



FAMILY PLANNING AND POPULATION CONTROL: PERSPECTIVES, CHALLENGES, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR EDO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Family planning remains a critical component of public health and socio-economic development in Nigeria, particularly in states like Edo where rapid population growth poses significant challenges. This study explores the perspectives of community members, healthcare workers, and policymakers on family planning and population control in Edo State. It also identifies the socio-cultural, religious, economic, and policy-related barriers that impede the uptake of modern contraceptive methods. Employing a mixed-method approach, the study reveals a persistent gap between awareness and actual use of family planning services. While a majority of respondents acknowledge the benefits of smaller family sizes for economic stability and maternal health, cultural norms and religious beliefs often override these rational considerations. The findings underscore the need for culturally sensitive interventions, improved access to reproductive health services, and strengthened policy implementation. The study concludes that addressing these multifaceted challenges is essential for managing population growth and enhancing the quality of life in Edo State.

Keywords; Family Planning, Reproductive Health, Cultural Beliefs, Contraceptive Use, Edo State, Public Policy

Introduction

Family planning is a fundamental aspect of public health that enables individuals and couples to anticipate and attain their desired number of children and the spacing and timing of their births. This is achieved through the use of various contraceptive methods and the treatment of involuntary infertility (Adeyemi & Ogunleye, 2019). It plays a vital role in reducing maternal and infant mortality, enhancing women's health, and supporting sustainable population growth. In Nigeria, family planning is particularly significant given the country's rapid population increase, which places immense pressure on socio-economic development, healthcare systems, education, and other critical infrastructure (Ikogho, Eferakorho, & Irimonre, 2025).

Despite growing awareness of contraceptive methods, the actual utilization of family planning services remains low in many Nigerian communities, especially among women of reproductive age. Several studies attribute this discrepancy to a variety of factors, including cultural beliefs, religious opposition, limited access to health facilities, and low levels of education (Adepoju, 2018; Mba, 2020). Ikogho (2022) further emphasized that socio-cultural resistance, misinformation, and gender norms continue to undermine reproductive health interventions in regions such as Ethiope East L.G.A. of Delta State and the wider Niger Delta.

Religious norms also play a pivotal role in shaping attitudes toward family planning. Odimayomi and Ikogho (2025) reported that religious ideologies significantly influence the perceptions of educators, leading to both passive and active resistance to the implementation of family planning programs. Moreover, the societal expectation of large family sizes, especially in rural communities, often discourages contraceptive use. Ikogho and Onoharigho (2025) observed that issues such as the culture of silence surrounding reproductive health and menstruation contribute to the lack of open dialogue, which in turn affects decision-making regarding family planning.

Additionally, economic and infrastructural limitations have been identified as major barriers to the uptake of family planning services. Adebayo et al. (2017), Ikogho and Igbudu (2013) noted that the cost of contraceptives, coupled with the unavailability of trained personnel and facilities, particularly in underserved areas, remains a persistent challenge. This is supported by the findings of Ikogho and Onoharigho (2025) who revealed that

inadequate hygiene infrastructure and poor access to health education in primary schools reflect broader systemic issues that hinder reproductive health service delivery.

The interplay of psychological stress, poor social support, and limited health education also shapes attitudes and behaviors regarding family planning. Ikogho, Onoharigho and Akpokiniovo (2025) examined how chronic stress and socio-economic adversity negatively affect community health behaviors, including sexual and reproductive decision-making. Moreover, Ikogho and Onoharigho (2025) linked ineffective menstrual waste management in tertiary institutions to broader institutional neglect of female reproductive health needs, indicating a need for integrated and gender-sensitive interventions (Anyaehe, *et al*, 2025; Ogbe & Ikogho, 2025; Ikogho & Ikogho, 2022).

In light of these challenges, this study seeks to examine the knowledge and attitudes of women of reproductive age toward family planning and population control in Edo State, Nigeria. By integrating both quantitative and qualitative perspectives, this research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the barriers and enablers of family planning adoption. The study also draws upon existing literature and empirical findings (Ikogho et al., 2025; **Odinayomi & Ikogho**, 2025; Ikogho & Onoharigho, 2025) to propose context-sensitive solutions for improving the uptake of family planning services. Ultimately, this work contributes to ongoing efforts to align Nigeria's reproductive health strategies with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) and Goal 5 (Gender Equality).

Statement of the Problem

The issue of family planning and its relationship to population control has been a persistent concern in Nigeria, particularly in Edo State, where rapid population growth has created substantial challenges in terms of budgetary allocations and the provision of services. Factors such as religious beliefs, unwanted pregnancies due to frustration, financial constraints, and lack of adequate information have been identified as key drivers of population surges. This study aims to examine these issues, focusing specifically on the role of family planning in controlling population growth in Edo State.

Purpose of the Study

This research aims to identify the means through which family planning can help control population growth and address the underlying challenges associated with it. The study's specific objectives include:

1. To assess whether religious beliefs discourage individuals from adopting family planning methods.
2. To explore the causes of unwanted pregnancies and their role in population control, especially among youths.
3. To investigate the role of inadequate information in hindering family planning practices.
4. To determine whether financial constraints play a significant role in the adoption of family planning methods and population control.

Research Questions

The study will attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. Does financial constraint contribute to difficulties in family planning and population control?
2. Do religious beliefs discourage individuals from adopting family planning methods?
3. Is there a connection between unwanted pregnancies and the frustration or pursuit of money, and how does this impact population control?
4. Does inadequate information contribute to the challenges of population control?

Significance of the Study

The findings from this study are expected to provide valuable insights into the challenges of family planning and population control in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. The results will contribute to:

- Enhancing couples' awareness and positive attitudes towards child spacing and family planning methods.
- Expanding knowledge on the various contraceptive options available and their potential benefits.
- Encouraging the government to provide more effective family planning services and infrastructure.

- Serving as a resource for researchers studying population growth, family planning, and related social issues.

Furthermore, this study will contribute to the growing body of literature on population control in sub-Saharan Africa, where family planning practices often encounter cultural, economic, and informational barriers.

Methodology

This study utilized a survey research design. Data were collected from respondents in Oredo Local Government Area (LGA) of Edo State, focusing on family planning and population control. The study was conducted in Oredo LGA, Edo State, Nigeria, selected for its socio-cultural relevance and the significant number of individuals affected by family planning and population control issues in the region. The study targeted 200 respondents from Oredo LGA, selected for their knowledge and perspectives on family planning and population control. A simple random sampling technique was employed, ensuring each individual had an equal chance of selection. A sample of 133 respondents was drawn from the population, providing a statistically significant group for analysis. Data were collected using a self-developed questionnaire. The instrument was divided into two sections: Section A collected demographic data, while Section B focused on family planning and population control practices. The questionnaire was validated by the researcher's supervisor and faculty experts to ensure content relevance. The instrument was validated by submitting it for review to the research supervisor, who provided feedback and approved the final version after necessary revisions, ensuring the questionnaire effectively measured the intended constructs (Eze & Oladipo, 2017). The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to respondents in Oredo LGA, ensuring a high response rate of at least 95%. Clear instructions were provided to ensure complete and accurate responses. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including tables and percentages, to answer the research questions and present the findings on family planning and population control in Edo State.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Table 1

Questionnaire Administration

Response Category	Frequency	Percent Valid	Percent Cumulative
Questionnaire completely filled and returned	120	90.2%	90.2%
Questionnaire not returned	13	9.8%	100.0%
Total	133	100.0%	100.0%

As shown in Table 1, a total of 133 questionnaires were distributed to respondents in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. Out of these, 120 (90.2%) were completed and returned, while 13 (9.8%) were not returned.

Research Question 1

Does finance as a problem contribute to family planning, resulting in population control challenges?

Table 2

Perception of Finance as a Challenge to Family Planning

Response	Frequency	Percent Valid	Percent Cumulative
Yes	95	79.2%	79.2%
No	18	15.0%	94.2%
No Idea	7	5.8%	100.0%
Total	120	100.0%	100.0%

Table 2 reveals that 95 respondents (79.2%) agreed that finance contributes to problems in family planning, ultimately affecting population control. A smaller proportion of 18 respondents (15%) disagreed, while 7 respondents (5.8%) had no idea.

Research Question 2

Does religious belief discourage family planning?

Table 3**Influence of Religious Belief on Family Planning**

Response	Frequency	Percent Valid	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	102	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%
No	11	9.2%	9.2%	94.2%
No Idea	7	5.8%	5.8%	100.0%
Total	120	100.0%	100.0%	

As indicated in Table 3, 102 respondents (85%) believed that religious beliefs discourage family planning. Meanwhile, 11 respondents (9.2%) disagreed, and 7 respondents (5.8%) had no idea.

Research Question 3

Is there a difference between unwanted pregnancy and frustration/pursuit of money in population control?

Table 4**Link Between Unwanted Pregnancy, Financial Strain, and Population Control**

Response	Frequency	Percent Valid	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	98	81.7%	81.7%	81.7%
No	13	10.8%	10.8%	92.5%
No Idea	9	7.5%	7.5%	100.0%
Total	120	100.0%	100.0%	

Table 4 shows that 98 respondents (81.7%) acknowledged a link between unwanted pregnancy and frustration/pursuit of money in relation to population control. Conversely, 13 respondents (10.8%) disagreed, while 9 (7.5%) had no opinion.

Research Question 4

Does inadequate information contribute to the problem of population control?

Table 5

Effect of Information Deficit on Population Control

Response	Frequency	Percent Valid	Percent Cumulative
Yes	80	66.7%	66.7%
No	10	8.3%	75.0%
No Idea	30	25.0%	100.0%
Total	120	100.0%	100.0%

According to Table 5, 80 respondents (66.7%) believed that inadequate information contributes to challenges in population control. Ten respondents (8.3%) disagreed, and 30 (25%) had no idea.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study have several important implications for public health policy, education, and community engagement regarding family planning and population control in Nigeria. These results also align with and reinforce existing literature in the field.

1. Financial Constraints and Population Control

The finding that a majority (79.2%) of respondents identified **finance as a barrier to family planning** is consistent with existing literature. According to Ikogho and Igbudu (2013), economic hardship significantly affects access to reproductive health services in Nigeria, particularly in low-income communities. When families lack the resources to purchase contraceptives or access clinics, they are less likely to plan their families effectively, leading to unplanned pregnancies and population growth. This suggests the need for government-subsidized family planning programs and greater integration of reproductive health into primary healthcare systems.

2. Religious Beliefs as a Barrier

A significant portion of the respondents (85%) reported that religious beliefs discourage family planning. This supports the assertion by Adeyemi and Ogunleye (2019) that cultural and religious norms in many Nigerian communities promote large family sizes and discourage contraceptive use. Religion often influences moral decisions regarding sex, reproduction, and the sanctity of life, making it difficult for individuals to adopt modern family planning methods. These findings imply that health campaigns must engage religious leaders and institutions to provide culturally sensitive education and promote positive attitudes toward family planning within a faith-based context.

3. Unwanted Pregnancy, Financial Frustration, and Population Growth

With 81.7% of respondents agreeing that **there is a link between unwanted pregnancy and financial frustration contributing to population issues**, this finding echoes previous studies that demonstrate how socio-economic instability exacerbates reproductive health problems (Ikogho, 2022). The frustration and financial pressure of raising unplanned

children can create a cycle of poverty, which further reduces access to education and health services. This suggests that addressing poverty and improving economic opportunities, especially for women, is critical for effective population control.

4. Lack of Information as a Contributing Factor

Two-thirds of respondents (66.7%) attributed **inadequate information to poor population control**, aligning with findings by **Eze and Oladipo (2017)**, who emphasized that misinformation and lack of awareness hinder the effective use of contraceptives. In rural and underserved communities, many individuals are either unaware of family planning options or harbor misconceptions about their safety and efficacy. This highlights the need for robust public health communication strategies, targeted community outreach, and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education in schools and community centers.

Overall Implications

The study underscores the interplay between economic, cultural, informational, and religious factors in shaping attitudes and behaviors toward family planning in Edo State. Without addressing these multidimensional barriers, efforts to control population growth will remain ineffective. The findings advocate for a multi-sectoral approach involving government health agencies, educational institutions, religious organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to promote awareness, affordability, and acceptability of family planning services. These implications not only validate existing literature but also provide a localized understanding of the challenges to population control. They reinforce the argument by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) that achieving sustainable population health requires community-specific strategies grounded in cultural sensitivity, economic empowerment, and evidence-based education. This study investigated the relationship between family planning and population control challenges in Edo State. Guided by four research questions, data were collected using structured questionnaires administered to 133 respondents in Oredo Local Government Area. Of these, 120 questionnaires (90.2%) were validly completed and used for analysis. Using descriptive statistics (percentages and frequency distributions), the following findings emerged:

- A significant proportion of respondents (79.2%) indicated that financial difficulties hinder effective family planning, contributing to population control challenges.
- Religious beliefs were reported by 85% of respondents as a factor discouraging family planning.
- The majority (81.7%) agreed that there is a difference between unwanted pregnancies and the frustration or pursuit of money, in relation to population control.
- A large segment (66.7%) identified inadequate information as a key factor impeding efforts to manage population growth.

Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that while there is a growing awareness of family planning and its importance for population control in Edo State, several challenges continue to hinder its effective adoption. These include entrenched cultural and religious norms, misinformation, limited access to reproductive health services, and inadequate governmental policy enforcement. The socio-economic implications of unchecked population growth—such as pressure on health services, education, housing, and employment—make family planning not only a health issue but a developmental priority. The success of population control initiatives in Edo State hinges on sustained educational efforts, inclusive stakeholder engagement, and targeted policies that are adaptable to local contexts.

Recommendations

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| 1. Strengthen | Health | Education | Campaigns: |
| Public health authorities should intensify awareness campaigns that demystify family planning and highlight its socio-economic benefits, especially in rural communities. | | | |

2. **Engage Religious and Community Leaders:**
Collaborations with religious institutions and traditional rulers are essential to address cultural and spiritual misconceptions about contraceptive use.
3. **Improve Access to Family Planning Services:**
Government and NGOs should expand family planning services to underserved areas, ensuring availability of a wide range of contraceptive methods and counseling.
4. **Incorporate Family Planning in School Curricula:**
Comprehensive sexuality education should be introduced at secondary and tertiary levels to cultivate early understanding and positive attitudes toward reproductive health.
5. **Policy Enforcement and Funding:**
The state government should commit more funding to reproductive health programs and enforce population policies that support sustainable development.
6. **Research and Monitoring:**
Continuous research and data collection are needed to track the effectiveness of family planning initiatives and to inform adaptive strategies based on real-time insights.

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