

The Relevance of Child-Spacing on the Academic Performance of Married Women in College of Education, Azare

Tata Umar SA'AD

Foundations Department, School Of Education, College Of Education, P. M. B. 044, Azare, Bauchi State, Nigeria

Abstract: *This study focuses on the relevance of child-spacing on the academic performance of married women in college of education, Azare. The sample of the study consisted of 201 married women selected through random sampling technique. The instruments of the study were questionnaire and result records. The questionnaire was administered to the sampled subjects and their end of semester results were collected from the exams offices of the college. It was observed that the level of the acceptance and usage of child-spacing by married women in the college was low. It was also revealed that some factors like belief, husband's influence and culture prevent them from embracing child-spacing. It was observed that child-spacing has a positive impact on their performance in the college because the t -cal of 8.8085 is greater than the t -value of 6.353 at 0.05 and degree of freedom of 199. Therefore, the hypothesis which said that there is no significant difference in performance between married women who embraced child-spacing and those who do not in the college is rejected. The study recommended that husbands, cultures and parents should allow women in the college to use child-spacing, particularly during studies.*

Key Words: *Child-spacing, Academic Performance, Married Women, College of Education*

I. Introduction

Presently, the number of women, particularly married ones in higher institutions in Nigeria is on the increase. The fact that women and married ones in particular seen in most of our higher institutions of learning has not occurred by chance. It has been the credit of post modern world, as a result of cultural changes of human perceptions and ideals. Married women are pursuing different courses in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state and are combining studies and domestic activities together (Sa'ad, 2007). Mercer, (2004) was of the view that married women students are finding it difficult in combining school activities and domestic ones.

Studies have shown that married women in higher institutions conceive and give birth during their studies which in turn affect their performances. For instance, Sa'ad, (2007) found out that married women in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state conceive and give birth while schooling. He also found out that married women also perform in academic activities like the unmarried but with so much sacrifice, dedication and assistance from other agencies. Agencies like peers, co-wives, teachers, husbands, parents and child-spacing help greatly in assisting married women in their academic activities.

It is against this background that this study examines the relevance of child-spacing on the academic performance of married women in college of education, Azare.

II. Review of Related Literature

Child-spacing means having a few years in between the children in the family (Osuide, 1995). In another vein, Siassi (1972) in Onwuka (2008) sees child-spacing as the ability of the couple to have the number of children they want, at the exact time they want them while giving sufficient interval to allow the wife to regain her health and be able to maintain her baby. A married student who has a new baby every year will have less time and energy to look after the other children and the new baby as well as concentrates on her studies. But if a woman waits for at least three or more years before bearing another child, particularly during studies, she will be able to look after each baby well and concentrate more on her academic activities thereby giving her opportunity to perform better (Osuide, 1995).

Adamu, (2009) categorically stated that child-spacing is very useful to her because she was getting enough time to go through what she was taught in school and that helped her perform better. In another vein, Delano, (1998) in Yamah, (1998) was of the view that child-spacing has the following general benefits:

- The mother with few children can devote her time, love, care and give attention to children.
- Each family can be more productive if child-bearing is well spaced.
- Each community can adjust more readily to demands for health services, schools, food supplies, employment and transportation if family size is moderate.

Yamah, (1998) categorically said that women or wives who want to further their education will have enough time for it in a well-spaced set up. Again, Sa'ad, (2007) found out that child-spacing help married

women in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state to tackle a lot of their problems, thereby giving them opportunity to perform better in academic activities like other students.

But with all the above importance of child-spacing to married women who are schooling, a lot of reasons are preventing them from it. For instance, issues of culture, tradition, beliefs, and husbands and so on are becoming obstacles to using child-spacing by married women students. Sahu, (2000) and Aluko, (2005) were of the view that people mostly do away with child-spacing because it is contrary to their traditions and religious belief.

In some cases husbands also serve as an obstacle in accepting and using child-spacing methods because they don't want use any substance (pills and injections). Aluko, (2005) was categorically of the view that it is pertinent to note that as we are clamouring for the population control, most men do not like to use condom or take preventive drugs for same purpose. Lack of adequate information and fear among women prevent them from embracing child-spacing particularly in remote areas. Onwuka, (2008) was of the view that provision of adequate information on child-spacing methods will permit women to choose the one that is appropriate with their body system.

III. Practical Methods Of Child-Spacing

Child-spacing methods vary in nature and in effectiveness. The most suitable method depends on what is available, the needs of the couple and on their beliefs about which methods are appropriate. The methods vary in how effective they are. Some will provide almost complete protection from pregnancy. Other methods are not reliable but may be helpful in spacing births when more children are wanted. Some of these methods include:

Breast Feeding : Women who breast feed their children regularly are less likely to become pregnant. But Wilson, (2009) was of the view that this method is not reliable because a woman may conceive after six months or even before, but it will help greatly in child-spacing. Sabiq, (1988) cited Holy Qur'an that "mothers shall give suck to their offsprings for two whole years if they desire to complete their term".

Withdrawal Method : In this method, the man prevents his sperm from being released into the woman's body by pulling out quickly. But experts are of the view that this method is not reliable and satisfactory to both husband and wife. Sabiq, (1988) was of the opinion that in Islam, the prophet Muhammad (SAW) endorsed the use of al-azal (coitus interruptus) for safeguarding the health of women.

Abstinence : This is a situation where the husband and wife decide to do away with sexual intercourse for sometime. For instance, in Hausaland, the wife normally remain with her parents for sometime whenever she gives birth to a child.

Safe Period or Rhythm Period or Natural Child-spacing : When using this method, couples are required to understand the time of the woman's ovulation period, so that they abstain from having intercourse. Abstinence during the time of ovulation prevents conception because sperm is not present when the egg cell is present in the oviduct of the woman. This method can be appropriately used by the woman who has a regular menstrual cycle and with the use of chart. In using this method, about 20 in 100 women will become pregnant in any year (Wilson, 2009).

Birth Control Pills : Pills which contain hormone that prevent eggs from being produced are taken by woman. The woman is required to remember to take the pill at the same time every day. But experts maintain that some women feel unwell when using this method. Using this method, 1 out of 100 women will become pregnant in any year (Carter, 2009).

Condom and Diaphragm : Condom is a fine rubber sack which covers man's penis. It catches and holds the semen so that it does not enter the vagina. The diaphragm is a small rubber cap which fits over the neck of the womb, thereby preventing sperm from entering. The caps are of various sizes depending on the one suitable for a woman. In using these methods 7 out of 100 and 10 out of 100 will become pregnant respectively (Wilson, 2009).

Other methods which are also used by some women include form or spermicides and injection (Depo-Provera).

Methodology

Research Design

The design adopted and used in this study was descriptive survey. It was used because it permitted the researcher study small sample and later generalized the findings to the whole population. Osuala (1985) was of the view that in survey research small sample is studied and the findings generalized to the population.

Objectives Of The Study

The purpose of this study is:

1. To find out the level of acceptance and usage of child-spacing by married women in college of education, Azare.
2. To find out the impact of child-spacing on the academic activities and performance of married women in college of education, Azare.

3. To highlight the factors that prevents married women from embracing child-spacing in college of education, Azare.
4. To find out the difference (if any) in academic performance between married women who embrace child-spacing during studies and those who do not in college of education, Azare.

Research Questions And Hypothesis

In this study, three research questions were raised to which answers were sought and one hypothesis was formulated to be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of acceptance and usage of child-spacing by married women in college of education, Azare during their studies?
2. What is the impact of child-spacing on academic activities and performance of married women in college of education, Azare during their studies?
3. What are the factors that prevent married women from embracing child-spacing in college of education, Azare during their studies?

Research Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was investigated;

Ho: There is no significant difference in academic performance of married women who accepted and used child-spacing and those who do not in college of education, Azare.

Methodology

Research Design

The design used in this study was descriptive survey. A sample was studied and the findings were generalized to the whole population. Osuala, (1985) was of the view that in a survey study, only sample is studied and the findings generalized to the whole population.

Population of the study

The population for this study comprises of all the married women students in college of education, Azare as at the time of the study. Therefore, the total population for this study was four hundred and sixteen (416).

Sample for the study

The sample for the study was two hundred and one (201) married women selected using random sampling technique. Krejcie and Morgan, (1984) in Kolo, (1992) were of the view that when population is 420, 201 can be selected as sample.

Sampling Technique

Random sampling technique was used in selecting the sample for this study. A sample drawn at random is unbiased in the sense that no member of the population has any more chance of being selected than any other member (Sambo, 2005).

Instruments For Data Collection

A questionnaire and result records were used as instruments of the study. The questionnaire comprises of fifteen (15) items on the relevance of child-spacing on the academic performance of married women in college of education, Azare. In addition to that the questionnaire was validated for face and content validity by an experienced academic staff who has had more than 20 years teaching experience at College of education, Azare.

On the other hand, the end of semester results of the sampled subjects were collected from the examination offices of the College of Education, Azare.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument was validated by experts who have more than two decades of teaching research in college of education, Azare.

The reliability of the instrument was determined by using test-retest method. The instrument was used on twenty (20) members of the population and after ten days the same instrument was used on the same members. The two results were correlated using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient and the result got was 0.7. This makes the instrument reliable

Data Analysis Procedure

The data collected through questionnaire was a discrete one and simple percentage was used in its analysis while data collected through result records was a continuous one and t-test was used in its analysis.

Data Presentation and Analysis of Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of acceptance and usage of child-spacing by Married Women in College of Education, Azare?

Table 1: The level of the acceptance and usage of Child-spacing by Married Women in College of Education, Azare.

S/N	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
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		YES	NO
1.	Do you accept and use child-spacing during your studies in College of Education, Azare?	51 25%	150 75%
2.	Do you think child-spacing will be good for your studies in College of Education, Azare?	122 61%	79 39%

Source: Field work, 2013

The data obtained from research question one shows that few married women in college of education, Azare embraced and used child-spacing during their studies. This could be noticed in the responses of the respondents, for instance, only 51(25%) said yes that they accepted and used child-spacing during their studies in the college as against 150 (75%). Even though not many accepted and used child-spacing but the respondents were of the view that child-spacing will be good for them if they will be allowed to use it during their studies. The data shows that 122(61%) said yes that child-spacing will be good for them during studies as against 79(39%).

Research Question 2: What is the relevance of Child-spacing on the Academic Performance of Married Women in College of Education, Azare?

Table 2: The Relevance of Child-spacing on the Academic Performance of Married Women in College of Education, Azare

S/N	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES	
		YES	NO
1.	Can child-spacing give you enough time to concentrate on your studies, thereby improving your academic performance in College of Education, Azare?	185 92%	16 8%
2.	Can child-spacing permit you to attend to your lectures regularly and promptly, thereby improving your academic performance in College of Education, Azare?	177 88%	24 12%
3.	Can child-spacing help you to pay more attention when lecture is going on, which in turn improves your understanding and academic performance in College of Education, Azare?	153 76%	48 24%
4.	Can child-spacing give you enough time to do any assignment, practical or tutorial given to you, thereby improving your academic performance in College of Education?	182 91%	19 9%
5.	Can child-spacing give you enough physical, mental and emotional health to participate actively in academic activities, thereby improving your performance in the College?	186 93%	15 7%
6.	Can child-spacing give you enough time to read more during any test or examination, thereby improving your academic performance in College of Education, Azare?	184 92%	17 8%

Source: Fieldwork, 2013

The data obtained from research question two shows that 185 respondents (92%) were of the view that child-spacing can give them enough time to concentrate on their studies and it will improve their performance in the college. 177 respondents (88%) were of the opinion that child-spacing can permit them to attend to their lectures regularly and promptly which in turn can improve their performance in the college even though few were permitted to use it. Therefore, it is clear that if all married women in the college can be allowed to use child-spacing, their performance can be improved.

Research Question 3: What are the factors that prevent married women from embracing Child-spacing in College of Education Azare during their studies?

Table 3: The factors that prevent married Women from Embracing Child-in College of Education, Azare.

S/N	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES	
		YES	NO
1.	Does your religious belief prevent you from embracing child-spacing during your studies in College of Education, Azare?	153 76%	48 24%
2.	Do your customs and traditions prevent you from embracing child-spacing during your studies in College of Education, Azare?	156 78%	45 22%
3.	Does your husband prevent you from embracing child-spacing during your studies in College of Education, Azare?	120 60%	81 40%
4.	Does your need for more children prevent you from embracing child-spacing during your studies in College of Education, Azare?	67 33%	134 67%
5.	Do your parents prevent you from embracing child-spacing during your studies in College of Education, Azare?	149 74%	52 26%
6.	Does the college system prevent you from embracing child-spacing during your studies?	00 00%	201 100%
7.	Does inadequate information on child-spacing methods prevent you from embracing it during your studies?	145 71%	56 26%

Source: Fieldwork, 2013

The data gathered from research question three reveals that 153 respondents (76%) were of the view that religious belief prevents them from embracing child-spacing as against 48 respondents (24%), 156 respondents (78%) were of the view that customs and traditions prevent them from accepting child-spacing as against 45 (22%). On the other hand, 120 respondents (60%) were of the opinion that their husbands prevent

them from embracing child-spacing during their studies as against 81 respondents (40%) while 134 respondents (67%) were of the opinion that their need for more children does not prevent them from embracing child-spacing as against 67 (33%). 149 respondents (74%) were of the opinion that their parents prevent them from embracing child-spacing as against 52 (26%) while the college system never stops or prevent any woman from embracing child-spacing. In another vein, 145 respondents (71%) were of the view that inadequate information on child-spacing methods prevents them from embracing it as against 56 (29%). Therefore, it is clear that religious belief, customs and traditions, husbands and inadequate information on the child-spacing methods prevent married women in the college from embracing child-spacing.

Hypothesis One (H_0) : There is no significant difference in performance between married women who embraced and used child-spacing and those who do not during studies in College of Education, Azare

Table 4: T-test of the score difference in performance of respondents who were using child-spacing and those who do not during studies in C O E, Azare.

Respondents	N	X	SD	SE	DF	t	L.S.
Married Women Using Child-Spacing	51	3.06	0.6559	0.1158	199	8.8085	significant
Married Women Not Using Child-Spacing	150	2.04	0.8638				

In table 4 above, the calculated t is 8.8085 while the critical t is 6.353 under the degree of freedom of 199 at 0.05 alpha level of significance. It implies that the null hypothesis which said that there is no significant difference in performance of married women who embraced and used child-spacing during studies and those who do not in College of Education, Azare is rejected since the table t value is less than the calculated t. It means that married women who are using child-spacing during studies are performing better in academic activities than their counterparts who do not accept and used child-spacing in college of education, Azare.

IV. Discussion of Findings

Three research questions and one hypothesis were raised in this study based on the objectives and literature reviewed. These questions and hypothesis led to the four findings which are discussed below:

Research Question One

The finding of research question one show that the number of married women using child-spacing during their studies in the college was small even though all of them want use it. In other words, few married women were using child-spacing during their studies in the college. Married women actually want to use child-spacing but they were not allowed due to some reasons which can be seen clearly under the discussion of research question three. This agrees with the views of Sa'ad, (2007) who was of the view that few married women in tertiary institutions of Bauchi state accepted and used child-spacing.

Research Question Two

The finding of research question two show that child-spacing helps married women to have enough time for doing assignment, tutorials, paying more attention and attending lectures regularly and promptly. In addition to that it gives them physical, mental and psychological health to undertake their studies and even perform better. This agrees with findings of Yamah, (1998), Sa'ad, (2007) and Adamu, (2009) who were of the view that child-spacing gives married women or wives opportunity to engage well in their academic activities, thereby improving their performance. In addition to that Yamah, (1998) categorically said that women or wives who want to further their education will have enough time for it in a well-spaced set up.

Research Question Three

The findings of research question three show that a lot of reasons like religious belief, traditions and so on prevent married women in the college of education, Azare from accepting and using child-spacing during their studies. This tallies with the views of Sahu, (2000), Aluko, (2005) and Onwuka, (2008) who were of the opinion that people mostly do away with child-spacing due to their religious belief, traditions, inadequate information on child-spacing methods and in some cases men don't want to use condom or take drugs.

Hypothesis one (H_0)

The findings of one hypothesis raised in this study shows that married women who used child-spacing are performing better in academic activities than their counterparts who do not used child-spacing during their studies. Therefore, this study agrees with the assertion of Osuide, (1995), Yamah, (1998), Sa'ad, (2007) and Adamu, (2009) who were of the view that child-spacing gives married women who embraced it during studies enough time to concentrate more on their academic activities, thereby helping them perform better.

V. Recommendations

As a result of the findings of this study the following recommendations were made:

1. A more detailed research in the relevance of child-spacing on the academic performance on married women in terms of coverage and in-depth should be carried out either by non-governmental organization or M.Ed or PhD candidate.

2. Husbands should allow their wives to use child-spacing methods which are in consonance with their body systems and belief, particularly during studies.
3. Adequate information on child-spacing methods should be provided and made accessible to married women undergoing studies, particularly in the higher institutions of learning by the college.
4. There should be public enlightenments on the importance of child-spacing so that husbands should have a clear understanding of it and allow their wives to use it, particularly during studies because it improves their performance.
5. There should be clear dissemination of information by our religious organizations on issues like child-spacing. This is because religions like Islam approve some ways of spacing children, particularly to preserve the health of the mother, like withdrawal and abstinence.

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