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Impact of Interpersonal Communication for Contraceptive Uses among Married Couples in Karachi

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Abstract: *The growing Pakistan population is putting pressure on the country's limited resources, which indicates that population control and family planning are serious issues. The government of Pakistan has taken various steps to address this, but in the end, it will be up to the married couples whose interpersonal communication, laced with knowledge about planned child-rearing, will lead government programs to fruition. In order to determine whether and to what extent there was a correlation, this study examined the effectiveness of interpersonal communication between married couples and Planned Parenthood. The results of the study concluded that Planned Parenthood is made possible by effective communication between married couples. Despite the significant efforts of state family planning initiatives to disseminate knowledge, promote birth control methods, and encourage the best spacing between children, there is still a clear need for couples to be given appropriate power, especially when it comes to making the first parenting decisions.*

Key Words: Interpersonal Communication, Planned Parenthood, Contraceptive Use, Married Couples, Health Communication

Introduction

Interpersonal communication has an essential role between husband and wife in adopting contraceptive methods. In Pakistan, like in other developing countries, policymakers and the government work on many family planning programs to control population growth and reproductive health issues. In the early stages of family planning programs in Pakistan, media played an important role in transmitting knowledge about contraception, but there were other factors like religion, culture, language, financial status and many others that work as curbing agents in the execution of family planning programs not only in rural but also in urban areas.

Establishing a stable foundation through communication is a vital first stage in facilitating the widespread acceptance of any innovation. In rural areas of Pakistan, the majority of people live their lives below the poverty line. Pakistan is a patriarchal society where men have complete power over fertility matters and are simultaneously considered breadwinners for the family. Financial status affects the social well-being, lifestyle, beliefs, traditions, and value system of the family. In this study, the financial disparity is considered a determinant of the lack of interpersonal communication between spouses for contraceptive use.

Comparatively, there has been very little work in Pakistan on interpersonal communication among husband and wife and their reproductive decision determinants. It is important to conduct a study with this dimension so that it will be helpful for policy reasons in the future.

Research in Pakistan examined how social and religious influences, harmful impacts, lack of reliable information, and education affect family planning decisions. The findings showed that factors such as education and accurate information positively impacted family planning decisions. In contrast, side effects

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and sociocultural or religious factors had a negative impact (Nishtar, Sami, Alim, Pradhan, & Hasnain, 2013).

Cynthia F. Link, in 2011, conducted a study on spousal communication and contraceptive use in rural Nepal. The research findings show that in spousal communication, the husband's perception greatly influences fertility behaviour, which is why policymakers should integrate men into family planning programs (Link, 2011).

A study examined how factors such as service fees, spouse communication, affluence, and the availability of family planning (FP) services affect decisions about family planning in Pakistan using the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) approach. The results showed that service fees harm family planning decisions, whereas spouse communication, financial situation, and access to FP services have a beneficial impact (Azmat, Mustafa, Hameed, Ali, & Ahmed, 2012).

M Naseem Iqbal Farooqi, in 1994, conducted a study on Interpersonal Communication in Family Planning in Pakistan. The findings show that younger and educated women were more likely to discuss their family planning issues with their husbands in comparison to aged and uneducated women. The number of living children was also the determinant. Hence, the researcher emphasises a great deal on interpersonal communication between spouses to achieve family planning goals (Farooqi, 1994).

In a similar study, Nasra M. Shah, in 1974, conducted a study on The Role of Interpersonal Communication in Adopting Family Planning Methods: A Couple Approach. The research findings show that the ratio of inter-spousal communication was higher in urban areas at 24% as compared to rural areas at 10% regarding family planning methods. The analysis of the research is based on the combined response of husbands and wives. Finally, the results show interspousal communication as the basic key variable for spouses' approach to using contraceptive methods because the majority of them reported their mutual consensus on it (Shah, 1974).

A study indicated that Family planning (FP) communication between spouses is noticeably rare in underdeveloped countries, highlighting the possible significance of poor communication with partners as a significant factor contributing to the limited uptake of contraception (Berhane et al., 2011).

Marc Boulay and Thomas W. Valente, in 1999, conducted a study in Kenya on The Relationship of Social Affiliation and Interpersonal discussion to Family Planning Knowledge, Attitudes and practice. The research findings show that the interpersonal communication between the community and other social affiliations like spouses, parents, coworkers, religious leaders, health care and school teachers strengthen the diffusion of family planning methods among men and women (Boulay & Valente, 1999).

Researchers found that family planning services (FPS) are more frequently chosen when the spouse is involved in the process by varying the degree of the husband's participation in the experiment. Researchers found that this trend is mainly impacted by couples whose wives have an incorrect impression of the husband's dislike of contraception after looking into the underlying causes. Researchers also found that when the husband participates, the woman is more likely to anticipate his presence at the family planning session. These results show that encouraging partner communication may help overcome demand limits for these services (D'Exelle & Ringdal, 2022).

James A. Palmore, Paul M. Hirsch and Ariffin Bin Marzuki, in 1971, conducted a study on interpersonal communication and the diffusion of family planning in West Malaysia. Findings show that women who discussed family planning with other women were more willing to adopt contraceptive methods than those who never discussed it with any other women (Palmore, Hirsch, & Marzuki, 1971).

Alanc Kerckhoff and Frankd. Bean, in 1970, conducted a study on social status and interpersonal patterns among married couples. The researchers' findings show that in high- and middle-status couples, husbands are more dominant, and their wives are more affectionate, although this was much less common among low-status couples (Kerckhoff & Bean, 1970).

A study highlighted that in the first year after giving birth, Ethiopian women prefer to utilize contemporary contraception at a relatively low rate. In the postpartum period, the use of modern contraceptives was significantly correlated with the help of family planning counselling during antenatal

and postnatal care (ANC), as well as with conversations about family planning with spouses, the return of menstrual cycles, and the resumed sexual activity (AzimerawTesfu, Beyene, Sendeku, Wudineh, & Azeze, [2022](#)).

Roger Klomegah conducted a study on spousal communication, power and Contraceptive use in Burkina Faso, West Africa, in 2006. The research finding shows that both spousal communication and spousal power have a significant relation with contraceptive use. Couples who communicate more alone decide to use family planning methods without the intervention of wives, which depicts the male power in society (Klomegah, [2006](#)).

Peter O. Ogunjuyigbe conducted a study on spousal communication changes in partner Attitude and Contraceptive use among the Yorubas of South West Nigeria in 2017. The researcher's finding about communication variables shows that couples who discuss and make joint decisions about the delay of a child are more likely to use contraceptives than those couples who have not discussed it. Results also indicated that men participate more in family planning methods once the need for it is made clear to them (Ogunjuyigbe, [2017](#)).

There is evidence that men can promote the use of contraceptives through improving communication between spouses when they are married. This better communication makes it easier to decide on the best technique of contraception as a group (Islam, Alam, & Hasan, [2013](#)).

Researchers conducted a study on Family planning demand generation in Rwanda: Government efforts at the national and community level impact interpersonal communication and family norms. The results show that strong government support, extensive media coverage, and neighbourhood gatherings significantly spread information about family planning. People started discussing contraception after hearing the information through these channels and witnessing others do so. Despite these advantages, the pervasiveness of rumours and false information remained a significant barrier to the use of contraceptive techniques. Family planning, formerly taboo, is now a common topic of conversation amongst married couples. It is advised to keep addressing everyday worries and myths by using communication channels like the media and community gatherings in Rwanda to increase contraceptive uptake (Corey et al., [2022](#)).

Hartmann, Gilles, Shattuck, Kerner, and Guest conducted a study in 2012. The results highlight the value of good communication in projects that successfully increase male participation in family planning. According to survey respondents, the study's direct results were improvements in partner interactions, increased conversation frequency, and a rise in joint decision-making. These developments considerably influenced the adoption of family planning techniques by the participants. These beneficial effects frequently resulted from more excellent knowledge or a decline in male opposition to family planning. Traditional gender-related communication patterns have changed due to a closer investigation of communication and decision-making dynamics, which has improved partner relationships and the adoption of contraceptives. This study provides a valuable framework for including males in family planning by highlighting the importance of programs supporting open communication between spouses and collaborative decision-making (Hartmann, Gilles, Shattuck, Kerner, & Guest, [2012](#)).

According to the findings of the two-variable analysis, several characteristics are directly related to men's participation in family planning and reproductive health. The age of the husband and wife, the number of living children, the educational and professional backgrounds of both partners, their familiarity with STDs and contraceptive methods, their social connections, and their communication regarding these issues are some factors (Kamal, Islam, Alam, & Hassan, [2013](#)).

The study's findings show that good communication between spouses is essential for both the use of family planning techniques and the process of deciding how many children to have. However, there was a noteworthy lack of or inadequate communication between couples regarding family planning and their shared preferences regarding the intended number of children in rural areas of Mwanza, Tanzania (Mosha, Ruben, & Kakoko, [2013](#)).

The research examines the issue of causality by utilizing longitudinal information from the Navrongo Health Research Centre panel survey. The outcomes obtained from cross-sectional and longitudinal



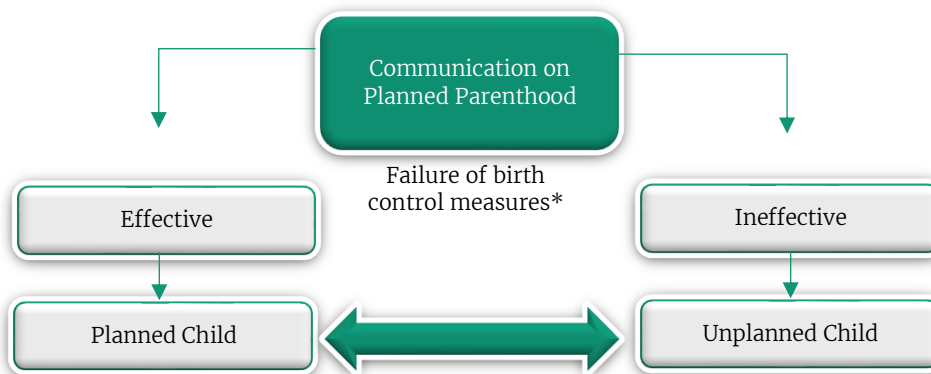
investigations prove that effective communication between spouses reliably anticipates contraceptive habits. This connection remains significant even when accounting for various other variables (Bawah, 2003).

According to the findings of the study, women's empowerment in Morocco significantly influenced how inclined Moroccan women were to have a particular desired number of children. This was accomplished through strengthening their communication skills, improving their relationships with their spouses, and gaining more freedom from social norms (Drioui & Bakass, 2021).

A study concluded that couples who communicate better with one another are more likely to accept and use modern birth control options. However, misunderstandings resulting from societal expectations and cultural views remain a significant barrier to contraceptive use (Abidemi, Oluseyi, & Olayinka, 2023).

Figure 1

Communication on planned parenthood



Leads to an unplanned child even after effective communication and a planned one despite ineffective communication.

The purpose of this study was to determine how well married couples interacted with one another and how much they knew about Planned Parenthood. The justification behind this was that it is a fundamental human right for a woman to choose when she wants to have children.

Problem Statement

The lack of effective interpersonal communication regarding contraceptive utilization among married couples in Pakistan significantly impedes family planning and reproductive health. This absence of open and informed conversations hinders the dissemination of crucial information, perpetuates misconceptions, and contributes to suboptimal contraceptive practices within marital relationships. The dearth of comprehensive research addressing the impact of interpersonal communication on contraceptive adoption and adherence among married couples in Pakistan underscores the pressing need for an in-depth investigation into the factors influencing communication patterns, the barriers preventing candid discussions, and the subsequent consequences for family planning decision-making. Addressing this research gap is imperative for designing targeted interventions and policy recommendations that foster improved interpersonal communication, empower couples with accurate knowledge, and ultimately enhance the overall efficacy of contraceptive use within marital contexts in Karachi.

Objective of the Study

The study tries to investigate the impact of selected variables (age, education, and family type) on interpersonal communication among husbands and wives for adopting contraceptive methods.

1. To assess the Effectiveness of Interpersonal Communication in Marital Relationships.
2. To assess the Level of Knowledge about Planned Parenthood.
3. To examine the reasons and decision-making processes that lead couples to support Planned Parenthood.

Hypothesis

There is a relation between some selected factors and communication effectiveness.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) emphasizes how social influence, cognitive processes, and observational learning all play a part in determining how people behave (Bandura, [1996](#)). The following ways this idea could be used to explain your research:

Observational Learning

Married couples frequently learn new skills by watching one another's actions, attitudes, and behaviours. The other partner's choices may be influenced by one partner's openness to discuss and use contraceptives in the context of contraceptive use. One spouse may learn and imitate the other's behaviours if they communicate about contraceptives well.

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is a crucial idea in the Social Cognitive Theory; it refers to a person's confidence in their capacity to carry out a behaviour. Self-efficacy can be increased by having a productive conversation regarding contraception use in married relationships. Confidence in making decisions regarding the use of contraceptives can increase with open communication, encouraging feedback, and supportive relationships.

Modelling and Limitation

The notion states that humans pick up behaviours by watching and copying others. In the context of using contraceptives, a married couple may be more likely to engage in comparable communication patterns if they see other couples using effective communication about contraception and seeing positive results.

Reciprocal Determinism

This approach emphasizes the dynamic connection between individual factors, the environment, and behaviour. In the context of your study, interactions between the partners, their attitudes, and their surroundings all impact communication patterns and behaviours linked to contraceptive use. Increased usage of contraceptives may result from effective communication, which may impact communication habits.

Social Norms and Reinforcement

According to the social cognitive theory, people's experiences with reinforcement and social norms impact their behaviour. Effective interpersonal communication on contraception can help build a model of open dialogue, lessen stigma, and foster a positive atmosphere. Successful contraceptive methods that provide positive reinforcement can strengthen these communication patterns even more.

Applying the Social Cognitive Theory to your research can shed light on how married couples in Karachi make decisions and act in ways that are relevant to the usage of contraceptives. Understanding how communication styles, experiential learning, self-efficacy, and societal variables affect married couples' adoption and adherence to contraceptive practices is helpful.

Methodology

In order to determine whether and to what extent there is an association between Planned Parenthood and interpersonal communication competence, this relational study was exploratory in character. In this quantitative study, a questionnaire-based analytical survey was employed to identify the aforementioned occurrences and how different independent variables affected them.



Study Sample

The participants were picked using a simple random sampling technique to ensure neutrality. The target group was educated married couples in Karachi who had been together for more than six months and were between 18 and 49 of age. Fifty couples in all were chosen for the study.

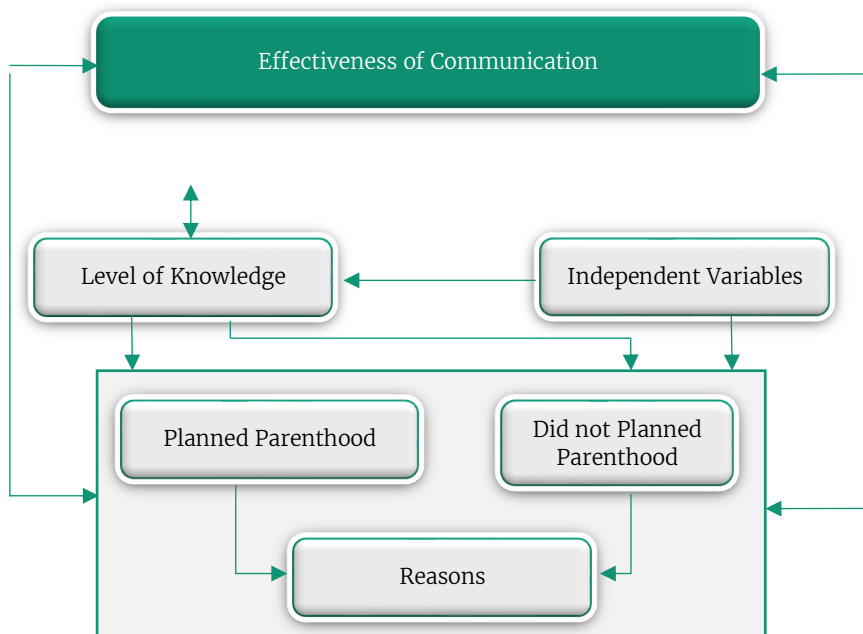
Variables

In this study, independent and dependent variables of both categories were used to evaluate correlations between them. The demographic factors (husband and wife's age, number of children, years of marriage), socioeconomic factors (husband and wife's education, monthly family income, work position), and attitudinal/behavioural factors (gender preference, support for Planned Parenthood) were the independent ones. Dependent phenomena, such as the effectiveness of communication, degree of knowledge, and arguments in favour of or against Planned Parenthood, were thought to have some link with independent phenomena.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 2

Conceptual framework design



Measurement Tool

This study was a descriptive survey where the questionnaire was used as the tool. The questionnaire has three sections: background details, methods of contraception, and interpersonal communication. To determine the greatest and least significant arguments in favour of or against Planned Parenthood, rank analysis was utilized. A two-point scale with the options "Yes" and "No" for the response categories was used to gauge the level of knowledge. A three-point scale was developed to gauge the effectiveness of interpersonal communication. The respondents indicated either "Always," "Sometimes," or "Never."

Results And Findings

The residents of Karachi city are part of this research survey. The analysis showed that the majority of the respondents are 29-39 years of age (57.9%), 18-28 (26.3%), and 40-49 (15.8%). Also, postgraduates made up more than half of 68.4% of the respondent pool.

Figure 1

Respondent's education

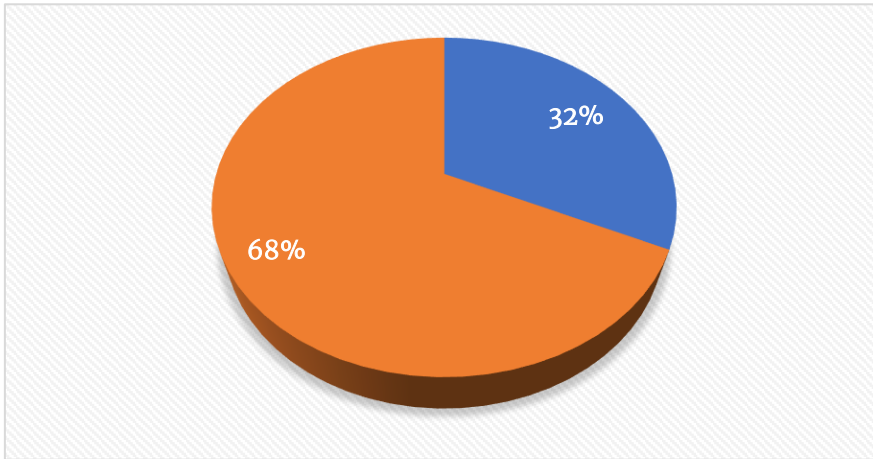
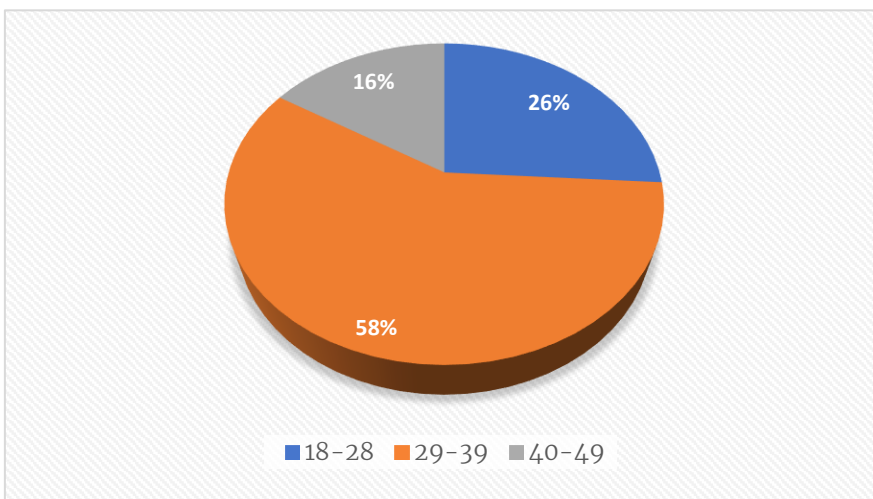


Figure 2

Respondents' age



The majority of the respondents, 63.2%, live in a nuclear family system. The most opted reasons for Planned Parenthood are suitable time (23.4%), managing career first (21.8%) and physical/medical reasons (14.9%). More than half, 63.2 % of the respondents go for Planned Parenthood, and 36.8 % never choose Planned Parenthood. The unknown method of contraception among the respondents was sterilization 63.2% of the respondents were not aware of it, and the most commonly known was female and male condoms 89.5% of the respondents knew about it.

Figure 3

Respondent's family types

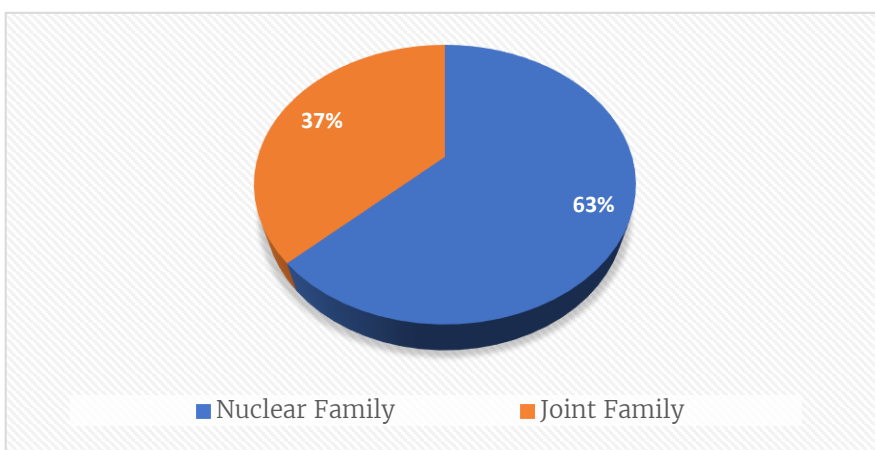
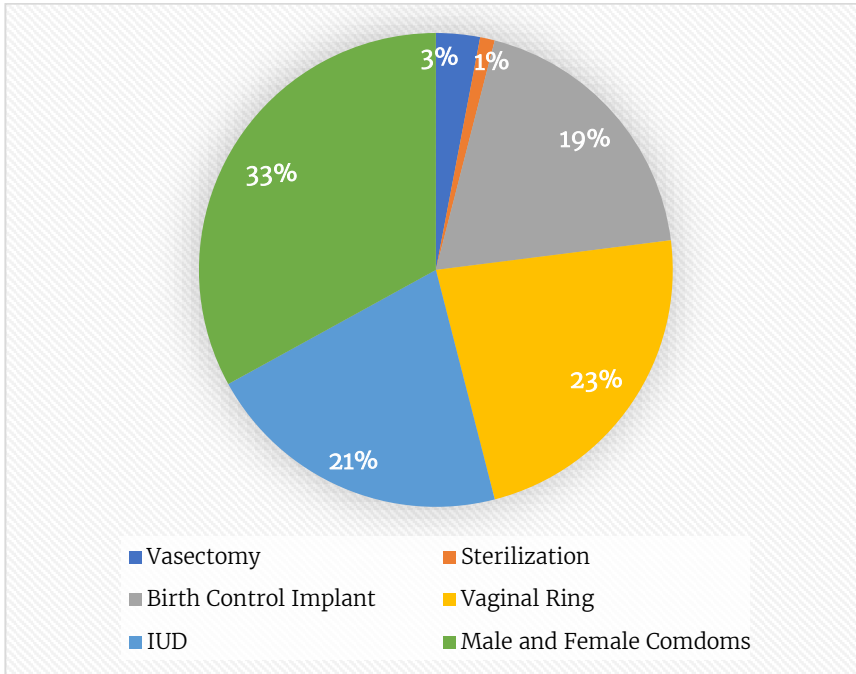


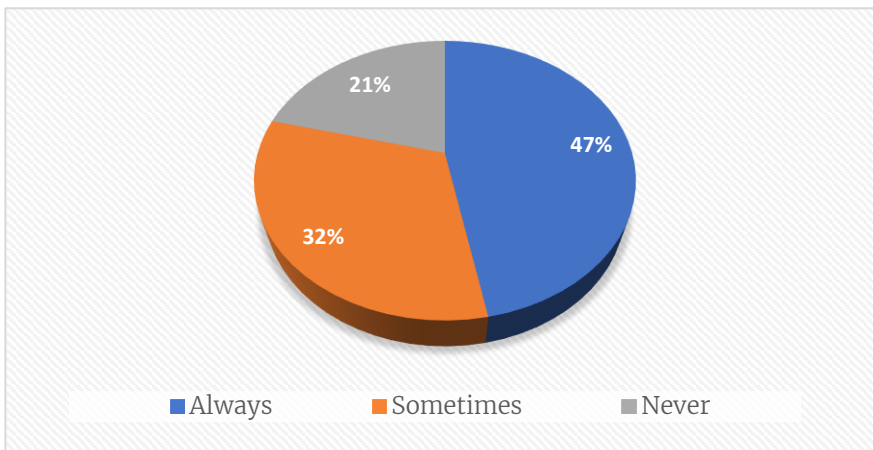


Figure 4
 Respondents’s awareness of contraceptive methods



84.2% of the respondents were in favour of open communication between husband and wife regarding Planned Parenthood or contraceptive use. Whereas 47.4% of respondents communicate with their spouse about the use of contraceptives before intercourse, 31.6% of respondents sometimes communicate, and 21.1% of respondents never communicate.

Figure 5
 Respondents communication about the use of contraceptives before intercourse with their spouse

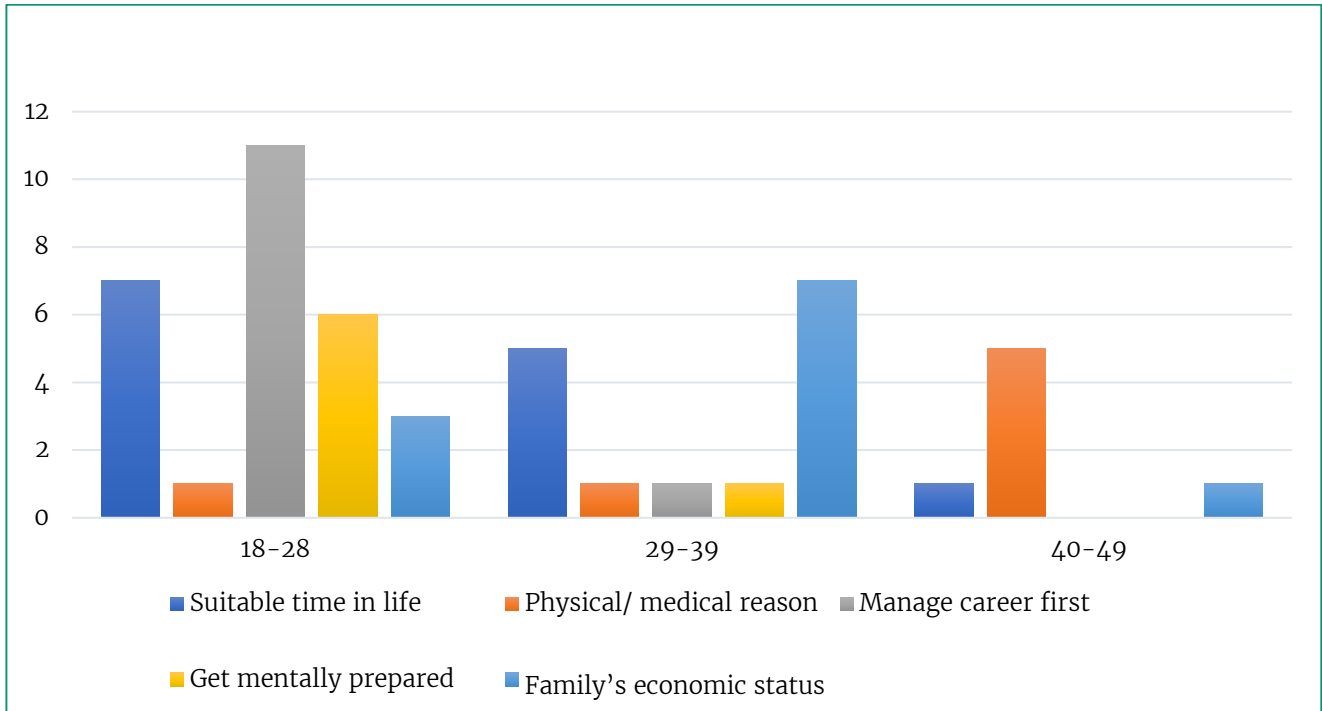


Hypothesis Testing

H₀1: There is no relationship between the age and the reasons for Planned Parenthood. Among the surveyed individuals, a notable majority, particularly those aged 18 to 28, emphasize the importance of career management as the pivotal factor in their decision-making process. Likewise, a significant number of respondents from the 29 to 39 age group indicate that ensuring their family's financial stability is the primary motivation for embracing parenthood. Lastly, within the 40–49 age category, a prevailing majority point to physical or medical reasons as the driving force behind their choices. The null hypothesis is rejected; there is a relationship between the age and the reasons for Planned Parenthood.

Figure 6

Respondents' age and reasons for planned parenthood

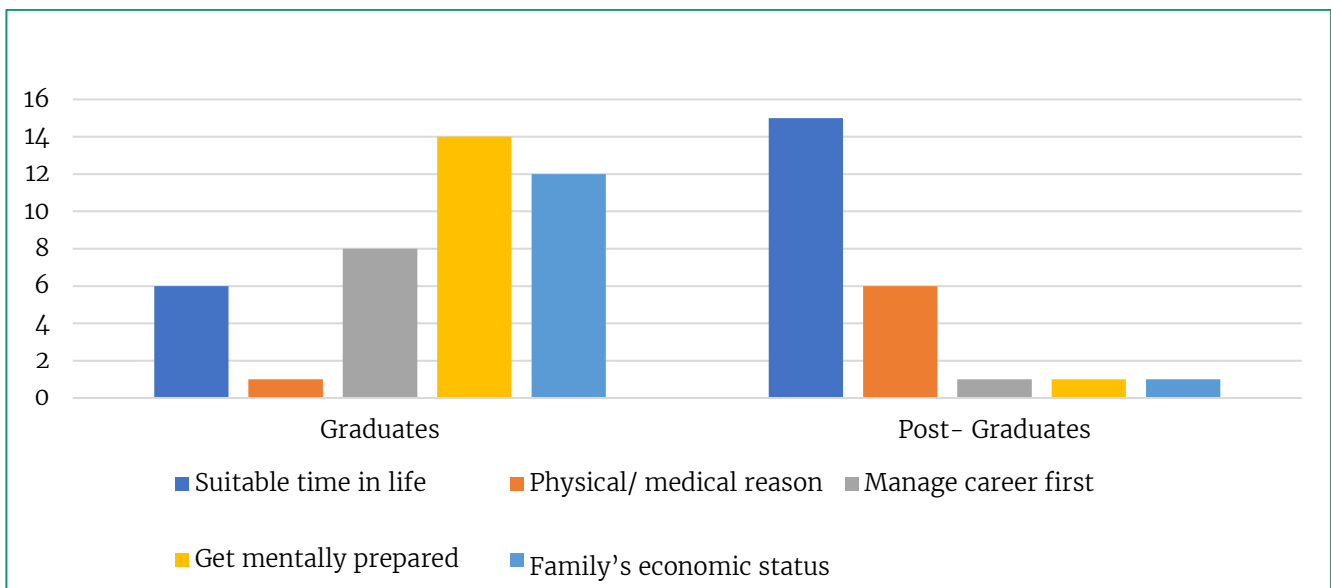


H₂: There is no relationship between education and the reasons for Planned Parenthood.

The primary consideration for graduates was guaranteeing mental readiness, closely followed by their families' financial situation. It's interesting to note that among postgraduates, the necessity of having a sufficient timeframe was emphasized by a significant margin. The null hypothesis is rejected. There is a relationship between education and the reasons for Planned Parenthood.

Figure 7

Respondent's age and reasons for planned parenthood.



H₃: There is no association between the type of family and the effectiveness of communication.

Most were from nuclear households, and a more significant percentage reported using effective communication techniques. In contrast, the communication dynamics of about two-thirds of families

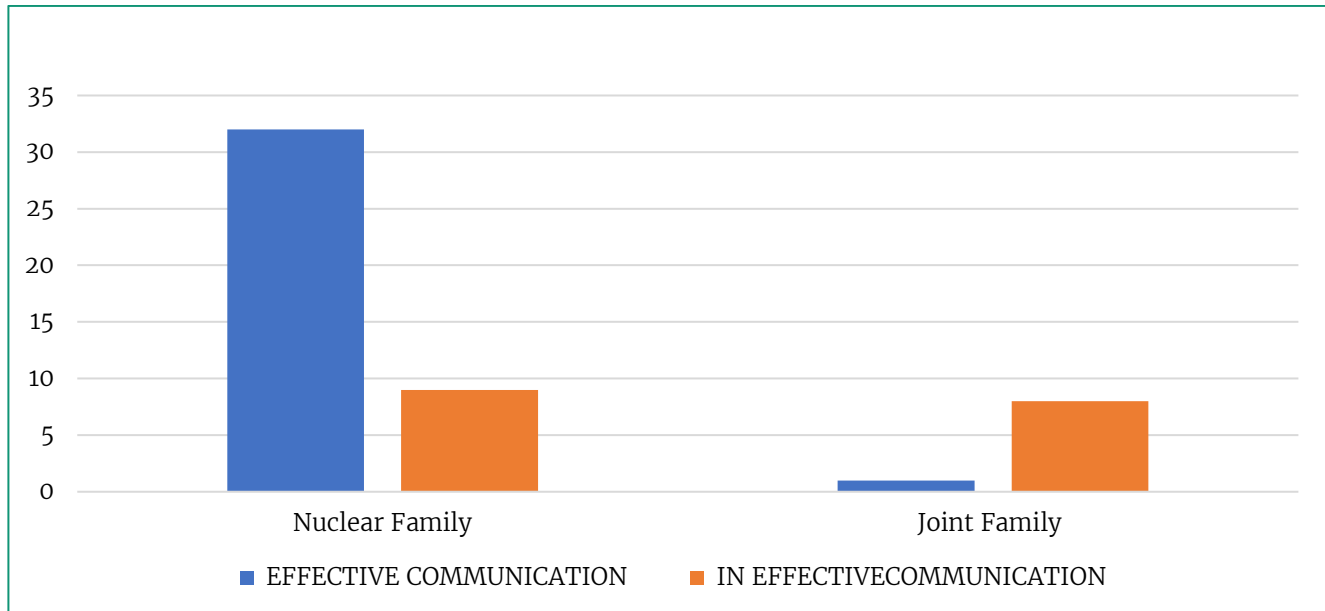


living in joint arrangements were problematic. This disparity can be explained by the fact that roles and responsibilities in nuclear families are typically clearly defined, as was observed during the data-gathering process. Furthermore, it was found that nuclear families allot time for leisure pursuits, providing chances for spouses to have in-person discussions regarding Planned Parenthood.

Contrarily, joint families encountered challenges due to the numerous responsibilities that spouses had to shoulder. These couples frequently found themselves concerned with various problems, leaving them little free time or energy to converse about Planned Parenthood. These revelations provide some justification for the observed data trends. The null hypothesis is rejected. There is a relationship between the type of family and the effectiveness of communication.

Figure 7

Respondents family system and effectiveness of communication for planned parenthood



Conclusion

In conclusion, the interpersonal interactions between married couples are vital for supporting Planned Parenthood. There is still a glaring gap in effectively empowering couples to engage in comprehensive family planning, especially regarding their first child, despite the significant efforts made by government family planning programs to disseminate information and encourage parents to embrace birth control methods and spacing between children. Although these government programs have successfully raised awareness and promoted conversations about family planning, they have not yet filled the gap in providing couples with the resources and support necessary to make educated decisions about when and how to begin their parenthood journey.

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