

Modern vs. Traditional Family Planning Methods: The Role of Spousal Communication in Decision- Making in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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Abstract: Family planning glowing aspect of reproductive health yet its adoption and method selection remain influenced by various socio cultural determinant mainly spousal communications. This study sightsee the role of spousal communication in the choice between traditional and modern family planning methods in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa a region where cultural norms considerably shape reproductive decisions. Using a quantitative approach, the research combines a quantitative survey method and cross-sectional research design while collecting data from married couples in Dir lower and Upper insights from close-ended interviews scheduled to assess the extent and nature of communication between spouses regarding contraception. Using multistage sampling technique to access potential respondent while which yielded a total sample of 768 sizes. Finally data was analyze including univariate statistical technique (frequencies and percentages) and bivariate analysis binary logistic regression was used to explore relationships to test the hypotheses. The findings reveal that a significant majority of respondents are knowledgeable about pregnancy delay methods and actively use family planning techniques. Modern methods dominate and are the most popular, but the couple's reliance is mainly on censuses. Traditional methods are also practiced by a significant minority, with withdrawal being the most common. The important role of communication in FPM adoption is prominent. While discussions about contraceptive use and sexual relations positively influence FPM utilization, conversations on topics like the number of children or equitable decision-making showed unexpected patterns, likely due to socio-cultural dynamics. The research underlines the necessity of joint decision-making with women at the center when addressing reproductive health issues.

Key Words: Reproductive, Health, Determinant, Spousal Communications, Traditional and Modern

Introduction

Family planning plays a role in improving maternal and child health by empowering women and fostering sustainable population growth. However, its adoption varies significantly across different regions due to socio-cultural, economic, and religious factors (Alam et al., 2019). In Pakistan, family planning remains a sensitive topic while deeply influenced by traditional gender roles, religious beliefs, and societal norms (Ali et al., 2024). Pakistan, having a population of 2017 million, holds the position of the world's fifth most populous country (Ataullahjan et al., 2019; Brown et al., 2017). Managing population growth has become a significant concern for the Pakistani government, to adopts and strengthen family planning program in Pakistan (Ali et al., 2021). The demographic landscape of Pakistan has witnessed sustained expansion since 1940, driven by declining mortality rates and consistently high birth rates. From its post-independence population of nearly 33 million in 1947, the country's populace has surged to approximately 196.5 million to date, marking a remarkable sixfold increase. This persistent population growth has positioned Pakistan as the sixth most populous country globally and the third-largest contributor to global population increments (Hackett et al., 2021; Khan, 2023). Characterized by a predominately youthful age structure and a substantial number of individuals entering their reproductive years, there exists the potential for rapid future population growth, despite anticipated declines in fertility

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rates (Khan et al., 2024). To address this demographic challenge, Pakistan has implemented the population welfare program, a social development aimed at curbing population growth, which is deemed imperative for the progress of development (Madni, 2017).

Family planning practices in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan, exhibit unique patterns influenced by socio-cultural, economic, and educational factors (Mustafa et al., 2015). The contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) in KP is approximately 28%, indicating that 28% of married women of reproductive age are using some form of contraception (Mustafa et al., 2015). Modern methods like condoms, oral pills, injectables, implants, and intrauterine devices account for about 74% of contraceptive use among married women (Madni, 2017). Traditional Methods such as withdrawal and the rhythm method constitute approximately 26% of contraceptive use among married women in Pakistan (NIPORT, 2013). Effective communication between spouses significantly influences the adoption of family planning methods. Studies have shown that couples who discuss family planning are more likely to use contraceptives (Khan, 2023). Within KP, contraceptive use varies by age and region. For instance, 21% of women aged 25–29 years use contraceptives (Sarfraz et al., 2021). Additionally, areas like Peshawar report a higher CPR of 48.6%, which includes significant use of traditional methods (Population Welfare Department, 2017).

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has one of the lowest contraceptive prevalence rates in Pakistan, with many couples either not using contraception or relying on traditional methods that have higher failure rates. According to NIPORT (2013), limited spousal communication and male dominance in reproductive decisions are significant barriers to the adoption of modern family planning methods (Khan, 2023). In a region where discussions about contraception are often considered taboo, women frequently lack the autonomy to make independent decisions regarding their reproductive health (Sarfraz, 2020).

Methodology

Methodology describe systematic the procedures and approaches used in collecting data, analysis data, and interprets data (Creswell, 2014). In this study, quantitative methodology was employed to analyze the role of spousal communication in the choice between traditional and modern family planning methods. The current study is based on a cross-sectional research design to assess the study objective at one point in time while restricted to districts of Dir Lower and Upper within Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, characterized predominantly by the rural and traditional social-cultural environments while making consensus on all married man and women (reproductive age 15-49) excluding divorce and widows as a unit of analysis. A structured interview schedule was designed with a closed-ended Likert Scale while using a multistage sampling technique to access potential respondents, which yielded a total sample of 768 sizes. Finally data was analyzing including univariate statistical technique (frequencies and percentages) and bivariate analysis binary logistic regression was used to explore relationships to test the hypotheses.

Result and Discussion

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics involves in summarizing and presenting data in a meaningful way to describe the basic features of a dataset through numerical measures, tables and graphical representations (Kaur et al., 2018). Descriptive statistics often do not make predictions beyond the given data while helping to simplify large amounts of data. The following is a descriptive analysis of primary data:

Table I

Communication between Spouses Regarding Reproductive Health (N=768)

Variable	F	(%)
Discussion regarding the use of contraceptives		
Frequently	599	(78.0)
Rarely	169	(22.0)



Variable	F	(%)
Discussion regarding birth spacing		
Frequently	580	(75.5)
Rarely	188	(24.5)
Discussion regarding the types of contraceptive		
Frequently	607	(79.0)
Rarely	161	(21.0)
Discussion regarding the number of children		
Frequently	600	(78.1)
Rarely	168	(21.9)
Discussion regarding sexual relations		
Frequently	571	(74.3)
Rarely	197	(25.7)
Discussion regarding sexual relations		
Frequently	557	(72.5)
Rarely	211	(27.5)
Married couples regularly claim birth spacing matters.		
Frequently	512	(66.7)
Rarely	256	(33.3)
Married couples discuss unplanned pregnancies		
Frequently	472	(61.5)
Rarely	296	(38.5)

Table I Highlights the communication patterns among married couples about various aspects of reproductive health, including contraceptives, birth spacing, and unplanned pregnancies. According to the univariate analysis, discussions regarding contraceptive use occur frequently (78%) among married couples, while 22% rarely engage in such conversation. This high frequency of discussion suggests awareness and consideration of family planning methods among the majority. According to the table, couples frequently discuss birth spacing in 75.5% of cases, with 24.5% rarely addressing the topic. These communications are vital for managing family size and ensuring the health and well-being of both mother and child.

Discussion about the types of contraceptives is the most common, with 79% of couples frequently engaging in such conversations and only 21% rarely doing so. This indicates an active interest in exploring suitable family planning methods. Discussion about the number of children frequently occur in 78.1% of relationships, while 21.9% rarely broach the subject. This reflect the importance couples place on planning their family size collaboratively.

Communication about sexual relations happens frequently among 74.3% of couples, but 25.7% rarely discuss this subject. This pattern indicates that while the majority of couples communicate openly about intimacy, a significant minority may face barriers in addressing such topics. In summary, the data reflects a generally positive trend of frequent discussions among married couples regarding reproductive health. Topics like contraceptive use, types of contraceptives, and the number of children are more commonly discussed, while matters such as sexual relations and unplanned pregnancies see comparatively less frequent communication.

Bivariate Analysis

The bivariate analysis led to a statistical method to examine the relationship between two variables to help the researchers understand how one variable influences another by identifying patterns, associations, or dependencies between them (Reitsma et al., [2005](#)). The following section represents the bivariate analysis for this study:



Table 2

Relationship between Spousal Communication and the Choice of FPM Types (traditional vs. Modern)

Variables	Types of FPM		OR, 95% C. I	P. Value
	Traditional F (%)	Modern F (%)		
Discussion regarding the use of contraceptives				
Frequently	355(55.8)	265(44.2)	1.65(1.15-2.36)	0.010
Rarely	95(63.3)	55(36.7)	1.00	
Discussion regarding the types of contraceptive				
Frequently	245(40.4)	362(59.6)	0.88(0.60-1.30)	0.588
Rarely	62(38.5)	99(61.5)	1.00	
Discussion regarding the number of children				
Frequently	380(63.3)	220(36.7)	1.50(1.05-2.14)	0.028
Rarely	52(31.0)	116(69.0)	1.00	
Discussion regarding sexual relations				
Frequently	260(46.0)	305(54.0)	1.55(1.07-2.25)	0.025
Rarely	73(34.6)	138(65.4)	1.00	
Married couples discuss the complications and outcomes of the use of Modern family planning Methods				
Frequently	205(39.1)	320(61.0)	1.01(0.71-1.44)	0.935
Rarely	91(37.4)	152(62.6)	1.00	
Married couples perform sexual intercourse with mutual consent				
Frequently	375(64.7)	205(35.3)	1.58(1.12-2.23)	0.015
Rarely	85(39.2)	132(60.8)	1.00	
Married couples equally discuss Modern Family Planning Methods				
Frequently	325(62.3)	197(37.7)	1.75(1.30-2.35)	0.038
Rarely	72(29.1)	175(70.9)	1.00	

Relationship between spousal communication and the choice of FPM types (traditional vs. Modern; Research shows that husbands and wives who often talk about contraceptives adopt modern FPM more frequently than other couples. Selected couples expose 65% more probability of selecting modern methods when they discuss contraception frequently when compared to couples who abstain from such conversations (OR 1.65, CI: 1.15-2.36, $p=0.010$). Research by Kamal and Islam (2012) validates this finding, emphasizing that spousal communication is vital for contraceptive choices because regular discussions between partners improve their family planning understanding and shared parental duties (Kamal & Islam, 2012).

The frequency of children-related dialogues between partners leads them to use modern FPM more likely (OR 1.50, CI: 1.05-2.14, $p=0.028$). Active family planning regarding child numbers leads couples toward the adoption of effective birth control, according to Bongaarts & Sathar, (2023). The discussion of sexual relations emerges as a major variable affecting the use of modern FPM. Those couples who address sexual issues regularly enjoy a 1.55 times greater likelihood to use modern contraceptives versus those couples who avoid sexual conversation (OR 1.55 CI: 1.07-2.25 $p=0.025$). The results demonstrate how couples who share clear conversations about sexual health demonstrate improved use of modern birth control because they become better at selecting suitable contraception options (Ezeanolue et al., 2019).

The adoption of modern FPM strengthens among couples who perform sexual intercourse through mutual consent. Participating in mutual consent repeatedly results in increased odds by 1.58 times that people will use modern contraception against those without mutual consent experiences (OR 1.58, CI: 1.12-2.23, $p=0.015$). Research confirms that mutual consent during sex results in enhanced reproductive communication along with better condom

adoption decisions (Gupta et al., 2019). The study findings demonstrate the key role that equal communication plays between genders when deciding about reproduction. An equal level of participation between partners in modern contraceptive method discussions leads to greater agreement for using these methods.

Conclusion

Family planning glowing aspect of reproductive health yet its adoption and method selection remain influenced by various socio cultural determinant mainly spousal communications. This study sightsee the role of spousal communication in the choice between traditional and modern family planning methods in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa a region where cultural norms considerably shape reproductive decisions. The result of descriptive statistics demonstrates that the communication patterns among married couples about various aspects of reproductive health, including contraceptives, birth spacing, and unplanned pregnancies, occur frequently (78%) among married couples while the couples frequently discuss birth spacing in 75.5% of cases. Discussion about the types of contraceptives is the most common, with 79% of couples frequently engaging in such conversations, while discussion about the number of children frequently occurs in 78.1% of relationships. Communication about sexual relations happens frequently among 74.3% of couples. The trends in media consumption and the exposure of married couples to messages related to modern family planning methods led by 61.5% of married couples frequently read newspapers while only 41.8% of couples frequently listen to FM radio. Watching television remains a favored medium, with 56.5% frequently watching it, while in social media engagement, 70.1% of the respondents frequently use Facebook, and 76.8% frequently use YouTube.

The synthesis of the bivariate analysis showed by binary logistic regression where the relationship between communications regarding reproductive health-related matter and the use of FPM among respondents; the binary logistic regression analysis showed that frequent discussions were significantly associated with higher odds of using FPM (OR 1.50, CI: 1.10-2.04, $p=0.010$). The negative association between frequent discussion on family size and FPM, as well as binary logistic regression analysis, further validated this finding (OR 1.50, CI: 1.05-2.15, $P=0.025$). Binary logistic regression analysis indicated that frequent mutual consent was significantly associated with higher odds of FPM adoption (OR, 1.50, CI: 1.10-2.24, $P=0.015$). This paradoxical finding was further supported by binary logistic regression, which revealed a significant negative association between frequent equitable discussion and FPM use (OR 1.713, CI: 1.518-1.982, $p=0.038$).

As aforementioned, the perceptions of married men and women regarding family planning methods vary based on cultural, religious, and educational backgrounds, especially in conservative societies where family planning is often viewed with skepticism due to traditional beliefs that emphasize large families. The findings reveal that a significant majority of respondents are knowledgeable about pregnancy delay methods and actively use family planning techniques. Modern methods dominate and are the most popular, but the couple's reliance is mainly on censuses. Traditional methods are also practiced by a significant minority, with withdrawal being the most common.

The important role of communication in FPM adoption is prominent. While discussions about contraceptive use and sexual relations positively influence FPM utilization, conversations on topics like the number of children or equitable decision-making showed unexpected patterns, likely due to socio-cultural dynamics. The research underlines the necessity of joint decision-making with women at the center when addressing reproductive health issues. The combination of joint discussions and female autonomy in contraceptive choices results in increased adoption of modern FPM. Partners who communicate better and achieve gender equality in reproductive health care will boost modern contraceptive adoption and lead to better maternal health results. Cultural misunderstandings, together with religious beliefs, incorrect health information, and social discrimination, strongly affect contraceptive decision-making.

Recommendation

The following recommendations provided a roadmap by addressing the problem of modern family planning:

- ▶ First and foremost recommendation of this study is to include modern family planning education into formal curricula to foster early awareness and informed decision making among young individuals. The curricula should



include reproductive health and family planning topics to equip students with accurate knowledge about contraception and its benefits, while structured training programs can be entertaining for married couples to help them understand modern contraceptive methods.

- ▶ Local community leaders can be instrumental in spreading accurate information about family planning because these trusted figures can address misconceptions, provide culturally sensitive guidance and encourage open discussions on reproductive health.
- ▶ Involve religious leader for promoting family planning within religiously sensitive contexts by align family planning awareness with faith based principles open a space for dialogues in religious gatherings to encourage informed reproductive health decisions among their followers.
- ▶ Utilize medial platform including television, radio and social media on effective way to broadcast educational programs, expert discussions and testimonials that address common misconceptions and highlight the benefits of family planning.

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