

FACTORS INFLUENCING USE OF TRADITIONAL METHODS OF CONTRACEPTION AMONG WOMEN IN UGANDA

By

Mugisha Michael Buteera
Makerere University
Department of Population

Growing populations of the developing world and consequently slowed economic development inspired the adoption of family planning programs in a bid to slow down population growth rates and improve the welfare of populations notwithstanding initiating and steering economic development. Contraceptive use has been increasing in Uganda and indeed, in many parts of the sub Saharan Africa and this perhaps explains the recent initiation of fertility reduction in Uganda (UBOS, 2006). The continued increase in contraceptive prevalence in the recent past has been contributed by increase in use of modern contraceptives as well as use of traditional methods. Currently statistics indicate a CPR of 24% among married women, modern methods constituting about 18% whereas traditional methods account for 6% (UBOS 2006; PRB 2009). However, the most desired surge in contraceptive prevalence in Uganda and ultimately decline in fertility rates will not be realized unless researchers, planners and policy makers take a more inclusive approach towards promotion of uptake of contraceptive use. Recent trends have revealed greater preference for use of modern methods whose failure in terms of sustainability has slowed increase in contraceptive prevalence rate. Use of traditional methods has persistently existed side by side with use of modern methods, many times, acting as a substitute for contraceptors who find use of modern methods greatly debilitating to their health. This research study attempted to provide a lucid understanding of dynamics in use of traditional methods which is likely to provide an implicit understanding of recent trends in use of modern methods especially in Uganda. The general objective of the study is to investigate demographic and socioeconomic factors that influence variation in use of traditional methods of contraception in Uganda.

Methods and Data sources

The study was carried out using the 2006 Uganda Demographic and Health Survey dataset. The data was collected and compiled by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (Uganda's Central Statistical Office) in collaboration with MACRO International. The Study made great use of contraception information generated using the woman questionnaire. Questions relating to ever use of contraception will be utilized particularly for this study. A total sample of 190 women who reported to have ever used a traditional method of contraception out of 8,358 women who were interviewed will be the focus of the study. In order to assess the degree of association between the independent and dependent variables, Karl Pearson chi square test was utilized principally because it is the most appropriate statistic for testing for independence between two categorical variables. At multivariate level, the multinomial logistic model was used to determine the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable. The model is best fit for the study because the dependent or response variable has three possible categories that is; use of periodic abstinence, withdrawal method and other folkloric methods. The statistical model for logistic regression is stated below;

$$\log\left(\frac{P(\text{withdrawal} = 2)}{P(\text{periodic_abstinence} = 1)}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \dots + \beta_k X_k \dots\dots\dots 1.1$$

$$\log\left(\frac{P(\text{Other_folkloric_methods} = 3)}{P(\text{periodic_abstinence} = 1)}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \dots + \beta_k X_k \dots\dots\dots 1.2$$

Where;

β is the coefficients of the explanatory variables,

X_k denotes explanatory variables (that is; age of the woman, education level, wealth status and etc) for $X=1, 2, \dots, k$.

Multinomial logistic regression was used because the dependent variable (Y) had three categories that is; use of periodic abstinence, withdrawal method and other folkloric methods such as beads and herbs. The logistic regression model works with relative risk ratios and in light of the equations (1.1) and (1.2), the model measured the probability of a woman choosing either withdrawal or other folkloric methods over periodic abstinence by various independent variables such as age, education, residence, occupation, marital status and so on.

Results

Table 4.1 shows the percent distribution of the selected demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents. The age of women was grouped into seven age groups. The table indicates that majority of the respondents were the age groups 20-24 (22.2%) followed by age groups 25-29 and 30-34, each constituting 16.3% of the respondents. This is an extracted age distribution given the current population dynamics of Uganda's population with almost 77% of the country's population under age 30 a rapid population growth rate of 3.2% (Population Action International 2010; PRB, 2010). Age group 15-19 had the least proportion of respondents (6.8%). The distribution of respondents by region shows that the majority of the users of traditional methods of contraception were from the western region (34.7%) followed eastern region (22.1%) and central region with 21.1%. Kampala had the least percentage of users of traditional methods (4.2%). The distribution of women by region shows the link between use of traditional methods and societal norms and cultural values which are deeply entrenched within communities that are predominantly rural. If this hypothesis holds true, then it is not surprising that Kampala had the least proportion of women who used traditional methods because of being highly urbanized and globalized and highly exposed to use of modern methods due to their loosened ties with their societal values and customs. Table 4.1 reveals that the majority of the women who used traditional methods of contraception were rural residents (88.4%) and only about 11% of the respondents were urban residents. This is probably because of higher unmet of modern contraception due to limited accessibility and availability of modern methods in rural areas. The results in Table 4.1 also show the distribution of users of traditional methods by education level. The table indicates that the majority of the users of traditional methods were primary graduates (59%) followed by those who had achieved secondary education qualifications (21.5%). It is quite surprising that those with no education were the least users of

traditional methods (19.5%). We can hypothetically state that low levels of education are commensurate with high levels of traditional contraception. Data presented in Table 4.1 further describes the distribution of users of traditional methods by religious affiliation. The table shows that the majority of the users of traditional methods were Catholics (45.8%) followed by Protestants (33.7%) with a small proportion of Muslims (11.9%). This is possibly because of the role the Catholic church has incessantly played in encouraging its followers to use traditional methods instead of the modern methods. In addition, about 8.9% of the users of traditional methods belonged to other denominations including the Born-again churches and Seventh Day Adventists. Past studies have significantly found wealth status to have a strong positive influence on use of modern methods. Table 4.1 shows that the rich were more inclined to use of traditional methods (43.7%). These were followed by the poor women constituting about 31% of the women well as those who fell in the middle category constituted about 26% of the women. Children a woman had at first use of a method of contraception were grouped into five categories as portrayed in Table 4.1. The results reveal that the majority of women who used traditional methods (40%) had four children and above. These were followed by those who had one child (18.4%) and 16.4% of the women had two children. The least proportion of users of traditional methods (11.6%) was found among those who had three children. Table 4.1 also shows that women who were employed in the Agricultural sector constituted the majority of the users of traditional methods of contraception (71.6%) followed by those who were employed in sales (16.3%). Those who had no form of employment represented the least proportion of traditional methods users (5.3%). Table 4.1 reveals that the large majority of the respondents were in the married group (70%) followed by those who were cohabiting (19%). This implicitly illuminates the higher preference for marriage as childbearing among women in Uganda. In addition, the widowed group constituted the least proportion users of traditional methods of contraception (1.1%).

Study findings also revealed that about 55% of the users of traditional methods expressed greater inclination or preference for use of periodic abstinence followed by withdrawal method (29%) and some 16% used other folkloric methods of contraception such as herbs and beads (Figure 4.1). This is possibly because of exclusive breastfeeding especially following earlier months after childbirth which is a common practice in most rural areas. The majority of men during this period postpone sexual intercourse with their wives in order to allow them to fully recuperate from the aftermath of child birth. Table 4.2 indicates the associations between selected socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of women and use of traditional methods of contraception. The table indicates that the highest proportion of women (91%) who used periodic abstinence was in Northern region followed by Eastern region with about 60% and the Central region came third with 45%. On the other hand, a highest proportion of women who used withdrawal method was found in Kampala (50%) followed by Western region with about 44%. From the results, we can tentative deduce that there is a very strong association between use of periodic abstinence and strong societal cultural norms and sanctions. This is because the regions that reported the highest proportion of women who used periodic abstinence are the same regions that have in the past displayed great adherence to societal cultural norms and sanctions in household decision making. A p-value of 0.000 indicates a significant association between region and use of traditional methods at 95% level of confidence interval. Education was also found to be significantly associated with use of traditional methods of contraception ($p=0.010$). Table 4.2, indicates that women with the highest level of education (secondary) were the least users of periodic abstinence (39%). On the other hand, women who had no education at all were

the highest users of periodic abstinence (62%). This is because of traditional methods generally has a strong correlation with cultural norms and sanctions of the society. More so, women with primary education (19%) and no education (14%) were using other folkloric methods contraception (e.g herbs and beads) most.

In Table 5.1, Region and specifically the western region turned out to be a significant predictor for use of traditional methods. The results in the table reveal that the relative risk for choosing withdrawal method over periodic abstinence were substantially lower for the Northern region compared to the western region (RRR=0.1014; P=0.000). The results also reveal the same trend for choice of other traditional folkloric methods over periodic abstinence for the same regions (RRR=0.1810; P=0.000). In addition, other factors such as education level, occupation and marital status were found to be significant predictors for the choice of traditional methods women were using. Table 5.1 indicates that the odds of choosing withdrawal method over periodic abstinence were higher for women with secondary compared to women with primary education (RRR=2.19; P=0.05). The same results also show that the odds of choosing withdrawal method over periodic abstinence were significantly higher for women who were not working compared to women who were agriculturally employed (RRR=4.68; P=0.01). However, the odds of choosing withdrawal method over periodic abstinence were higher for married women compared to single women (RRR=0.1605; P=0.01). This is probably because single women often spend some time away from their sexual partners. From the findings, it is clear that a woman's region of origin was found to be the only strongest predictor for use of traditional methods of contraception. This has a tremendous implication of the influences of cultural values and norms in the decisions women make especially in line with contraception. Jinadu et.al., 1997 in their study of traditional contraceptives users in rural Nigeria, discovered that use of traditional methods among women in Nigeria emerged as a cultural imperative, practiced by women of all ages, parities and education levels in the communities. Therefore, the study findings adduces that women who belong to regions where there is strong existence of tribal cultural norms and controls on one's life, such women are more likely to use traditional methods of contraception (particularly, withdrawal and periodic abstinence) than other women who belong to regions where there is less tribal cultural norms and controls on one's life.

Drawing from the above findings, it would be prudent to recommend that the Population Secretariat of Uganda and other partners who are at the helm of improving and expanding access to family planning services within the country, there is need for Family Planning Organization to redesign family planning programs to incorporate the aspect of different regional cultural norms and values in the bid to scale down use of traditional methods and scale up use of more effective methods of contraception. This is because the study found region as the most influential determinant for use of traditional methods. This is implicitly associated with variation in cultural values and norms existing in different region and how they impact on one's life especially in matters of decision making in connection with regulating reproduction.

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Appendix

Table 4. 1: Distribution of Respondents by Demographic and Socioeconomics

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Age group		
15-19	13	6.8
20-24	42	22.2
25-29	31	16.3
30-34	31	16.3
35-39	26	13.7
40-44	23	12.1
45-49	24	12.6
Total	190	100.0
Region		
Central	40	21.1
Kampala	8	4.2
Eastern	42	22.1
North	34	17.9
Western	66	34.7
Total	190	100.0
Type of Residence		
Rural	168	88.4
Urban	22	11.6
Total	190	100.0
Education Level		
No Education	37	19.5
Primary	112	59.0
Secondary	41	21.5
Total	190	100.0
Religion		
Catholic	87	45.8
Protestant	64	33.7
Muslim	22	11.6
Other	17	8.9
Total	190	100.0

Wealth Status		
Poor	58	30.5
Middle	49	25.8
Rich	83	43.7
Total	190	100.0
Children at first use		
0	25	13.2
1	35	18.4
2	32	16.8
3	22	11.6
4+	76	40.0
Total	190	100.0
Occupation		
Not Working	10	5.3
Sales	31	16.3
Employed in Agriculture	136	71.6
Skilled Manual	13	6.8
Total	190	100.0
Marital Status		
Cohabiting	36	19.0
Married	133	70.0
Single	13	6.8
Separated	6	3.1
Widowed	2	1.1
Total	190	100.0

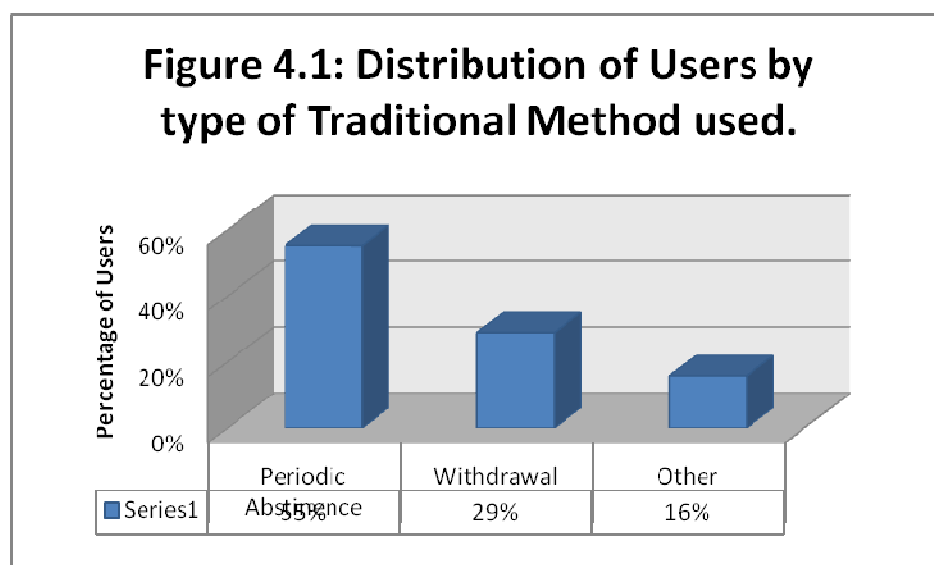


Table 4.2: Differentials in Use of Traditional Methods of Contraception by Background Characteristics

Variable	Traditional Method Used		
	Periodic Abstinence (%)	Withdrawal (%)	Other (%)
15-19	76.9	23.1	0.0
20-24	59.5	28.6	11.9
25-29	58.1	29.0	12.9
30-34	48.4	32.3	19.3
35-39	53.8	38.5	7.7
40-44	56.5	13.1	30.4
45-49	41.7	33.3	25.0
$\chi^2=13.99$; df=12; p-value=0.302			
Region			
Central	45.0	37.5	17.5
Kampala	37.5	50.0	12.5
Eastern	59.5	14.3	26.2
North	91.2	2.9	5.9
Western	42.4	43.9	13.6
$\chi^2=34.99$; df=8; p-value=0.000**			
Type of Residence			
Urban	50.0	45.5	4.5
Rural	56.0	26.7	17.3
$\chi^2=4.56$; df=2; p-value=0.108			
Education Level			
No Education	62.2	24.3	13.5
Primary	58.9	22.3	18.8
Secondary	39.0	51.2	9.8
$\chi^2=13.23$; df=4; p-value=0.010**			
Religion			
Catholic	60.9	25.3	13.8
Protestant	54.7	26.6	18.7
Muslim	40.9	40.9	18.2
Other	47.1	41.2	11.7
$\chi^2=4.86$; df=6; p-value=0.562			
Wealth Status			
Poorest	72.4	15.5	12.1
Middle	49.0	26.5	24.5
Rich	47.0	39.8	13.2
$\chi^2=14.73$; df=4; p-value=0.005**			
Number of Children at First			

Use			
0	60.0	32.0	8.0
1	68.6	14.3	17.1
2	62.5	34.4	13.1
3	50.0	36.4	13.6
4+	46.1	30.3	23.6
$\chi^2=13.59$; df=8; p-value=0.093			
Occupation			
Not Working	20.0	60.0	20.0
Sales	58.1	35.5	6.4
Agriculture—Self Employed	56.6	26.5	16.9
Skilled Manual	61.5	15.4	23.1
$\chi^2=9.70$; df=6; p-value=0.138			
Marital Status			
Cohabiting	52.8	30.6	16.6
Married	52.6	30.1	17.3
Single	61.5	30.8	7.7
Separated	100.0	0.0	0.0
Widows	100.0	0.0	0.0
$\chi^2=7.63$; df=8; p-value=0.471			

****Association was found to be statistically significant**

Table 5.1: Multinomial Logistic Regression Model for Predicting Use of Traditional Methods of Contraception

Variables	Withdrawal Method			Other Folkoric Methods		
	RRR	Std.err	Pvalue	RRR	Std.err	Pvalue
15-19	1.5967	1.1197	0.505	0.7736	0.6418	0.757
20-24	1.0000			1.0000		
25-29	0.9750	0.4833	0.959	0.8515	0.5455	0.802
30-34	1.1735	0.6241	0.764	1.1342	0.7128	0.841
35-39	0.8669	0.4948	0.802	0.5429	0.4041	0.412
40-44	0.9066	0.5547	0.873	1.6643	1.1458	0.459
45-49	1.3961	0.9044	0.606	1.1960	0.9240	0.817
Region						
Central	0.6860	0.2624	0.324	1.1616	0.5686	0.760
Kampala	1.3950	0.8722	0.594	2.1440	1.2800	0.980
Eastern	0.2538	0.1116	0.002	1.3652	0.6455	0.510
North	0.1014	0.0632	0.000	0.1810	0.1338	0.021
Western	1.0000			1.0000		
Type of Residence						
Urban	0.7464	0.4193	0.603	4.2700	0.0002	0.980
Rural	1.0000			1.0000		

Education Level						
No Education	1.1118	0.4679	0.801	1.5105	0.6936	0.369
Primary	1.0000			1.0000		
Secondary	2.1996	0.8669	0.045	0.8115	0.4120	0.681
Religion						
Catholic	1.0000			1.0000		
Protestant	1.5582	0.5088	0.174	0.8259	0.3082	0.608
Muslim	1.8188	0.8797	0.216	1.1122	0.6584	0.857
Other	1.1760	0.5643	0.736	0.4163	0.2968	0.219
Wealth Status						
Poor	0.9256	0.4257	0.867	0.7385	0.3709	0.546
Middle	1.2342	0.5123	0.618	0.9491	0.4284	0.908
Rich	1.0000			1.0000		
Number of Children at First Use						
0	0.6663	0.3769	0.473	0.2503	0.2085	0.096
1	0.6018	0.3158	0.333	0.9695	0.5470	0.956
2	0.6985	0.3281	0.445	0.5605	0.3341	0.331
3	1.0468	0.5097	0.925	0.9408	0.5638	0.919
4+	1.0000			1.0000		
Occupation						
Not Working	4.6785	2.9502	0.014	4.5284	3.3556	0.042
Sales	1.1478	0.5247	0.763	0.6022	0.3822	0.424
Agriculture—Self Employed	1.0000			1.0000		
Skilled Manual	0.9734	0.5086	0.959	1.7710	0.9759	0.300
Marital Status						
Cohabiting	1.1275	0.4272	0.751	1.3177	0.6038	0.547
Married	1.0000			1.0000		
Single	0.1605	0.1184	0.013	1.9257	1.6549	0.446
Separated	0.5381	0.4301	0.438	1.3651	1.0483	0.685
Widowed	1.5599	2.1711	0.749	8.8200	0.0016	0.994