

Perception of North-Central Nigerian Muslims on Modern Family Planning Practices: Assessment of Shari'ah Jurisprudence

Ahmed Abiodun Muhammed-Mikaaeel¹, Shehu Kazeem Hassan², Anifat Tosin Salaudeen³, Anifat Opeyemi Abdulazeez⁴

¹ Faculty of Law, Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria, Nigeria. E-mail: ahmed.muhammed-mikaaeel@kwasu.edu.ng

² Kwara State College of Arabic and Islamic Legal Studies (CAILS), Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. E-mail: hassanshehu317@gmail.com

³ Faculty of Law, Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria, Nigeria, E-mail: salaudeenanifatossin@gmail.com

⁴ Faculty of Law, Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria, Nigeria. E-mail: anifatopeyemi2004@gmail.com

*Author Correspondence email: ahmed.muhammed-mikaaeel@kwasu.edu.ng

Abstract

The Islamic world cannot close its eyes to the topical global family planning debates. That is, the practice of modern family planning is based on the potential of maintaining family size within the family's financial competence. Reports have come from various quarters alleging negative perceptions by the Northern Nigerian Muslim of the family planning practice. This study thus empirically assesses the perception of Muslims in the North-Central region of Nigeria on modern family planning practices. The study adopts mixed methods of doctrinal and non-doctrinal to gather information, which were analysed accordingly. The study finds that the Muslims in the North-Central region of Nigeria had positive perceptions of the modern family planning practices. The study, however, finds that there was abysmally low practice of modern family planning in the region of the country. This suggests that there is a practice of multitude procreation in this part of the country despite the unfriendly economic hardship being experienced. The study recommends strategic sensitisation by the relevant stakeholders in the country.

Keywords: North-Central Nigerian Muslims, Modern Family Planning, Shari'ah Jurisprudence

1. Introduction

The campaign for the practice and sustainability of family planning is gaining momentum across the globe.¹ This comes forth as a form of mechanism towards combating the negative effects economic meltdown on the populace.² It is thus hypothesised that reducing the effect of a harsh economy has a significant link with reduced population growth. It is on this basis that population size adjustment with strategic family planning has been recommended to cushion the effect of the economic meltdown being experienced presently.³ It is noteworthy that the Islamic world is not excepted from the experience. The popularity of the family planning practice is deeply rooted in salient history from Shari'ah jurisprudence as practised during the time of the Prophet (PBUH).⁴ However, modernisation has changed the practice. The modern family planning practice entails various contraceptive methods towards child spacing and the prevention of unwanted pregnancies.⁵ Therefore, there have been reports that many Nigerian Muslims have exhibited aversions to modern family planning under the modern conventional methods.⁶ This is because of the misconception towards and phobia of modern family planning methods.

However, the issue at the heart of this study relates to the longstanding tension between modern family planning interventions and the beliefs of many Muslims in North-Central Nigeria. While both the Nigerian government and worldwide advocates have promoted family planning as a pathway to better maternal and child health, less poverty, and sustainable population growth, uptake in Muslim communities in North-Central Nigeria has been limited. The resistance to their uptake has much to do with the perception that certain family planning methods, especially artificial contraceptive methods, violate Islamic principles of procreation and God's will. Many Muslims view the practice of family planning as interfering with Qadar Allah (divine predestination) or possibly condoning immorality by dissociating sexual activity from procreation. Moreover, the fact that the Shari'ah jurisprudence (fiqh al-usrah) surrounding which methods are permissible is not clearly understood has perpetuated moral angst and prevented an opportunity for clarity. Although fiqh al-usrah qualifies family planning in certain situations, without adequate religious counsel and due to various socio-economic and cultural factors, a distrust has developed toward modern medical interventions. Therefore, the current study aims to bridge the gap between religious interpretations and public health aims by exploring how North-Central Nigerian Muslims view modern family

¹ V Hatcher, *et al*, 'Catalyzing Sustainable Development: Assessing the Impact of Family Planning Programs on Population Control, Reproductive Health, and Gender Empowerment' (2023) 17(2) Law and Economics 111-130

² EO Iyanda, *et al*, 'Family Planning Practices and Economic Development in Nigeria: A Systematic Review' (2024) 11(2) Benue Journal of Sociology 139-150

³ *ibid*

⁴ M Grema, *et al*, 'Legal Framework for Family Planning as Reproductive Health and Women's Right under Islamic Jurisprudence' (2025) 7(6) International Journal of Social Science Research and Anthropology 65-78

⁵ I Hassan, *et al*, 'Utilization of modern family Planning Methods among Women of Reproductive Age Group in North-Central Nigeria; rural-urban comparison' (2022) 8(2) Indian Journal of Community Family Medicine 99-105

⁶ *ibid*

planning interventions in a Shari'ah context, while also establishing the socio-demographic factors that shape those views.

The study aims to examine the perception of Muslims in the North-Central region of Nigeria on the modern family planning practices, albeit through the lens of Shari'ah jurisprudence. The study concentrates on the topical discussions of family planning practices under Shari'ah and juxtaposes them with the modern methods through the principles of *halal* (lawful) and *haram* (unlawful) for clarification. The study is significant because it clears the misconceptions and phobias about modern family planning practices by Muslims in the North-Central region of Nigeria. It is also significant because there is a literature gap on the aspect of the empirical assessment of the perception of Muslims in the North-Central region of Nigeria on modern family planning practices from the perspective of Shari'ah.

2. Method

This study relies on both doctrinal (literature-based analysis) and non-doctrinal (quantitative approach). The first part of the discussion relies on the data derived from primary sources of law under Shari'ah and as well as the secondary sources. The primary sources are principally the Holy Qur'an and Hadith, while the secondary sources include *Qiyas*, *ijma'*, positions of scholars from various literature found in textbooks, journals, the internet, conference proceedings, etc. The information gathered via the doctrinal method was subjected to thematic content analysis. The second part of the discussion focuses on the assessment of the perception of North-Central Nigerian Muslims. Non-doctrinal method involving a quantitative approach for data collection was adopted. One hundred questionnaires (100) were administered to selected participants in the North-Central part of Nigeria. However, 78 questionnaires were valid as duly returned and analysed. The quantitative method was adopted for the data collection because it enables the researchers to reach out to a greater number of Muslims in the North-Central part of Nigeria simultaneously within a short period of time to assess their perceptions on the modern family planning practice from a Shari'ah perspective. The adopted approach also allowed for confidentiality as the respondents filled out the questionnaires at their convenience and privately. The privacy even endeared some Christian residents of the North-Central part of Nigeria to participate in the exercise.

3. Analysis or Discussion

3.1. Conceptual Analysis of the Modern Family Planning Practices under Shari'ah

The modern family planning practice is a practice which seeks to achieve child spacing and the avoidance of unwanted pregnancies by couples for adequate planning for the family.⁷ The essence of family planning tilts towards ensuring

⁷ T Mulatu, *et al*, 'Modern Family Planning Utilization and its Associated Factors among Currently Married Women in Rural Eastern Ethiopia: A Community Based Study' (2020) 1 BioMed Research International 1-2

quality life for the couples and their children, and control of procreation within the family's financial capacity and reality.⁸ The topical issue of modern family planning is not alien to Shari'ah. This is because Shari'ah is a perfect legal system that blends with the advancement in science and technology, as it is being experienced in the modern family planning practices.⁹ The unique feature of Shari'ah recommends sticking to the provisions of the law and its sources, namely the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW) for solution to societal problems.¹⁰ This is because the Qur'an and Sunnah are the foundation of Shari'ah and the bases of all rulings and judgments. Marriage is strongly encouraged in Islamic jurisprudence.¹¹ This is because it is the voluntary agreement by two opposite adult partners uniting in love, tranquillity and affection for cohabitation and procreation and creating lasting happiness together in this world and the hereafter.¹² The primary aim of Marriage is to keep everyone in society away from various kinds of damage, thereby bringing benefits, tranquillity and peace of mind to society.¹³ It is therefore important to note that Shari'ah infuses discourse on family planning practices under the sacred institution of marriage as part of *halal* Islamic healthcare.¹⁴

Shari'ah perceives the family as the nucleus and a significantly basic component unit of any society under a social and cultural system.¹⁵ One of the objectives of marriage is procreation to maintain humanity via sexual marital relations.¹⁶ Notwithstanding, marriage is not principally for the purpose of having children. Shari'ah perceives procreation as a phenomenon which should not negate tranquillity, happiness and quality of life in the marital life-long journey.¹⁷ Thus, if tranquillity is threatened, a potential problem is spotted and deserves a solution to protect the marital union. This is where the idea of family planning comes into play. This is because family planning practice is a useful tool towards enhancing tranquillity in marriage.¹⁸

⁸ OS Babatunde and JU Evelyn, 'Knowledge, Attitude and Acceptance of Modern Family Planning Method among Women Attending Post-Natal Clinic in Ayeka Health Centre in Okitipupa Local Government Area, Ondo State, Nigeria' (2017) 1(4) BioMedical Journal of Scientific & Technical Research 1037-1038

⁹ AY al-Hibri, 'Family Planning and Islamic Jurisprudence' 1-5 available at <<https://karamah.org>> accessed 6 August 2025

¹⁰ BTA Nugroho, 'Integration of Islamic Education with Science and Technology in Islamic Junior High School' (2017) Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan Islam 1-27

¹¹ MA Meraj, 'The Importance of Marriage in Islam' (2018) 6(11) International Journal of Research – Granthaalayah 1-5

¹² A Robaj, 'Marriage According to the Islamic Law (Shariah) and the Secular Law' (2021) 10(2) Perspectives of Law and Public Administration 45

¹³ S Lyubomirsky and L King, 'The Benefits of Frequent Positive Affect: Does Happiness Lead to Success?' (2005) 131(6) Psychological Bulletin 803-855

¹⁴ Al-Hibri, (n 9)

¹⁵ SH Nasr, *Science and Civilisation in Islam* (ABC International Group, Inc, Chicago, 2001) 24

¹⁶ AA Muhammed-Mikaaeel and AT Salaudeen, 'Systematic Exposition to the Implication of Procreation under the Qur'an and Hadith' (2024) 5(2) AQWAL: Journal of Qur'an and Hadis Studies 207-223

¹⁷ *ibid*

¹⁸ *ibid*

Modern family planning practices come with various contraceptive methods.¹⁹ The contraception helps families to achieve tranquillity by having control over the number of children they desire to have in view of the economic reality.²⁰ Owing to the importance of family in Muslim societies, the topical issue of modern family planning has attracted the attention of Islamic jurists. This culminates in considerable attention being given to modern family planning practice from a Shari'ah compliance angle.²¹

It is reported that modern family planning practice attracts low patronage in Muslim countries, thereby accounting for the low prevalence rate.²² It is reported further that many Muslims nurse the apprehension that the campaigns for modern family planning are strategies by the West to cut down the population of Muslims across the globe. It is feared that the various methods of preventing unwanted pregnancies under the modern family scheme are another form of infanticide in disguise.²³ It is reported that this ideology is prevalent among the North-Central Nigeria Muslims.²⁴ To this end, some literature has shifted attention to the validity of family planning practices under Shari'ah.

3.2. Validity of Family Planning Practices under Shari'ah

The scope of family planning generally focuses on promoting the sanctity of family institutions towards the management of the human resources for the available resources in line with population schemes and policies.²⁵ The Holy Qur'an discusses the topical issue of family planning practices, albeit indirectly. The provision of the Qur'an constitutes a legal framework for the contemporary issue of modern family planning practices.²⁶ It is asserted that Shari'ah does not permit family planning practices. The assertion is premised on the fact that the Qur'an makes it unlawful for Muslims to terminate the lives of their children because of poverty. The exhortation by the Prophet encouraging Muslims to multiply by way of procreation is another bedrock of the assertion.²⁷ However, the assertion is misconstrued because a sound understanding of Shari'ah tenets requires considering all other relevant

¹⁹ Mulatu, (n 1)

²⁰ Muhammed-Mikaaeel and Salaudeen, (n 16)

²¹ Nasr, (n 9)

²² M Najimudeen, 'Islamic Perspective on Family Planning' (2020) 3(3) Scholar International Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology 90-93

²³ *ibid*

²⁴ OO Akpoti, *et al*, 'Demand for Modern Contraceptives and Use among Women of Reproductive Age in North Central Nigeria' (2023) 10(30) International Journal of Community Medicine and Public Health 958-967

²⁵ Y Mahendradhata, *et al*, 'Health Systems in transition' (2017) 7(1) The Republic of Indonesia Health System Review, 34

²⁶ AH Ragab, 'Islam and Family Planning' available at: www.faithtoactionnetwork.org accessed on 6 August 2025

²⁷ Qur'an, Suratul An-Nahl (Q17:31)

conditions.²⁸ The Prophet's cousin, Sayyidina Ali, practised *al-'azl* (coitus interruptus), which is a form of family planning practice without objection from the Prophet (SAW).²⁹

Understanding the comprehensive position of Shari'ah on the modern family planning practice requires holistic consideration.³⁰ The Hadith of the Prophet on multitude procreation preference among Muslims and the Quranic stance on killing of children because of poverty are purposely to negate the widespread pre-Islamic practice, which promoted the elimination of children on the grounds of low income and male gender preference over the female gender. However, the Quranic prohibitive and preventive measures do not translate to concluding that contraception and other methods of modern family planning are ordinarily prohibited.³¹ The majority view among the Muslim scholars is that contraception is permissible, though perhaps disliked in certain cases.³²

Imam al-Ghazali asserted that the maxim which states that what is not expressly prohibited by *nass* (the Quranic and Sunnah) by analogical reasoning is permissible.³³ With respect to contraception, he noted that there are no such express prohibitions found in Islamic jurisprudence.³⁴ He thinks that contraception is permissible in Islamic jurisprudence, but it is, however, frowned upon (*makruh*) if practised with a view to avoiding a female child. This is because under Shari'ah, preferring a male child to a female child is frowned upon.³⁵ However, Imam Al-Ghazali opined that contraception is permissible for some other reasons. This could be to protect a woman from the risk foreseen by a medical expert in the event of subsequent childbirth. He is also of the opinion that preserving a woman's beauty and ensuring the children are sizably given birth to within the family's financial capability are other permissible reasons.³⁶ Thus, adopting contraception with a view to avoiding procreation beyond the family's financial capability does violate the right of the unborn. It is important to ensure good living for those already born as part of the right to life.³⁷

There are several authentic narrations which confirm the validity of contraception ('*Azl*) in Islamic jurisprudence. The Hadith of Jabir is to the effect that the Prophet (SAW) approved of the practice of contraception ('*Azl*) during his lifetime because

²⁸ Muhammed-Mikaaeel and Salaludeen, (n 16)

²⁹ AR Omran, *Family Planning in the Legacy of Islam* (Routledge, London, 2004) 13

³⁰ AM Sadiq, *A Study of Family Planning Practices among the Muslims in Ashaiman* (Master Thesis, College of Humanities, University of Ghana, Legon, 2020) 1-103

³¹ N El-Hamri, 'Approaches to Family Planning in Muslim Communities, (2010) 36(1) MBJ Sexual & Reproductive Health 27-31

³² *ibid*

³³ AH Al-Ghazzali, '*ilya ulum Ad-din* (Cairo: Mustafa Al - Babi Al Halabiwa Awladuhu, 1939) 34

³⁴ *ibid*, 35

³⁵ Qur'an, Suratul An Nahl (Q16:58)

³⁶ Qur'an, Suratul An Nahl (16:2)

³⁷ *ibid*

the companions were doing that without objection from the Prophet.³⁸ Another Hadith as reported by Jabir indicated further that the Prophet (SAW) also recommended the practice of contraception ('Azl) for those wishing to avoid pregnancies in their sexual activities with their lawful partners.³⁹ To this end, Islamic jurists agree with the position of Imam Ghazali above regarding the permission of the practice of contraception ('Azl) on the considerable reason, especially due to life tribulations resulting from financial difficulty to cater for all the basic needs of the family.⁴⁰ Despite the recognition and approval of family planning practices under Shari'ah, it is important to note that not all the contemporary methods of family planning are permissible. This is because Shari'ah categorises the modern family planning methods into *halal* and *haram* from an ethical point of view.

3.3. *Halal* Family Planning Practices under Shari'ah

Consequent upon the recognition, approval and validity of the family planning practices under Islamic jurisprudence, certain form of modern family planning practices is identified and ascertained as being medically safe and permissible as birth control methods under Shari'ah.

3.3.1. Safe Period Approach

The approach of the safe period is safe, as the name implies. It is the oldest method which makes use of calendar calculation rhythm to determine when legally married couples can have sexual intercourse without any apprehension of conceiving a pregnancy for child spacing.⁴¹ This is a woman's menstrual cycle-based approach to ascertain her safe period. The medically ascertained fact is that, all things being equal, any woman in her puberty naturally experiences outflow of blood from her private part periodically when she has not conceived pregnancy.⁴² Thus, this safe period method or approach is a viable means of child spacing to achieve family planning. This is done by a pilot study of the woman's menstrual cycle for about six months to ensure accuracy. This will ensure accurate calculation of the probable fertility and infertility period for the prevention of unwarranted pregnancy.

Some medical experts assert that women experience ovulation two weeks before the next menstrual cycle.⁴³ Going by this assertion, medical experts fix a safe period to a period of two weeks before menstruation and two weeks after menstruation. By

³⁸ Reported by Bukhari and Muslim

³⁹ BA Wani and DR Anjum, 'Islamic Perspective on Birth Control: Issues and Prospects', (2019) 2(1) Al-Afkar Journal for Islamic Studies 200-208

⁴⁰ *ibid*

⁴¹ A Ese, *et al*, 'Knowledge of Safe Period and Utilization of Long-Lasting Reversible Contraceptives among Female Adolescents in Urban City in Nigeria' (2024) 1 Asian Journal of Pregnancy and Childbirth 15-22

⁴² *ibid*

⁴³ G Jones, *et al*, 'Women's Experiences of Ovulation Testing: A Qualitative Analysis' (2015) 12(116) Reproductive Health 1-11

this, it is believed that, if a man has sexual intercourse with his wife within this period, the wife is not likely to conceive; hence, it serves as a good method of birth control.⁴⁴ Although it is also asserted that the safe period could be achieved between the period of five days before the menstrual cycle and five days after the menstrual cycle. This is based on the analogy that some women react faster to others owing to their different natures. The safe period approach guarantees birth control and maximum enjoyment by both partners because the husband can ejaculate into her wife without the apprehension of pregnancy.⁴⁵ This is because at this period, the sperm finds no egg to fertilise and consequently drops out.

3.3.2. The Approach of the Temperature-Based Method

This approach is similar to the safe period approach, but with a different dimension, which is temperature-based. The approach of the temperature method is a technical method of birth control and child spacing in achieving family planning.⁴⁶ The approach is an ovulation detector.⁴⁷ Medically, the early morning temperature of women is asserted to be normally between 0.20°F and 0.40°F.⁴⁸ This becomes higher after ovulation until the next menstruation. This is a good indication that ovulation has occurred because it could show late fertile days commencing with the third rise in temperature.⁴⁹

3.3.3. The Barriers Creation Approach

As the name implies, it is a method which creates certain barriers between the sperm and the eggs of a woman. Invariably, the methods prevent pregnancy by keeping the eggs out of the reach of the sperm.⁵⁰ This could be achieved by various means such as using condoms (for men and women), using a diaphragm (for women), adopting spermicide (contraceptive foam, tablets, jelly or cream), etc.⁵¹ The use of condoms ensures the creation of a barrier between the sperm and the eggs. Also, the spermicide and diaphragm. For instance, if a diaphragm is inserted into a woman's private part over the cervix at least three hours before sexual intercourse, it could prevent the sperm from reaching the eggs.⁵²

⁴⁴ Ese, *et al*, (n 41)

⁴⁵ TA Salako, 'Islamic Perspective on Birth Control' (2013) 3(1) American International Journal of Contemporary Research, 122

⁴⁶ OK Ogidan, *et al*, 'Development of an Automated Temperature Measuring Device: A Potential Tool for Ovulation Detection' (2023) 6(1) ABUAD Journal of Engineering Research and Development (AJERD) 13-21

⁴⁷ *ibid*

⁴⁸ *ibid*

⁴⁹ World Health Organization, 'Natural Family Planning' (1988) 1-75

⁵⁰ NB Asante, *et al*, 'Barrier Methods of Contraception' 1-22 available at [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/379771000 Barrier Methods of Contraception](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/379771000_BARRIER_METHODS_OF_CONTRACEPTION) accessed 3 October 2025

⁵¹ *ibid*

⁵² PJ Feldblum, *et al*, 'The Effectiveness of Barrier Methods of Contraception in Preventing the Spread of HIV' (1995) 9(A) AIDS 585-593

3.3.4. Hormonal Methods

These are methods that prevent a woman's ovary from releasing eggs, thereby making it difficult for the sperm to connect with the eggs.⁵³ This keeps the lining of the womb from supporting a pregnancy. They are in the form of pills, injections and implants.⁵⁴ Medical scholars think that the administered pill, patch, shot, or ring in hormone medications contains manufactured forms of the hormone's estrogen or progesterone.⁵⁵ They asserted that the hormonal methods work in three ways.⁵⁶ That is, by preventing a woman's ovaries from releasing eggs every month and causing the cervical mucus to thicken. This makes it difficult for the sperm to reach and penetrate the eggs.⁵⁷

Apart from the birth control methods discussed above, it must be pointed out that there are a few others which are not acceptable under Shari'ah. This is because of their permanent nature. Hence, using them will simply try to change what Allah has created. Methods of modern family planning practices in this category are considered haram in Islamic jurisprudence.

3.4. *Haram Family Planning Practices under Shari'ah*

Below are the methods which are prohibited under Islamic law because they involve permanent loss of fertility, and they are categorised under the greater risk method.

Sterilization Method

This method is frowned upon under Shari'ah. This is because the sterilisation method is a method of permanent loss of fertility. In Islamic jurisprudence, all the Sunni schools disallowed the sterilisation method.⁵⁸ The jurists assert that the method of sterilisation is tantamount to castration, thereby changing the normal creation by Allah (SWT). Classical jurists have opined that sterilisation is considered a crime which could attract serious sanctions in the form of punishment.⁵⁹ The jurists likened sterilisation to the offence of *Qatl* (murder), which attracts payment of *Diyyah* (blood money).⁶⁰ To this end, Islamic scholars assert that sterilisation

⁵³ FE Casey, 'Hormonal Methods of Contraception' (2023) Health Living 1, available at https://www.msmanuals.com/home/women-s-health-issues-/family-planning/hormonal-methods-of-contraception#Contraceptive-Implants_8951419 accessed 3 October 2025.

⁵⁴ *ibid*

⁵⁵ G Harper-Harrison, *et al*, 'Hormone Replacement Therapy' (2024) National Library of Medicine available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books.NBK493191> accessed 3 October 2025

⁵⁶ *ibid*

⁵⁷ L Gressier and K Lewis, 'Changes in Maternal Morbidity and Infant Outcomes following State-Level Abortion Bans Post-Dobbs: A Comparative Interrupted Time Series Study' (2025) 25 BMC Public Health 2265

⁵⁸ A Habib, *et al*, 'Contraception – An Islamic Perspective' (2020) 5(2) Journal of British Islamic Medical Association 4

⁵⁹ D Dahlan and J Jusmawati, 'Islam Law Review about Applications of Contraception Vasectomy and Tubectomy Methods to Muslim Community in West Sumatera' (2022) 7(1) Al Hurriyah Jurnal Hukum Islam 31

⁶⁰ *ibid*

encourages celibacy, which clearly contradicts the valid tradition of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to the effect that celibacy has no place under Shari'ah.⁶¹ Misconception by the proponents of celibacy that the state of celibacy enables one to fully concentrate on the worship of Allah and avoid unnecessary distraction coming forth with child procreation received stern condemnation by the Prophet (SAW).⁶² It is therefore worthy of note that Shari'ah forbids sterilisation as a method of family planning except where there is a serious excuse for such a person under the law.⁶³

3.4.1. Abortion as a Method of Family Planning

In contemporary times, the practice of resorting to abortion as a form of getting rid of unwanted pregnancy is on the increase. Abortion is a practice of outright and deliberate termination of a fetus in the womb of its mother. This practice is disapproved by Allah (SWT) as contained in the Holy Qur'an, where Allah (SWT) expressly prohibited the practice of killing children for fear of poverty.⁶⁴ Though abortion is not expressly mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, Islamic scholars have subjected it to *ijtihad* (Islamic research). Thus, with respect to abortion, Islamic scholars maintain two views. Maliki Madhhab opined that abortion is outrightly forbidden under Shari'ah.⁶⁵ Hambali Madhhab opined that abortion could be carried out based on necessity, provided it is done within the first 120 days of conceiving the pregnancy.⁶⁶ They based their opinion on the verse of the Holy Qur'an, which explained when the foetus becomes living⁶⁷ and the further explanatory Hadith of the Prophet, signifying the 120th day as the day the *ruh* (soul) is blown into the foetus.⁶⁸

Following this reasoning, the jurists hold the belief that aborting the foetus within the first 120 days would be permitted in a situation of grave necessity. It is important to point out that in Islamic jurisprudence, abortion is not permitted to be used as a measure for birth control or family planning. It can only be done where there are certain cogent reasons, such as cases of threat to the mother's life, imminent harm to the child or a deformed foetus. The permission of abortion in this circumstance is to save the life of the mother.⁶⁹

⁶¹ Sadiq, (n 30)

⁶² Ulama, Islamic Perspectives on Reproductive: Health and Childbirth Spacing in Nigeria' The Child Initiative 6-89 available at <https://tciurbanhealth.org> accessed 6 August 2025

⁶³ *ibid*

⁶⁴ Qur'an, Suratul Al-'Isra (17:31)

⁶⁵ See M. Yusuf al-Abdary, 'Al-Taju wa al-Iklil (Vol. 2, Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1398H) 622; M Ahmad-Qurnaty, 'Qawanin al-Fiqhiyyah (Beirut: Dar al-'Ilmiyyah, 1988) 235

⁶⁶ *ibid*

⁶⁷ Qur'an, Suratul Al-Hajj (22:4)

⁶⁸ Sahih Bukhari, Book 77: Divine Will (Al-Qadar) available at <<https://www.iium.edu.my/deed/hadith/bukhari/077>> accessed 6 August 2025

⁶⁹ S Almutairi, 'Abortion under Sharia Law: The Need for the Extension and Expansion of Women's Right to Privacy in Saudi Arabia' (2024) 144 Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization 144 23-39

3.5. Consensual Factor between Couple as regards Family Planning Decision under Shari'ah

The consensual factor has generated debates amongst Islamic scholars. The frequent debates have been over who, between the husband and the wife, has the right to decide when to have children and how this right is to be administered between them. To this end, the debates split the opinions of Islamic scholars according to Mahmud Syaltut.⁷⁰ The first view states that it is the husband who has the right to decide when to have children.⁷¹ Thus, by this opinion, if the husband desires pregnancy, the wife cannot refuse her husband. However, a careful consideration of the Quranic position reveals that Allah commands that newborns should be weaned for two years as a form of divine consideration between husband and wife.⁷² Al-Razi is of the view that without the willingness of the parent through deliberation, children would not be weaned before two years.⁷³ He asserted that the wife cannot engage in the acts of pregnancy, procreation, etc., without the involvement of her husband; it is unfair to give the right of consent to the husband alone. This is because the husband is not directly burdened by pregnancy, breastfeeding and so forth.

The second view is held by Hanfiyyah. They opined that both spouses should be involved in the decision regarding when to have children.⁷⁴ This opinion is more acceptable in all aspects of procreation, the each of the spouses shares their unique responsibilities. For instance, the husband donates sperm, shoulders the financial responsibility of taking care of the pregnancy, the wife and the child, as well as he or her upbringing. In the same vein, the wife donates an ovum, carries the pregnancy, weans the child and takes care of the upbringing of the child. Thus, both the husband and wife deserve the right to decide when to have children. Moreover, the Qur'an exhorts couples to reason together in matters of family affairs concerning procreation, pregnancy, weaning of the child, upbringing, etc.⁷⁵ The third view gives the right to decide when to have children to the couples as well as to the society represented by the government institution. However, Shafiiyah, Hanabilah and *Jumhur Ulama* assert that the right of the couples is greater compared to that of the government.⁷⁶ The last view is similar to the third view in that it gives both the couples and the society the right to decide when to have children. This view,

⁷⁰ G Mohammed, *et al*, 'Difference of opinions among the Four Sunni School of Islamic Jurisprudence on Family Planning' (2025) 7(8) International Journal of Educational Research and Library Science 1-15

⁷¹ RD Siregar, 'An Analysis of Islamic Law on Childfree's Life Choices' (2024) 2(2) El-Sirry: Jurnal Hukum Islam Dan Sosial 15-28

⁷² Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah (2:233)

⁷³ S Mehrprisheh, *et al*, 'The Importance of Breastfeeding Based on Islamic Rules and Qur'an' (2020) 5(2) Hospital Practice Research 37-41

⁷⁴ Siregar, (n 71)

⁷⁵ Qur'an, Surah Al Baqarah (Q2:233)

⁷⁶ Siregar, (n 71)

however, states that the right of the government is greater than the right of both couples, as espoused by the scholar of Hadith.⁷⁷

It is important to note that the last two views are interesting, especially the fourth. If the decision to have children is solely left in the hands of the couples, it may affect the society that is seeking to promote public good and avoid harm. Thus, *Al-Maslaha al-Ummah* (public interest) ought to be given priority for *the* good of all in society.

3.6. *Al-Maslaha Al-Mursala* and Family Planning Practices

Shari'ah is a dynamic legal system whose dynamism readily accommodates the advancement in science and technology for the benefit of mankind. The primary source of Shari'ah dictates for every aspect of Muslims' affairs, inclusive of family planning practices. With the conclusive establishment of the recognition and approval of family planning practices under Shari'ah as orchestrated above, the influence of modern scientific methods of family planning cannot therefore be overemphasised. Though it is important to note that Shari'ah does not approve of all the available modern scientific family planning within the understanding of the concepts of *haram* and *halal* family planning practices. Several benefits have been identified from the practice of modern family planning in Islamic jurisprudence. One important benefit derived from the practice is the potential to reduce poverty among couples in the Muslim Community.⁷⁸ Islam urges Muslims to strive for *Ayatu Tayyibah* (good leaving) without limit within the purview of *Halal* (permissible) means, the reason being that all resources in heaven and on earth have been created for the benefit of mankind.⁷⁹ By implication, anything that may prevent them from achieving a good living, such as poverty, financial overburden, debt, uncontrollable family growth beyond family means, etc., should also be avoided.

According to the 2015 population estimates by the UN report, it is asserted that uncontrollable population growth will make it burdensome for governments to eradicate poverty in the poorest countries of the world and achieve even the provision of the basic amenities of life in their jurisdictions.⁸⁰ More so, it is now the consensus that emerging rapid population growth as a result of uncontrolled procreation can lead to an increase in the number of poor people in some communities. Efforts to eradicate poverty and inequality in these communities must start from the family level through family planning practices. Thus, the modern family planning practices are the key to poverty reduction. The Family planning practice also guarantees a quality life and good health in the form of benefits. In

⁷⁷ *ibid*

⁷⁸ Muhammed-Mikaaeel and Salaudeen, (n 16)

⁷⁹ Qur'an Suratul Al-Baqarah (2:284) Qur'an, Suratul Al-Imran (3:189)

⁸⁰ United Nations (UN), 'World Population Prospects: Key Findings & Advance Tables' (Department of Economic and Social Affairs; Population Division, 2015) available at <https://www.un.org> accessed 6 August 2025.

Islamic jurisprudence, Shari'ah balances the satisfaction of both the spiritual and material needs of mankind. In the holy Qur'an, Allah enjoins Muslims that 'do not forget your worldly entitlement and do good to the people the way Allah has been good to you.'⁸¹ Every day, approximately hundreds of women die because of pregnancy and childbirth, which occur in low-income countries.

More so, it is asserted that lack of proper care and malnutrition has been the cause of death of children under the age of 5. This situation is occasioned by poverty. There exists a demographic record of high-risk pregnancies⁸² accounting for the high mortality rate as a result lack of practice of family planning. Therefore, resorting to family planning has potential benefits towards improved family life for the couples and the children.⁸³ The foregoing shows that there are inherent benefits in the practice of family planning which coincide with the objective of Shari'ah. This is because under the Shari'ah principle of *Al-Maslaha al-Mursala*, the practice of family planning is sanctioned in view of the embedded benefits to the *Ummah*.

3.7. Empirical Assessment of the North-Central Nigerian Muslims' Perception of the Modern Family Planning from Shari'ah Perspective

Bio Data

Table 1: Respondents' Bio Data

Variable		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	34	43.6
	Female	44	56.4
Total		78	100

Source: Authors, Quantitative Field Study, 2025

Variable		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Religion	Muslim	75	96.2
	Non-Muslim	3	3.9
Total		78	100

Source: Authors, Quantitative Field Study, 2025

Variable		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age Range	16-25	33	42.4
	26-35	19	24.4
	36-45	14	17.9

⁸¹ J Mohsen, 'Islamic Conception of Well-being; The Pursuit of Human Well-being (2017) 109-131 available at https://doi.org/19.1007/978-3-319-39101-4_5 accessed 6 August 2025

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⁸³ E Starbird, *et al*, 'Investing in Family Planning: Key to Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals' (2016) 4(2) Global Health: Science and Practice Journal 191-210

	46 and above	12	15.4
Total		78	100

Source: Authors, Quantitative Field Study, 2025

Variable		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Marital Status	Single	35	44.9
	Married	42	53.9
	Divorced	1	1.3
Total		78	100

Source: Authors, Quantitative Field Study, 2025

Variable		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Level of Shari'ah Knowledge	Student of knowledge	54	69.2
	Ordinary practising Muslim	17	21.8
	Islamic scholar/Teacher/Imam	7	8.9
		78	100

Source: Authors, Quantitative Field Study, 2025

Table 1: The table starts with the sex of the respondents in consideration of the respondents' bio data. Their sex is either male or female. 34 (43.6%) respondents were male, while 44 (56.4%) were female. This shows that in the North-Central part of Nigeria, those who showed more concern about the issue of modern family planning practices were female. Next to the sex variable is the religion. For this variable, 75 (96.2%) of the respondents were Muslims, while the non-Muslims among the respondents were 3 (3.9%). Though this study focuses on the assessment of the North-Central Muslims on the modern family planning practices, the questionnaires were distributed amongst the Muslims and non-Muslims. However, fewer non-Muslims showed interest and participated in the survey. It therefore shows that the topic is apt because the major focus is on the Muslims, as confirmed by the variable's percentage. Another variable considered in the respondents' biodata is age range. 33 (42.4%) of the respondents were between the age range of 16-25, 19 (24.4%) of the respondents were between the age range of 26-35, 14 (17.9%) of the respondents were between the age range of 36-45, and 12 (15.4%) of the respondents were between the age range of 46 and above. It is important to note that the age range of 16-25 was the highest participating respondents. This shows that the younger adults in the North-Central part of Nigeria show more concern about the issue of modern family planning practices.

For the marital status, 35 (44.9%) of the respondents were single, 42 (53.9%) of the respondents were married, and 1 (1.3%) of the respondents were divorced. This

shows that the divorced in the North-Central part of Nigeria show little concern about the issue of modern family planning practices. It is noticeable that the married tops the list of respondents with the highest concern for the theme of this study, followed by the single. The last variable showed the level of Knowledge of Shari'ah by the respondents. Thus, 54 (69.2%) of the respondents were students of knowledge, 17 (21.8%) of the respondents were ordinary practising Muslims, and 7 (8.9%) of the respondents were either an Islamic scholar, Teacher or Imam. By this, the outcome of the survey reflects the perceptions of the relevant stakeholders, especially the last category in his last variable, occupying 8.9%.

Distributions as per Respondents' Responses to Questionnaire

Table 2: Distribution of Responses on the awareness of the meaning of family planning practices

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	78	100
Disagree	0	0
Total	78	100

Source: Authors, Quantitative Field Study, 2025

Table 2: As shown in the above table, 78 (100%) of the respondents were aware of the meaning, essence and implication of family planning. This shows that all the respondents actually knew and were aware of the rationale for their participation in the survey. This shows that the majority of the Muslims in the North-Central part of Nigeria were well informed with respect to the concept of family planning practices.

Table 3: Distribution of Responses on the awareness of the various methods of modern family planning

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	75	96.2
No	3	3.8
Total	78	100

Source: Authors, Quantitative Field Study, 2025

Table 3: This depicts that 75 (96.2%) of the respondents were aware and familiar with the various methods of modern family planning practices, while 3 (3.8%) were not aware of the various methods of modern family planning practices. This also shows that the majority of the North-Central Nigerian Muslims were well of the various methods for the modern family planning practices.

Table 4: Distribution of Responses on the awareness of all the specific methods of modern family planning practices

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	75	96.2
Disagree	3	3.8
Total	78	100

Source: Authors, Quantitative Field Study, 2025

Table 4: 75 (96.2%) of the respondents are aware of the specific methods of the modern family planning practices such as the use of contraceptive pills, intrauterine devices (IUDs), implantable devices, injectable contraceptive, diaphragms, male and female condoms, hormonal patches, sterilisation procedures and abortion. However, 3 (3.8%) of the respondents were not aware of those specific methods.

Table 5: Distribution of Responses on the awareness of whether Shari'ah supports modern family planning practices

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	31	39.7
Strongly Agree	14	17.9
Disagree	28	35.9
Strongly Disagree	5	6.4
Total	78	100

Source: Authors, Quantitative Field Study, 2025

Table 5: On the fact that Shari'ah actually supports the modern family planning practices, 31 (39.7%) agreed, 14 (17.9%) strongly agreed, 28 (35.9%) disagreed, while 5 (6.4%) strongly disagreed. The results, therefore, show that the majority of the North-Central Nigerian Muslims agreed to the fact that Shari'ah is not actually against the modern family planning practice. This shows that the respondents' idea of family planning practice is also deeply rooted in Shari'ah.

Table 6: Distribution of Responses on the awareness that not all modern family planning practices are permissible in Shari'ah

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	52	66.7
Strongly Agree	21	26.9
Disagree	3	3.9
Strongly Disagree	2	2.6
Total	78	100

Source: Authors, Quantitative Field Study, 2025

Table 6: This section tests the knowledge and perception of the respondents on the fact that it is not all the various methods of the modern family practices that are permissible under Shari'ah. In this vein, 52 (66.7%) agreed to the position, 21 (26.9%) strongly agreed, 3 (3.9%) disagreed, while 2 (2.6%). The trend of their responses shows that the majority of the North-Central Nigerian Muslims are aware that Shari'ah does not approve of all the various methods of modern family practices.

Table 7: Distribution of Responses on whether they can subscribe to the modern family planning practices

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	50	64.1
No	28	35.9
Total	78	100

Source: Authors, Quantitative Field Study, 2025

Table 7: This table tests the respondents' perception of whether they can subscribe to the modern family planning practices. While 50 (64.1%) responded affirmatively that they can subscribe to the modern family planning practices, 28 (35.9%) responded negatively that they cannot subscribe to the modern family planning practices. The majority of the respondents, therefore, gave assurance that they can subscribe to the modern family planning practice.

Table 8: Distribution of Responses on whether they have earlier subscribed to the modern family planning practices

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	15	19.2
No	63	80.8
Total	78	100

Source: Authors, Quantitative Field Study, 2025

Table 8: 15 (19.2%) responded in affirmation that they had earlier subscribed to the modern family planning practices. However, 63 (80.8%) responded negatively that they had not previously subscribed to the modern family planning practices. This shows that subscription to the modern family practice is still very low among the North-Central Nigerian Muslims. It is observed that even the few respondents who have earlier subscribed refused to disclose the particular method they subscribed to. Hence, Muslims in the North-Central part of Nigeria still largely lack confidence in the modern family planning practices.

Table 9: Distribution of Responses on whether the consent of the husband is required before a wife subscribes to the modern family planning

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	44	56.4
Strongly Agree	32	41.0
Disagree	1	1.2
Strongly Disagree	1	1.2
Total	78	100

Source: Authors, Quantitative Field Study, 2025

Table 9: Question regarding whether the consent of the husband is required before a wife can subscribe to modern family planning. The respondents gave different answers. 44 (56.4%) agreed that husband's consent is required, 32 (41.0%) strongly agreed that the husband's consent is required, 1 (1.2%) disagreed that the husband's consent is required, and 1 (1.2%) strongly disagreed that the husband's consent is required. By and large, the majority of the respondents believe that a husband's consent is required before a wife can go ahead and subscribe to any of the methods of modern family planning practices.

Table 10: Distribution of Responses on whether the modern family planning practices can minimize the negative effects of multiple procreation

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	46	58.9
Strongly Agree	22	28.2
Disagree	6	7.7
Strongly Disagree	2	2.6
Total	78	100

Source: Authors, Quantitative Field Study, 2025

Table 10: This table shows respondents' responses to the question of whether modern family planning practices can minimise the negative effects of multitude procreation. 46 (58.9%) agreed that it can minimise the negative effect of multitude procreation, 22(28.2%) strongly agreed that it can minimise the negative effect of multitude procreation, 6 (7.7%) disagreed that it can minimise the negative effect of multitude procreation, 2 (2.6%) strongly disagreed that it can minimise the negative effect of multitude procreation. Thus, the majority of the respondents believed that the modern family planning practices can minimise the negative effects of multitude procreation.

Table 11: Distribution of Responses on the awareness of the Shari'ah consideration for approving or disapproving modern family planning practices based on the existence of inherent benefits (*maslaha*) and the absence of harm/evil (*mafsadah*)

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	75	96.2
No	3	3.8
Total	78	100

Source: Authors, Quantitative Field Study, 2025

Table 11: This table tests the knowledge, awareness and perception of the respondents with respect to the fact that the consideration for approving or disapproving modern family planning practices under Shari'ah is based on the existence of inherent benefits (*maslaha*) and the absence of harm/evil (*mafsadah*). Hence, 75 (96.2%) responded in affirmation, while 3 (3.8%) respondents the negative. To this extent, the majority of the respondents believed that the existence of inherent benefits (*maslaha*) and the absence of harm/evil (*mafsadah*) are the yardstick for approving or disapproving any methods of the modern family planning practices under Shari'ah.

3.6. Presentation of Findings

This study presents the empirical perception of the North-Central Nigerian Muslims on the modern family planning practices. The perception is assessed through the quantitative method vis-à-vis the position of Shari'ah. The study adopts a sequential approach towards assessing the perception of the respondents. The study finds that the majority of the North-Central Nigerian Muslims were aware and familiar with the meaning, concept and connotation of the modern family planning practices. The majority of the respondents among the North-Central Nigerian Muslims were aware of the various methods of modern family planning. Specifically, as per the various methods of the modern family planning, which include the use of contraceptive pills, intrauterine devices (IUDs), implantable devices, injectable contraceptives, diaphragms, male and female condoms, hormonal practices, patches, sterilisation procedures and abortion, the majority of the respondents, representing 96.2% were aware and familiar with these methods.

It is important to note that the majority of the respondents (57.6%) believed that Shari'ah is in support of the practice of modern family planning geared towards the reduction of the family size that the couples can financially maintain. This finding affirmed the previous study conducted on the implications of procreation under the Qur'an and Hadith.⁸⁴ Be that as it may, the majority of the respondents who

⁸⁴ Muhammed-Mikaaeel and Salaudeen, (n 16)

participated in the survey among the North-Central Nigerian Muslims did perceive that it is not all the methods of the modern family planning practices that are permissible under Shari'ah. This finding reinforces the position of Allah (SWT) in the Qur'an Chapter 17:31, where He forbids abortion except in cases of *darurah* (necessity).⁸⁵ The finding also attests to the haram family planning under Shari'ah, such as sterilisation as propounded by Habib *et al* in their previous study.⁸⁶ The study further finds that the majority of the respondents among the North-Central Nigerian Muslims believe that they can subscribe to the modern family planning that is permissible under Shari'ah. They were, however, not bold enough to indicate the particular type they can subscribe to. In the same vein, 80.8% of them have never subscribed to any of such modern family planning methods in the past. This shows that subscription to the modern family planning practice among the North-Central Nigerian Muslims is abysmally low. This translates to mean that there is a practice of multitude procreation in practice. This finding also affirmed the previous study⁸⁷ which contends that Muslims prefer not to engage in the practice of family planning owing to certain misconceptions and misinterpretations of the textual authorities⁸⁸ under Shari'ah.

The majority (97.4%) of the North-Central Nigerian Muslims held the perception that consent of the husband is required before a wife can subscribe to the modern family method. Also, they believe that the practice of *halal* (lawful) family planning can potentially minimize the negative effects of the multitude of procreation, as confirmed by the previous study of Muhammed-Mikaaeel and Salaudeen.⁸⁹ The yardsticks for approving and disapproving any methods of the modern family planning practices are the availability of the inherent benefit (i.e. *Al-Maslaha*) and prevention of the inherent evil (*Al-Mafsadah*). To this end, the study finds that the majority (96.2%) of the respondents confirmed the yardsticks, thereby corresponding with the findings of the previous study embarked upon by Muhammed-Mikaaeel and Salaudeen. Hence, this might contribute to the low subscription to modern family planning by the majority of the North-Central Nigerian Muslims, considering the inherent risks involved in most of the family planning methods.

4. Conclusion

The study assesses the perception of the North-Central Nigerian Muslims on the modern family planning practice from the lens of Shari'ah. The study reports a

⁸⁵ This is where the position of foetus in the womb of his or mother poses greater risk to the life of the mother. This permission is to save the life of the mother under the Shari'ah *maqsid* of *Hifz an-Nas* (protection of life).

⁸⁶ Habib, *et al*, (n 45)

⁸⁷ Muhammed-Mikaaeel and Salaudeen (n 16)

⁸⁸ The Qur'an and Hadith

⁸⁹ Muhammed-Mikaaeel and Salaudeen (n 16)

positive perception of the North-Central Nigerian Muslims of the modern family planning practices. The major findings in this study reveal that the North-Central Nigerian Muslims were aware of the modern family planning practices, their various methods and the position of Shari'ah on the modern family planning practices as well as their yardstick for approval and disapproval under Shari'ah. However, the practice of modern family planning is abysmally low among the North-Central Nigerian Muslims because majority of them have never subscribed to any of the modern methods before. This suggests that there is a practice of multitude procreation in this part of the country despite the unfriendly economic hardship being experienced. This paper has significantly contributed to the body of existing knowledge. This is because there has not been an empirical study of the perception of the North-Central Muslims on the modern family planning practice from the lens of Shari'ah.

It is high time Nigerian Muslims were sensitised on the need to subscribe to the family planning practices as a way of reducing family size in tandem with the family's financial capability. The relevant stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Health, medical practitioners, and religious organisations, should shoulder the responsibilities for adequate campaigns in this respect. This, if actively done, will reduce the practice of multitude procreation and give room for the regime of family planning practices in the country. The study has implications for further study. It is therefore recommended that an empirical study into the reasons (s) for the non-subscription of the modern family planning by the majority of the Nigerian Muslims be carried out. Also, an empirical study on the Muslim preference between the modern family practices and the traditional Islamic family planning practices should be conducted.