

# Community-Based Marketing and Women's Perceptions of Family Planning Methods in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

*This study investigated the association between community-based marketing and women's perceptions of family planning methods in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey research design was adopted. The population consisted of women of reproductive age (18–49 years), including nursing mothers who were aware of family planning methods in the study area. A sample size of 399 respondents was determined using the Taro Yamane formula. Data were collected using a structured five-point Likert-scale questionnaire administered through convenience sampling. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were used with SPSS version 24. The findings revealed that health education, community outreach, and community advocacy were positively and significantly associated with women's perceptions of family planning methods. However, due to the non-probability sampling technique, the findings were interpreted as associative rather than causal. Ethical standards were observed through informed consent, voluntary participation, and privacy of respondents' information. It was therefore recommended that strengthening community-based health education, outreach, and advocacy programmes would improve women's perceptions and adoption of family planning especially in the rural areas.*

**Keywords:** Community-Based Marketing, Health Education, Community Outreach, Community Advocacy, Reproductive Health Perception, Family Planning, Akwa Ibom State



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### INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is one of the developing countries where population issue has become a major area of concern during the last few decades. Contraceptive practices

among women of reproductive age remained very low (15 percent) with use level higher in urban areas (27 percent) than rural areas (9 percent) due to several factors namely

negative perception of family planning, inadequate access to healthcare services and personal reasons (National Population Commission and ICF International, 2024; Ndaeyo et al., 2025). According to Population Division of United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, (UNDESA, 2022). The global progress in meeting the demand for family planning with modern methods (SDG indicator 3.7.1) has stalled at approximately 77% since 2015, sub-Saharan Africa has demonstrated measurable gains, with coverage increasing from 52% to 58% by 2022.

Family planning could prevent as many as one in every three maternal deaths by allowing women delay motherhood, space birth, avoid unintended pregnancies and abortion and stop childbearing when they reached or achieved their desired family size (World Health Organization, 2024). Evidence suggests that more than half of all couples in the developing world are using family planning to delay space or limit feature pregnancies, yet the need for family planning keeps increasing, as the number of women of reproductive age continues to grow (World Health Organization, 2024).

Although several studies have examined social marketing and family planning adoption in Nigeria and other sub-Saharan African countries, existing research has largely focused on contraceptive prevalence, service utilization, and partner influence, with less empirical attention given to how specific community-based marketing variables that change women's perceptions of family planning methods (Asangaeneng et al., 2024; Garba, 2023; Silumbwe et al., 2020).

Recent studies in Nigeria show the growing importance of community involvement and health communication strategies is improving reproductive health outcomes, yet these studies often examine social marketing tools in isolation or at national levels, thereby ignoring states' levels where cultural, religious, and socio-economic factors strongly influence women's reproductive health decisions (Etim et al., 2023; Akamike et al., 2024).

In Akwa Ibom State, empirical evidence on the joined roles of health education, community outreach, and community advocacy in changing women's perceptions of family planning remains limited. This study therefore contributes to the literature by empirically investigating the association between community-based marketing variables and women's perceptions of family planning practices.

Despite national and statewide family planning interventions, the unmet need for modern and traditional contraceptive use remains high among women of reproductive age in Nigeria, especially in sub-Saharan regions. In Akwa Ibom State, cultural beliefs, misinformation, limited access to reproductive health education, and low community involvement continue to change women's perceptions of family planning practices, contributing to low uptake and continued exposure to maternal health risks.

Recent demographic evidence reveals that contraceptive prevalence in Akwa Ibom State remains below the national urban average, with marked differences between urban and rural communities (National Population Commission & ICF, 2023). While community-based marketing strategies are increasingly promoted as tools for improving reproductive health perception, empirical evidence on their effectiveness in Akwa Ibom State remains limited. Hence, the intent of the researchers to examine the relationship between community-based marketing and women's perceptions of family planning methods in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between community-based marketing and women's perceptions of family planning methods in Akwa Ibom State.

The specific objectives were to;

- (i) investigate the relationship between health education and women's perceptions of family planning methods in Akwa Ibom State.
- ii determine the relationship between community outreach and women's perceptions of family planning methods in Akwa Ibom State.
- iii examine the relationship between community advocacy and women's perceptions of family planning methods in Akwa Ibom State.

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested:  
Ho<sub>1</sub>: Health education has no significant relationship on women's perceptions of family planning methods in Akwa Ibom State.

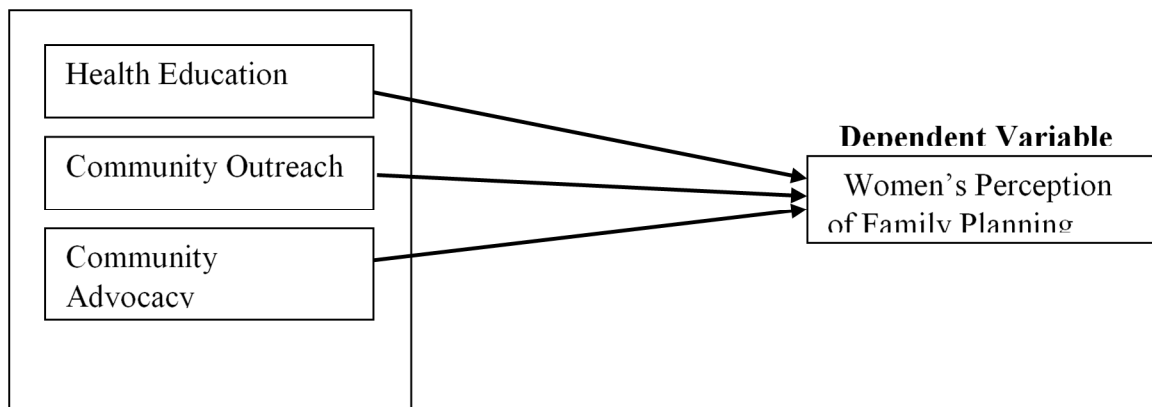
Ho<sub>2</sub>: Community outreach has no significant relationship on women's perceptions of family planning methods in Akwa Ibom State.

Ho<sub>3</sub>: Community advocacy has no significant relationship on women's perceptions of family planning methods in Akwa Ibom State

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Concept of Community Based Marketing**

Community-based marketing refers to the strategic use of locally grounded communication and engagement activities to influence attitudes and behaviors within a specific community context (Figure 1). In the area of reproductive health, community-based marketing traces on trust-building, culturally sensitive messaging, and participatory approaches to improve awareness and acceptance of family planning services (Dangi & Petrick,



**Figure 1:** Conceptual model showing the relationship between health educations, community outreach and community advocacy as independent variables and women's perceptions of family planning methods as the dependent variable. Source: Researcher's Conceptualization (2025).

2021; Udoh & Willard, 2023). These strategies mainly operate through health education, community outreach, and advocacy, which collectively aim to address misinformation, cultural resistance, and mis-information that change women's perceptions about family planning methods.

### Health Education and Women's Perception

World Health Organization, (WHO, 2024) defined health education as a combination of learning experiences designed to help individuals and communities improve their health by increasing their knowledge or influencing their attitudes. This has to do with activities that educate individuals about health behaviors and materials that promote physical, mental, and social well-being. Empirical evidence shows that health education plays a vital role in changing women's perceptions of family planning by correcting misconceptions, improving risk awareness, and increasing confidence in modern contraceptive methods. When women receive accurate, culturally appropriate reproductive health information, they are more likely to develop favorable perceptions and attitudes toward family planning services, which in turn influences their acceptance decisions (WHO, 2024). This makes health education an importance channel through which community-based marketing can positively influence women's perceptions of family planning methods.

### Community Outreach and Women's Perception

According to ElGeed et al. (2020), community outreach referred to efforts by an organization or institution to connect its ideas, programs, or services with the community, especially underserved groups, in order to

provide help, education, or healthcare. It usually involves activities that extend beyond the usual boundaries of services or institutions. Community outreach is the process of bringing information, services, or resources to people where they live or spend time, often focusing on helping those who have limited access to traditional institution (Park, 2021). The goal is to enhance access to important services such as health, education, or social support. Community outreach promotes women's perceptions of family planning by bringing services and information closer to their social environments, thereby reducing structural and psychological barriers to access. Outreach activities such as mobile clinics, home visits, and community forums increase visibility and familiarity with family planning services, which can positively influence trust and acceptance among women (ElGeed et al., 2020; Park, 2021). As a result, sustained outreach efforts are expected to improve women's perceptions of family planning methods, especially in rural areas.

### Community Advocacy and Women's Perception

Community advocacy involves actions taken by individuals or groups to promote or defend a particular cause or policy that will benefit the community. Its goal is to influence public policies, social systems, or resource allocation to address issues like health, education, or justice (Park, 2021). It often includes campaigning for better services or influencing local or national policy. Community advocacy influences women's perception of family planning by changing social norms and legitimizing contraceptive use through respected community voices. Advocacy efforts involving traditional leaders, religious figures, and women's groups can reduce stigma, counter cultural resistance, and promote supportive narratives around

family planning (Campenhout et al., 2020). By influencing collective attitudes, community advocacy creates an enabling environment that positively change women's perceptions and willingness to adopt family planning methods.

### **Women Perception of Family Planning**

Women's perception of family planning refers to their beliefs, attitudes, awareness, and emotional responses toward contraceptive methods and reproductive health services. These perceptions are changed by personal experiences, cultural norms, religious beliefs, and exposure to health information (Asangeneng et al., 2024). Positive perception is associated with greater adoption and application of family planning services, while negative perceptions often bring out myths, fear of side effects, or moral concerns can discourage uptake. According to Hanna and Wozniak (2013), perception is a process whereby individual selects, organizes as well as interprets sensations. The level of any individual's perception affects the way he interprets the world around him. Women's perception plays a critical role in changing health-related decision-making and behavioral intentions. Positive perceptions of family planning services such as trust in healthcare providers, perceived safety of contraceptive methods, and satisfaction with service delivery are associated with increased acceptance and sustained use of contraception (Mfon & Uford, 2022; Asuquo et al., 2024).

### **Community-Based Marketing and Women Perception of Family Planning Methods**

Family planning according to United Nation Population Fund (UNFPA, 2022) includes information about how to become pregnant when it is desirable, as well as treatment of infertility. Today, through the use of community-based marketing programs, individuals or groups in the community can exchange information about a specific organization, its products, and services. This exchange usually leads to either a positive change for customers to patronize or negative consumption of the products or services based on their perceptions. It is really sad to know that an average woman in Nigeria does not believe in modern family planning methods. This is because the government, NGOs and individuals still have much role to play, since community-based program is considered to be one of the most powerful forms of communication that can change women's perception on the use of family planning methods in Akwa Ibom State (Ferguso & Leiriao, 2017).

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)**

Ecological Systems Theory is the best fit theory as it sees

individual behaviour changed by various systems like family, community, and societal influences. The theory considers how these systems interact and impact a person's choices and behaviours. Ecological Systems Theory mirror on explaining how community-based marketing influences women's perceptions of family planning across difference levels of social interaction. At the microsystem level, health education targets individual knowledge and attitudes toward contraception. The mesosystem level considers interactions between women, healthcare providers, and community outreach programs that promotes access and trust. At the ecosystem level, community advocacy influences institutional support, local leadership engagement, and policy implementation related to family planning services. While, the macrosystem level includes cultural, religious, and societal norms that change reproductive health perceptions.

#### **Application of Ecological Systems Theory in Family Planning**

Ecological system theory is useful for understanding how community, family, healthcare systems, and societal norms influence women's perceptions of family planning. Community-based marketing programs can work within these systems to address potential barriers and encourage positive perceptions of contraception.

#### **Review of Empirical Studies**

Alemayehu et al. (2021) investigated the use of community-based marketing interventions to promote family planning use among pastoralist women in Ethiopia: cluster randomized controlled trial. The objective of the study was to assess the effect of community-based interventions such as male involvement in family planning education, women's education on family planning and control. A total of 33 clusters were randomized and allocated with a one-to-one ratio. Intervention components included health education on family planning to married women and men by extended family leaders (a traditional community-based structure that serves as a social support group), video-assisted message on family planning and assisting the extended family leaders using health workers and health extension workers (HEWs). Results showed that male involvement in family planning education was 34%, women's education on family planning was 17.5% and control was 4.3%. There was a positive change in the proportion of family use in the male involvement in family planning education and women's education on family planning. The researchers recommended more community-based health education focusing males as a promising strategy for improving family planning use and intention to use family planning.

Akamike et al. (2020) researched on perception, pattern of use, partner support and determinants of uptake of

family planning methods among women in rural communities in Southeast Nigeria. The aim of the study was to assess the perception, pattern of use, partner support and determinants of uptake of family planning methods among married women of reproductive age in rural communities of Ebonyi state. The study used quasi-experimental study. A total of 484 married women of reproductive age were recruited using multistage sampling method. Four focus group discussions (men and women) and pre tested semi-structured interviewer-administered questionnaires were used to collect information from the participants. Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 software and thematic analysis. Chi square test and logistic regression were carried out at 5% significance level. Results indicated that only 26.2% of respondents were currently using any method of family planning. The most commonly used method was the natural method (57%). Amongst those who reported using artificial methods, 32.7% used condoms, 27.3% used implant while 23.64 and 16.4% used injectable and pills respectively. Qualitative findings showed that only few families were using a method of family planning and those who did not practice family planning perceived it to interfere with God's plan for fruitfulness and to be counter-productive to household income due to decreased manpower for agricultural activities. Poor partner involvement and support for family planning was also cited as a deterrent by both male and female participants. Perception and use of family planning methods is poor in rural communities of Ebonyi state. One of the recommendations was improving uptake of family planning methods in these rural communities as well as debunking fatalistic views, and cultural and religious myths through advocacy.

Shafi (2020) did a study on perception of family planning and reasons for low acceptance of NSV among married males of urban slums of Lucknow city - A community-based study. The aim of the study was to access the perception of married males towards family planning, knowledge about NSV and enumerate the causes for low acceptance of NSV. A multi-stage random sampling technique was used. In the first stage, two urban slums from each Nagar-Nigam zone were selected randomly. In the second stage, from each selected slum, a sample of 24 eligible households was selected at random to achieve the desired sample size. Findings of the study revealed that female sterilization technique was considered as the most effective family planning method by the male respondents.

Socio-cultural barriers were the most important reason for the low acceptance of NSV. Educational status was found to be the most important predictor for these socio-cultural barriers. It was then concluded that measures should be taken to remove misconceptions, to increase uptake of NSV through health education, outreach and advocacy.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design, which is appropriate for examining relationship among variables at a single point in time without manipulating the study environment. The design enabled the assessment of associations between community-based marketing dimensions and women's perceptions of family planning methods, rather than causal effects (Akpan et al., 2022). The population of the study consisted women of reproductive age (18–49 years) residing in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, estimated at 215,090 according to the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS, 2023). A sample size of 399 respondents was considered adequate for the study, guided by the Taro Yamane (1975) formula as a benchmark for sample adequacy, rather than for statistical generalization, given the non-probability nature of the sampling procedure. A convenience sampling procedure was used to select respondents. This method was considered appropriate due to the sensitivity of reproductive health issues, difficulties associated with accessing women of reproductive age across different communities, and the exploratory nature of the study at the state level. Similar methods have been adopted in reproductive health perception studies where probability sampling is limited by access and ethical considerations. However, the researchers acknowledge that the use of convenience sampling limits the generalizability of the findings beyond the study sample.

Data were collected from primary sources using a structured online questionnaire administered via Google Forms. The instrument was divided into two sections: Section A captured respondents' demographic characteristics, while Section B contained items measuring the independent variables (health education, community outreach, and community advocacy) and the dependent variable (women's perception of family planning methods). Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." To ensure content and construct validity, questionnaire items were adapted from existing literature on community-based marketing and reproductive health perception and were reviewed by experts in marketing and public health. The reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The results revealed acceptable internal consistency, with alpha values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 for all constructs, confirming the reliability of the measurement scales. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. The regression analysis was used to examine the strength and direction of associations between the study variables. Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained from all respondents, and privacy of

**Table 1:** Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Showing the Association between Health Education, Community Outreach, Community Advocacy and Women's Perceptions of Family Planning Methods in Akwa Ibom State.

Variable	Parameters	Coefficient	Std error	Tcal – value
Constant	$\beta_0$	4.12	0.31	9.05**
Health education( $X_1$ )	$\beta_1$	0.51	0.07	4.12
Community outreach( $X_2$ )	$\beta_2$	0.48	0.06	4.32**
Community advocacy( $X_3$ )	$\beta_3$	0.39	0.05	3.73***
R		0.71		
R-Square ( $R^2$ )		0.60		
Adjusted $R^2$		0.59		
F – Statistics		142.74		
F – Probability		0.000		
Durbin-Watson stat		2.170		

Dependent variable: Women's perception of family planning methods: Source: Researcher's Computation (2025)

responses were assured. No personally identifiable information was collected, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty.

## RESULTS

Data collected from 399 women of reproductive age in Akwa Ibom State were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, while multiple linear regression analysis was used to test all the hypotheses. This method was considered appropriate because the independent variables are conceptually related and may jointly influence women's perceptions (Table 1). Before the regression analysis, diagnostic tests were conducted to examine the assumptions of linear regression. Multicollinearity was examined using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and tolerance values, which were found to be within acceptable thresholds, showing no serious multicollinearity among the predictors. Normality and homoscedasticity of residuals were also examined and met the required assumptions for regression analysis. The regression analysis centered on assessing the strength and direction of associations, rather than causal effects, between the predictor variables and women's perceptions of family planning methods. The results of the model reveal that the predictors ((health education, community outreach, and community advocacy) jointly explained a substantial proportion of the change in women's perceptions of family planning methods ( $R^2 = 0.60$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.59$ ). The overall regression model was statistically significant ( $F=142.74$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), showing that the independent variables collectively have a significant association with the dependent variable (Table 1). Health education was found to be positively and significantly associated with women's perceptions of family planning methods ( $\beta = 0.51$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that increased exposure to health education activities is associated with more favorable perceptions of family planning methods. Community outreach also revealed a positive and

statistically significant association with women's perceptions of family planning methods ( $\beta = 0.48$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This shows that outreach programmes targeting women within their communities are associated with improved perceptions of family planning services. Also, community advocacy was positively and significantly associated with women's perceptions of family planning methods ( $\beta = 0.39$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), meaning that advocacy programmes aimed at addressing cultural, social, and informational barriers contribute to changing favorable perceptions of family planning. Overall, the findings suggest that community-based marketing dimensions are important predictors of women's perception of family planning methods in Akwa Ibom State; however, the results reflect associative rather than causal relationships due to the cross-sectional nature of the study.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that health education, community outreach, and community advocacy are significantly associated with women's perceptions of family planning methods in Akwa Ibom State. The positive relationship between health education and women's perceptions is in line with previous studies (Shafi, 2020; Alemayehu et al., 2021; Garba, 2022), which trace the role of targeted educational interventions in addressing misconceptions and improving reproductive health awareness. The strong association observed between community outreach and women's perceptions may be explained by the closeness of outreach programmes to women's everyday environments, which promotes trust, message credibility, and accessibility of family planning information. Related findings have been showed in community-based reproductive health studies where local engagement enhanced perception and adoption of family planning services. Community advocacy also revealed a significant association with women's perceptions, supporting earlier evidence that advocacy efforts can influence cultural, religious, and social beliefs that affect

family planning acceptance (Akamike et al., 2024; Shafi, 2020). Advocacy interventions that involve community leaders and stakeholders may be important in changing positive reproductive health beliefs. Despite these findings, the study has some limitations. The use of a cross-sectional design and convenience sampling limits the ability to generalize the results and precludes causal inference. Also, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce response bias.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that health education, community outreach, and community advocacy are significantly associated with women's perceptions of family planning methods among the women surveyed in Akwa Ibom State. The regression results demonstrate a strong and statistically significant relationship between the community-based marketing variables and women's perceptions, with health education ( $\beta = 0.51$ ), community outreach ( $\beta = 0.48$ ), and community advocacy ( $\beta = 0.39$ ) all showing positive effects. The overall model explained a substantial proportion of the variance in women's perceptions ( $R^2 = 0.60$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.59$ ) and was statistically significant ( $F = 142.74$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating the robustness of the findings. These results suggest that increased exposure to community-based marketing interventions is associated with more favorable perceptions of family planning. While the cross-sectional design and non-probability sampling preclude causal interpretation and generalization to all women in Akwa Ibom State, the statistically significant coefficients provide strong empirical evidence of the relevance of health education, outreach, and advocacy in shaping perceptions within the studied context. Overall, by empirically disaggregating community-based marketing into its key components and quantifying their associations with women's perceptions, the study makes a meaningful contribution to the family planning literature in Nigeria and reinforces evidence from related studies globally.

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