simple random and systematic sampling methods. Selection of local government areas for the research was the first stage of the sampling process.

Two urban study locations were purposively selected from the dominant urban center, (Kano municipal and Dala, which is also the capital city of the state). Census enumeration areas in the respective settlements were considered as clusters and two enumeration areas were randomly sampled in each of the places. The enumeration areas on the average consist of two hundred households each. In the third stage of selection, households were sampled with systematic sampling techniques using household listing obtained from the National Population Commission 2006 as adopted in Lambu (2017). The homogeneity of the population made small sample adequate due to low level of variability

Methods of data analysis

Chi square was used to find out significant difference or otherwise between status and livelihood in relation to practices related to family planning. Respondents indicated their responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree on a four-interval scale.

The instrument was pre-tested to ensure its validity and reliability. Data were collected on important variables, which include: Marriage structure (monogamy or polygyny), number



of children, acceptance or otherwise of family planning, education, age, income, time or duration of marriage, religion and ideas about family planning, and contraceptive decision making.

Results and major findings of the study

Many respondents are religious minded and show some difficulty in giving contrary opinion that negate the mainstream belief. Culture of the people affects acceptance, adoption and practice of family planning. As part of Islamic culture where birth and death are solely from God and even the tradition of the religion encourages marriages and giving more births, similarly, sex role in the culture dictates that males are the heads of Household irrespective of age and economic status. These and many more, accentuate the need for son(s) than daughter(s).

Reasons and causes of sex preferences in relation to adoption of family planning

As in a previous research (Lambu 2017), it is found that there is presence of male sex preference among the respondents irrespective of sex and economic status of the parents. Rivalry and jealousy in polygamous family accentuate need for wives to have control of their marital home through having more children in essence this intensifies the preference for sons among the female respondents. Wives show more preference of having more sons than their husbands by 20% that is (60:40) as shown in Table 1 because of the roles being played by male children at homes. Poor families prefer more males by 63% because sons render more help at home. Family security displays amazing scenario where both male/female and literate/illiterate parents show closer ties. A PhD female respondent disclosed that *'if not for my age (47 years old) and the advice by physician, I will continue giving birth because my mother gave birth to twelve children, this is our culture as ordained by our belief.'* Many reasons are attributed to low level of adoption of family planning.

There is significant differences in preference among gender and economic status of respondents. Females and low income earners show more preferences of sons than daughters as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Reasons for sex preference based on gender and economic status of parents

Reason/category	Male parent	Female parent	Total	Rich parent	Poor parent	Total
Gender role	40%	60%	100	37%	63%	100
Family security	45%	55%	100	50%	50%	100
More heirs	10%	90%	100	40%	60%	100
Competition	15%	85%	100	61%	39%	100

Source: Fieldwork 2017



Basic gender preference by the parents

On aggregate, males are preferred by both sexes of parents but the degree is high among wives for the reasons explain in Table 1. Among the respondents, many wives are ready to continue giving birth till right combination is achieved so that both issues of gender, security, heirs and so forth are secured. Males show less preference than females and similarly the former are more ready for family planning than latter. Even at early stage of marriage, brides are brainwashed to deliver as many children as possible so as to capture the house at early time in fear of future co-wife/wives. The adoption of family planning may continue to experience decline and setback due to influence of culture on the individual and collective behaviours.

Socio-economic status versus livelihood option in relation to family planning

Higher income and higher education are expected to reduce sex preference and adoption of family planning. However, this paper found that income and education do not directly reduce sex preference because those with medium income among the respondents express stronger preference than those with low income. On the other hand, low income expresses higher preference than those with higher income. The main reason for this is that even among those with medium and higher income, there is the need to have a son who can continue the family name, and even inherit his family income and assets, because it has reported that there is the general belief that a girl can transfer her inheritance to another family (Lambu 2017). Low income earners have less concern on quality of the family so they seldom practice family planning. Some expressed lack of money to patronize planning methods or techniques as reason for their non-adoption. A respondent lamented that *'daily food is our basic problem now, by the way birth and death are from destiny'*. A lady also commented that *giving birth is from God so is beyond my husband and me, in fact we don't have money to waste'*. When inquired about the fate of the children if they are in large number as to education and general welfare, some are of the belief that all children come with their wealth and God can enrich whoever He wishes. Socio-economic status affect level of adoption as depicted in table 2 where high income earners especially civil servants show high level of acceptance and practice of family planning.

Table 2: Socio-economic status and family planning level of adoption

Socio-economic status	Traders	Labourers	Farmers	Civil servants	
Low income	11%	17%	22%	50%	
Medium income	19%	21%	27%	33%	
High income	22%	28%	21%	29%	
	<i>chi-sq</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>x-crit</i>	<i>Sig</i>	<i>Cramer V</i>
Pearson's	6.546518	0.087846	7.814728	No	0.180921

Source: Field work 2017



The chi square result with calculated value 6.5 less than critical value 7.8 shows that there is no significant differences in the adoption of family planning method between socio-economic status and types of livelihood options due to influence of religious culture of the society in the study area.

Socio-economic status affects level of acceptance of family planning in the study area. Number of children is conceived differently across socio-economic status cadre of living. Farmers especially from low to medium income level consider children as asset, helping in farming activities while civil servants that are educated tend to adopt family planning because of quality considerations such as training, health and general welfare and therefore regard many children as burden. Cross section of respondents expressed mix reactions on family planning adoption. A respondents expressed his feeling during an interview that *'why do you want impose your culture on us? A government that cannot give drugs in clinics, no classrooms no teachers ... allow us to decide our fate, the children offer many helps and one day we will reap the dividends.'* Another interviewee gave a contrary view and even quoted a proverb in Yoruba(who claimed to have lived in Oyo state for 15 years), *'time is hard now, my friend one must act wisely, feeding, clothing and even where to sleep is becoming great headache... Yorubas are right in their culture (omowerioseiwari) that is having too much children breed poverty.* Women appeared to be skeptical on the issue of family planning for two reasons. First and foremost, it is the decision of their husbands to practice or not. *Mine is to deliver, it is for my husband to decide how much and when to give birth* as opened up by one pregnant woman. Secondly many feel shy to discuss such issues with third party, a matter they held confidential. Educated civil servants show more readiness for adoption of family planning techniques and even birth control with highest percentage than members of business community.

Effect of gender preferences on family planning decision

Finding from previous study on children gender preferences has shown positive effect on the decision to adopt planning or birth control (Lambu 2017). Quite many couples expressed that their desire for attaining certain gender combination distorted their family planning agenda. Many males decided to adopt polygamy when the only wife cannot produce a male child or children. Even the wives opined that they cannot stop giving birth if they don't have a right combination of sexes. Over 90% of educated husbands are in support of family planning but expressed caution that *'planning of family is after attaining the right sex combination'* as expressed by a respondent. Many wives are of the opinion that their marriage security is higher after attaining certain number of both males and females offspring. To both husbands and wives, marriage without many children is just like casual parting Lambu (2017).

Conclusion

It can be concluded that gender preferences and competitive birth race in the polygamous homes affect adoption, practice and benefits derivable from family planning techniques. Even educated couples continue to keep breeding if the desired gender set is not achieved. Similarly, the culture of polygamy (polygyny) accentuates competition among wives to



possess more number of children for more heirs and marriage security. Dominance and strict adherence to culture over shadow the influence of socio economic status and livelihood attachments.

Some social transformation of people through enlightenments are needed to understand individual capability to give birth only to a manageable family size, but if left unchecked, will affect the future wellbeing of the society. Many may not cater for family and hence the tendency to have more beggars, hawkers and thugs in the society.

It is recommended that families need to raise an appropriate number of children qualitatively (with good education, sound moral training and skillful mind) irrespective of sex for the betterment of the entire society. In other words, quality of life should be a priority by government and individuals for better tomorrow.



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