

Patterns of Fertility And Perception of Population Concerns In Kwara State, Nigeria

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SUMMARY

Objective: To examine the patterns of fertility, preference, perceived ideals as well as perception of population problems.

Materials and Methods: In 1996, a questionnaire was administered through face-to-face interview of 300 subjects (150 males and 150 females) in 3 Local Government Areas in Kwara State.

Results: From the 289 records analysed, the mean number of children born by women who desired to limit births was 4.4 while that of men in monogynous union was 4.5. A family size of more than 4 child was found among 22.3% of women and 20% of men in monogynous unions. Of the women who wanted more children, 20.3% were aged 35 years and above. However, this desire was significantly less among the latter than among the younger women. Desire for more children among women and in monogynous unions who had 4 or more children already was respectively, 13.4% and 8.6%. Females perceived a significantly higher ideal number of children (4.5) than males (3.7). In all groups, the actual number of children born was not associated with their perceived ideal. The perception of a population problem which was found among 49.3% of the women. 56.7% of all the men and 61.9% of the men in monogynous unions, did not significantly influence preference.

Conclusion: Although low family sizes is presumable, a large proportion of women and men in monogynous unions desired pregnancies which could be high-risk in addition to their demographic impacts. Integrated population education backed up with family planning services to meet increased potential demand is recommended. *Niger Med. J, Vol 46, No.3, July -Sept., 2005: 68 – 74.*

KEY WORDS: *Fertility, patterns, preferences, ideals, population control.*

INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria as in many parts of the developing world, although the fertility rate is falling, it is still relatively high. The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has fallen as shown from the Nigerian Demographic and Health Surgery (NDHS) of 1990 (2), from 6.1 to 5.2. This is still high compared to the low TFR of 1.6 in the more developed world (3). Adolescent contribute

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to the high fertility in sub-saharan African and child bearing in adolescence is said to lead to high TFRs. It has however been observed that child bearing in adolescence is declining (4). The growth rate is falling although the population continues to increase due to the population momentum.

In many parts of sub-Saharan Africa there is a significant reduction in desired family size, particularly in areas with high female education and low child mortality (5). This was said to have led to an actual reduction in fertility. The latter was ascribed to the success of family planning programmes. Similarly, the fertility level was found to be closely related to the proportion of women of reproductive age who did not want to have any more children (6). This implies that the women were able to actualise their desire. Changes in reproductive intentions, use of family planning methods and fertility levels are closely linked in the transition from high to low fertility in any country (7).

The ideal family size perceived by African respondents in the World Fertility Surgery (WFS) of 1987 was 6-8 children⁸. However, in the NDHS of 1990 (1) many respondents (61 percent) did not specify their perceived ideal family size. They would rather leave the decision to God. Among those who gave numeric responses to their perceived ideal number of children, the mean in 1990 was 5.8 while in 1999 it was 6.2. From that 1990 NDHS, the relationship between perceived ideal family size and actual number of children born was inconclusive. The desire for fertility was influenced by social factors such as tradition, religion and education. Also in that surgery (1) overall 36 percent of the currently married women aged 15 – 49 years did not want any more children while the proportion of women aged 15 – 49 years in the 1999 survey who did not want more children was 20 percent (2), from these figures the potential demands for family planning services has fallen between 1990 and 1999.

The population projections for Nigeria for the year 2010 and 2025 are respectively, 157.4 million and 231.6 (9). Nigeria as the most populous country in Africa and with a rapid population growth, which outweighs the growth of resources requires population control. This will alleviate poverty prevalent in the country. In addition to demographic issues, the maternal mortality ratio is rather high (10) and also demands interventions. Every pregnancy carries a risk of death and disability (11,12). By reducing the proportion of pregnancies that are high - risk and hopefully the number that result in obstetric complications, maternal mortality and morbidity would reduce. Although the risk approach might not be so effective in the prevention of maternal mortality (13), it would have demographic impact at least.

The National Policy on Population (14) has the goals and objectives of achieving lower population growth rates and

increasing access of couples and individuals to family planning services, among others. Targets have been set and strategies defined to control population and promote development. Such targets for 1995, which was a year before this study was conducted, included reducing pregnancies in women under 18 and 35 years and above by 50% and reducing the proportion of women bearing more than 4 children. It is against this background that this paper examines the patterns of fertility, desired fertility, perception of ideal family size and child spacing as well as perception of population problems among the respondents. The potential demand for contraception and population education is highlighted.

METHODOLOGY

Area of study

This study was conducted in seven States in Nigeria, namely Akwa Ibom, Bauchi, Cross River, Edo, Kwara, Ondo and Osun. Similar methodology was used in each of the 7 States.

This paper focuses only on Kwara State. Kwara is one of the States in the Middle Belt or North Central geo-political zone in Nigeria. The population at 1991 census was 1.6 million. The State is culturally heterogeneous with the major ethnic groups being the Yorubas, Nupes and Barubas. There are mainly both Christians and Muslims.

Three Local Government Areas (from the then 12) were selected for the study – Ilorin West, Irepodun and Offa. Data collection took place in the headquarters of the 3 LGAs.

Subject selection

The study population comprised of men and women within their reproductive ages, 18 – 65 years and 15 – 49 years, respectively. Three hundred subjects (150 males and 150 females) were selected through a multi-stage probability sampling technique. Areas were grouped by socio-economic level - largely high, medium and low. Households were selected by systematic random sampling. If there was more than one eligible respondent in any selected household, a simple random sampling procedure was used to select one (male or female).

Data collection & analysis

A cross-sectional, descriptive survey was carried out. The data was collected in 1996, through a pre-tested questionnaire which was administered through a face-to-face interview. Information was collected on socio-demographic characteristics, fertility, fertility preferences, and perceptions of population concern among others. Data analysis was performed using Epi-Info version 6.02 software. The significance level was $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS

A total of 289 records (141 for males and 148 for females) were analysed. The findings have been presented in three sections namely background characteristics, patterns of fertility and perception of population problem.

Background characteristics

The age range of male respondents was 18 – 63 years

and that of females was 18 – 49 years. Their mean ages were 36 years and 33.1 years respectively. Of the 141 male respondents 104 (73.8%) had formal western education while 108 out of 148 females respondents (73.0%) had formal western education. The Christians constituted 68 (48.2%) males and 84 (56.7%) females of various denominations. Muslims constituted 68 (48.2%) and 56 (37.8%) of the male and female respondents respectively.

Most of the respondents, 131 (92.9%) males and 134 (90.5%) females were married. Of the married respondents, 81 (62.3%) females and 105 (78.9%) males were in monogynous unions. The number of wives among men in polygynous unions ranged from 2 to 5, while the co-wives among the women were from 1 to 4. The median age at first marriage among females was 22 years. It was also 22 years and 22.5 years respectively among the females currently aged 20 – 49 years and 25 – 49 years (see Table 1). Eight respondents: that is 6% of the married female respondents first got married below the age of 18 years.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Characteristic	Male (%)	Female (%)
N	141	148
Age		
Mean	36.0	33.1
SD	7.8	7.0
Educational Level		
None	23 (16.3)	33 (22.3)
Koranic	9 (6.4)	5 (3.4)
Adult Literacy	2 (1.4)	1 (0.7)
Primary	38 (27.0)	43 (29.1)
Secondary	32 (22.7)	37 (25.0)
Beyond Secondary	34 (24.1)	28 (18.9)
Non-response	3 (2.1)	1 (0.7)
Religion		
Catholic	7 (5.0)	11 (7.4)
Protestant	61 (43.3)	73 (49.3)
Muslim	68 (48.2)	56 (37.8)
Traditional	3 (2.1)	4 (2.7)
Non-response	2 (1.4)	4 (2.7)
Marital Status		
Married	131 (92.9)	134 (90.5)
Co-habiting	3 (2.1)	8 (5.4)
Previously married	1 (0.7)	4 (2.7)
Never married	1 (0.7)	2 (1.4)
Non-response	5 (3.5)	–
Type of Union		
Monogynous	105 (78.9)	81 (62.3)
Polygynous	28 (21.1)	49 (37.7)
N	133 (100.0)	130 (100.0)
Median Age at 1st Marriage		
All		22.0 years
Current age 20 – 49 years		22.0 years
Current age 25 – 49		22.5 years

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Patterns of fertility

Table 2 shows the distribution of the number of children ever born by age-group and by marital status among the female respondents. Only one female aged below 20 years had children. The mean number of children ever born by the female respondents was 3.4 (SD = 2.1), while that of men in monogynous unions was 3.2 (SD = 1.7) and the mean by all the male respondents was 3.9 (SD = 2.2) as shown in Table 3. Of all the women, 33 or 22.3% had more than 4 children. Similarly, 21 or 20% of all the men in monogynous unions had more than 4 children, see Table 3. As shown in Table 4, the mean number of children born by women who married earlier than age 20 and did not want any more children was 5.4 (SD = 1.7). This was significantly different from the mean number of children born by women whose age at first marriage was 20 years and above and did not want any more children 4.2 (SD = 1.4) $P = 0.02$. Using 18 years as cut-off for the age at first marriage, there was no significant difference between the two groups ($p = 0.26$), although the number of those who married earlier than 18 years was rather small. The mean number of children born by women who did not want any more children was 4.4 (SD = 1.6) and that of monogynous men was 4.5 (SD = 1.5) as shown in Table 3.

In Table 3, the desire for more children was expressed by 79 or 56.0% of all the men, 57 or 54.3% of all the men in monogynous unions and 64 or 43.2% of all the women. Those who left the decision to God constituted 18.2% of women and 11 or 7.8% of men. The mean numbers of additional children desired respectively by all the women, all the men and men in monogynous unions were 1.9 (SD = 0.7); 2.7 (SD = 1.4) and

2.7 (SD = 1.5). The younger women more than the older women desired to have additional children, 44 (68.8%) compared to 13 (20.3%). In terms of the additional number of children desired, older women desired fewer children (mean = 1.5), than younger women (mean = 2.0), although the difference was not statistically significant ($p=0.13$).

Also shown in Table 3, in terms of parity of those women who wanted more children, 18 or 28.1% had 4 or more children already. These constituted 13.4% (18 out of 134) of all the women who already had children. However, women with parity of 4 or more significantly had less desire for more children than those women with less than 4 children ($p<0.001$). Also the additional number of children desired by the women para 4 and above (mean = 1.4) is less than that of the women below para 4 (mean = 1.9), this difference was also not statistically significant ($p=0.11$). Similarly, among the men in monogynous unions, those with less than 4 children significantly desired to have more children compared to those with 4 or more children ($p = 0.00$). Specifically, 9 out of the 105 men in monogynous unions (8.6%) had 4 or more children and still desired to have more.

In Table 5, more than half of those women who desired more children (64.5%) said that it was because they had not had the number that they desired. Others wanted more children because they wanted to carry on the family name (14.5%) and because they considered that children would be required to care for them at old age (14.5%). The main reasons why those women with 4 or more children or those aged 35 years and above still desired more were because they had not had the number of children that they desired and the need for care in old age. Similarly, among the men in monogynous unions who already

Table 2: Percentage distribution of number of Children Ever Born by Age-group, and by Marital status among female respondents

	Number of Children Ever Born								N	Mean
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Age-group (in years)										
15 – 19	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0*	0.0	0.0	0.0	1	4.0
20 – 24	0.0	83.3	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	6	1.5
25 – 29	0.0	16.0	40.0	24.0	8.0	8.0	4.0	0.0	25	2.6
30 – 34	3.3	10.0	33.3	23.3	23.3	3.3	0.0	3.3	30	2.8
35 – 39	0.0	0.0	10.7	17.9	42.9	21.4	7.1	0.0	28	4.0
40 – 44	0.0	5.6	5.6	11.1	16.7	16.7	27.8	16.7	18	4.8
45 – 49	12.5	0.0	0.0	12.5	25.0	25.0	25.0	0.0	8	4.1
Non-response	0.0	11.1	16.7	22.2	22.2	16.7	11.1	0.0	18	3.5
All Respondents	1.5	11.2	20.1	18.7	23.9	12.7	9.0	3.0	134	3.4
Marital status										
Never married	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2	1.0
Married	1.6	8.9	21.0	20.0	23.4	13.7	8.9	2.4	124	3.4
Co-habiting	0.0	16.7	16.7	0.0	33.3	0.0	16.7	16.7	6	4.0
Previously married	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2	2.5
All respondents	1.5	11.2	20.1	18.7	23.9	12.7	9.0	3.0	134	3.4

*Age at 1st marriage = 15 years.

Table 3: Children ever born and preferences for more children among respondents

Factor	Women	Men in monogynous Unions	All men
Children Ever Born		N (%)	
Mean	3.4	3.2	3.9
SD	1.6	1.7	2.2
N	134	94	122
Parity ≤ 4	101 (68.2)	73 (69.5)	82 (58.2)
> 4	33 (22.3)	21 (20.0)	40 (28.4)
Do you desire more children?			
Yes	64 (43.2)	57 (54.3)	79 (56.0)
No	50 (33.8)	36 (34.3)	44 (31.2)
God's choice	27 (18.2)	9 (8.6)	11 (7.8)
Undecided	7 (4.7)	3 (2.9)	7 (2.9)
Total (100.0)	148 (100.0)	105 (100.0)	141
Desired more children			
Age: < 35	44 (68.8)	—*	—*
≥ 35	13 (20.3)	—	—
Parity: < 4	37 (57.8)	43 (75.4)	—
≥ 4	18 (28.1)	9 (15.8)	—
Additional children desired			
All: Mean (SD)	1.9 (0.7)	2.7 (1.5)	2.7 (1.4)
N	47	44	51
Age < 35: Mean (SD)	2.0 (0.87)		
N	39		
Age ≥ 35: Mean (SD)	1.5 (0.54)		
N	8		
Parity < 4: Mean (SD)	1.9 (0.85)	2.8 (1.4)	
N	47	38	
Parity ≥ 4: Mean (SD)	1.4 (0.52)	1.8 (1.3)	
N	8	6	
Children ever born by those who desired no more children			
Mean	4.5	4.5	5.0
SD	1.6	1.5	1.9
N	49	35	42

*Spousal (maternal) age not ascertained

Table 4: Number of children born among women who desired no more children by age at first marriage

Age at 1st marriage	Mean	SD	n
< 20 years	5.4	1.7	11
≥ 20 years	4.2	1.4	30
<i>p</i>		0.02	
< 18 years	5.1	1.9	7
≥ 18 years	4.4	1.4	34
<i>p</i>	0.26		
All	4.4	1.6	49

Table 5: Reason for desiring more children among respondents

Reason	All women	Women Para ≥ 4	Women aged ≥ 35	Monogynous men ≥ 4 children
Don't have many now	40 (64.5)	7 (41.2)	7 (53.9)	4 (44.4)
To carry on family name	9 (14.5)	4 (23.5)	—	2 (22.2)
Care in old age	9 (14.5)	4 (23.5)	4 (30.8)	2 (22.2)
Spouse's desire	—	—	—	1 (11.1)
Help with house/farm work	1 (1.6)	—	—	—
Other	2 (3.2)	2 (11.8)	2 (15.4)	—
Non-response	1 (1.6)	—	—	—
Total	62 (100.0)	17 (100.0)	13 (100.0)	9 (100.0)

had 4 or more children, the main reason for wanting to have more children was because they had not had the number they desire.

The perceived ideal number of children a couple should have was between 1 and 9, with a mean of 4.5 (SD = 2.1) among the female respondents. It was between 2 and 8 with a mean of 3.7 (SD = 1.3) among all the men. Similarly, men in monogynous unions reported ideal number of children to be 2 to 8, with a mean of 3.8 (SD = 1.4). In all, 39% of all the male respondents, 33.4% of men in monogynous unions and 22.3% of the female respondents gave non-numeric responses concerning perceived ideal number of children (God's choice). The perception of ideal child spacing by the female and male respondents respectively was a mean of 28.4 months and 29 months, see Table 6.

Also in Table 6, females perceived a significantly higher ideal number of children than males ($p = 0.003$). Those who considered above 4 children as ideal constituted 20.3% of the women, 14.1% of all the men and 17.2% of men in monogynous unions. There was no significant difference in the perception of ideal number of children (≤ 4 or > 4) between men in monogynous unions and all men ($p = 0.72$) and between those women married early and other women ($p = 0.27$).

Among men and women there was no significant difference between actual number of children born and their perceived ideal number, see Table 7. Perception of ideal number of children (≤ 4 or > 4) was not associated with education or religion among men. However, religion was associated with the perception of ideal number of children among the married females. The Muslim women (33.9%) compared to the Christian women (10.7%) perceived more than 4 children as ideal number ($p < 0.001$).

Perception of Population problem

In Table 8, about half (49.3%) of the female respondents perceived that Nigeria has a population problem. Perception of a population problem was not significantly different between

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Table 6: Respondents' perceived ideal number of children a couple should have.

Factor	Women	N (%)	
		Monogynous men	All men
Ideal: ≤ 4	85 (57.5)	52 (49.5)	66 (46.7)
> 4	30 (20.3)	18 (17.2)	20 (14.1)
Non-numeric response	33 (22.3)	35 (33.4)	55 (39.0)
Total (100.0)	148 (100.0)	105 (100.0)	141
<i>p</i>	0.96 ^a	0.72 ^b	
Ideal: Mean (SD)	4.5 (2.1)	3.3 (1.0)	3.7 (1.3)
N	115	31	
<i>p</i>	0.003 ^c	0.12 ^d	
Age at 1st marriage <18			
Ideal: Mean (SD)	4.9 (2.4)		
N	31		
Age at 1st marriage ≥ 18			
Ideal: Mean (SD)	4.4 (2.0)		
N	84		
<i>p</i>	0.27 ^c		
Perceived ideal child Spacing (in months)			
Mean (SD)	28.4 (10.4)	30.5 (9.9)	29.0 (9.6)
N	141	39	127

A & c = Between women and monogynous men
 B & d = Between monogynous men and all men
 E = Between < 18 and ≥ 18 at 1st marriage

those women with more than 4 children and those with 4 or less ($p = 0.31$). Similarly, among those who did not want any more children, the perception was not significant different between those women with more than 4 children and those with 4 or less. Among women with 4 or more children, desire for more was independent of perception of a population problem ($P = 0.42$). Similarly, among women aged 35 years and above desire for more children was independent of perception of a population problem. Furthermore, among those women who were aged 35 years and above who had also had 4 or more children, desire for more children was independent of perception of population problem ($p = 0.38$).

Also in Table 8, 80 or 56.7% of the male respondents and 65 or 61.9% of the men in monogynous unions knew that Nigeria had a population problem. Men in monogynous unions had better perception of the population problem than the men in polygynous unions ($p = 0.03$). Among the men in monogynous unions who had 4 or more children, desire for more children was independent of their perception of a population problem ($p = 0.24$). Among women and the men in monogynous unions who did not desire to have any more children, number of children had (≤ 4 or > 4) was independent of perception of population problem. There was no significant difference in the

Table 7: Examination of selected factors against perceived ideal number of children

Factor	Women		Monogynous men		All men	
	≤ 4	≥ 4	≤ 4	≥ 4	≤ 4	≥ 4
No. of children ever born						
≤ 4	76	23	60	14	68	14
> 4	27	6	18	4	36	4
<i>p</i>	0.54		0.61		0.30	
Educational level						
NFE & Primary	39	10	26	9	40	9
At least Secondary	53	12	45	10	56	10
<i>p</i>	0.8		0.39		0.65	
Religion						
Christianity	75	9	48	13	55	13
Islam	37	19	38	6	62	6
<i>P</i>	<0.001		0.31		0.08	
Age at first marriage						
< 18 years	7	1				
≥ 18 years	81	21				
<i>P</i>	0.5					

Table 8: Perception of population problems by desire for more children.

Factor	Women	N (%)				
		Monogynous men		All men		
Perception of problem						
Yes	68 (49.3)	65 (61.9)	80 (56.7)			
No	43 (31.2)	27 (25.7)	42 (29.8)			
Non-response	27 (19.6)	13 (12.4)	19 (13.4)			
Total	138 (100.0)	105 (100.0)	141 (100.0)			
Parity: ≤ 4	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
> 4	45	31	45	21	49	26
<i>p</i>	17	7	15	3	24	10
	0.31		0.21		0.59	
Desired no more children parity:						
≤ 4	41	13	8	6	19	6
> 4	11	5	12	3	23	3
<i>p</i>	0.23		0.18		0.49	
Women (or spouse of monogynous men). Para ≥ 4.						
Desired more	10	3	5	3		
Desired no more	18	10	19	4		
<i>P</i>	0.42		0.24			
Women aged ≥ 35 years						
Desired more	9	2				
Desired no more	15	12				
<i>P</i>	0.25					
Women para ≥ 4 and aged ≥ 35.						
Desired more	6	1				
Desired no more	13	8				
<i>P</i>	0.48					

perception of population problem between males and females ($p = 0.31$).

DISCUSSION

This study, unlike most surveys, which were either among women alone or couple, was among either the male or the female member of the union. As a proximate determinant of fertility, the median age at first marriage among the female respondents (22 years) was higher than the 17 year from the 1990 NDHS (1). This suggests that the median age at first marriage is increasing. Only 6% of the women got married below the stipulated age of 18 year. Based on the fact that high fertility is associated with early marriage and of course early childbearing, the low prevalence of early marriage in this study suggests that fertility is falling. Similarly, the relatively low proportion of respondents in polygynous union (37.7% of females compared with 40.9% from the NDHS) also has an implication for lower fertility. This study shows that early marriage did not increase the family size, although the number of respondents who married early was small (Table 4).

Concerning family size, 22.3% of the women and 20.0% of the men in monogynous unions had more than the 4 children (see Table 3), as against the recommended 4 or less in the National Policy on Population (14). In terms of the Total Fertility Rate (TFR), examination of the mean number of children ever born by those who desired to limit births showed a tendency towards lower family sizes (4.4 among women and 4.5 among men in monogynous unions), compared with the 6.1 and 5.2 of 1990 and 1999 respectively (1,2).

The desire for more children by women aged 35 years and above (20.3%) is also contrary to the targets of the Population policy, which seeks to reduce births to women under 18 and above 35 years by 50% by 1995 and 90% by year 2000 (14). The men's spousal age was not determined hence this deduction could not be made about their families. The respondents who desired more children but who had at least 4 already (13.4% of the women who had children and 8.6% of men in monogynous unions) as against the population policy targets (14), would increase the population growth rate. In addition to the demographic impacts, by getting pregnant the women would be exposed to high-risk. Although various options apart from the risk approach have been proposed for reducing the maternal mortality and morbidity (11), to attain the goals of the national policy on population such pregnancies must be discouraged for population growth control. However, even when such pregnancies are prevented, population growth will continue for some years due to the population momentum, the men in monogynous unions might not necessarily have the additional children they desired by the same women. They could marry other wives and bear more children to attain the desired number of children. While they have not increased the risk of childbearing they would be increasing the population.

The respondents who desired to limit births (31.2% of all men and 33.8% of all the women, as presented in Table 3) constitute potential demand for family planning services. This demand must be satisfied if their preferences would have any

effect on fertility. It is also possible that some of those who desired to limit birth would eventually have unwanted pregnancies, the prevalence of which is rather high (15). The desire for large family sizes was the main reason for wanting more children among those who either had at least 4 children already or the women aged at least 35 years (see Table 5). Wanting to carry on the family name implies desire for more male families so that the children could take care of them, as expressed by some respondents. This value system promotes high fertility. Although their perceptions of ideal number of children were not associated with such social factors as education (see Table 7), enhancing people's (and especially women's) socio-economic status could make a difference to fertility reduction.

Despite the population situation in the country, 20.3% of the women, 14.1% of all the men and 17.2% of men in monogynous unions considered having above 4 children the ideal see Table 6. The mean though (4.5 for women and 3.3 for monogynous men) is lower than that of the 1990 NDHS, which was 5.8 for all women and 6.2 for all married women (1). There was no association between the respondents family size (≤ 4 or > 4) and their perceived ideal number of children (≤ 4 or > 4). This implies that if respondents were to start all over, their fertility would not have been significantly different from what it was. The respondents' perceived ideal child spacing (28.4 – 29.0 months) was adequate when the prescribed 24 months is considered (14).

View respondents perceived that Nigeria has a population problem and this knowledge did not influence their preferences (see Table 8). This could mean that those who were aware of the population problem did not use the information for their choice or that their choice even though for high fertility was informed.

Since fertility levels are associated with the proportion of women who do not desire more children and reduction in desire for more children leads to actual reduction in fertility (5), interventions to reduce desire for large family sizes especially among those who have had at least 4 children or those aged at least 35 years, are required. Such interventions include population education, which should be integrated with other programmes and mobilisation for family planning services. Positive outcome of these interventions will in addition to those who desired to limit birth originally, increase the potential demand for family planning services. If fertility preferences change and use of family planning services increases as reported (7), integrated population education will thus have an implication for the expansion of family planning services. All these will have positive effects on population control.

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