

# Pluralistic Ignorance & Modern Contraceptive Use in Nigeria

BY

BINUYO OLUTOMIWA AYOMIDE

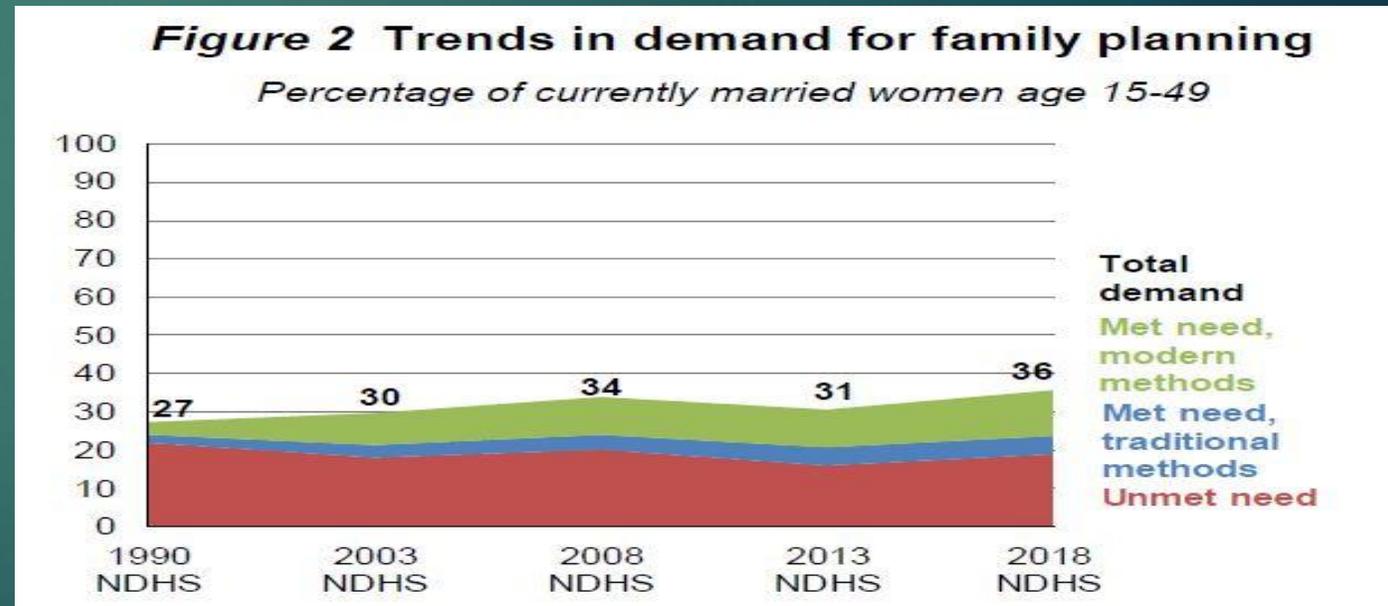
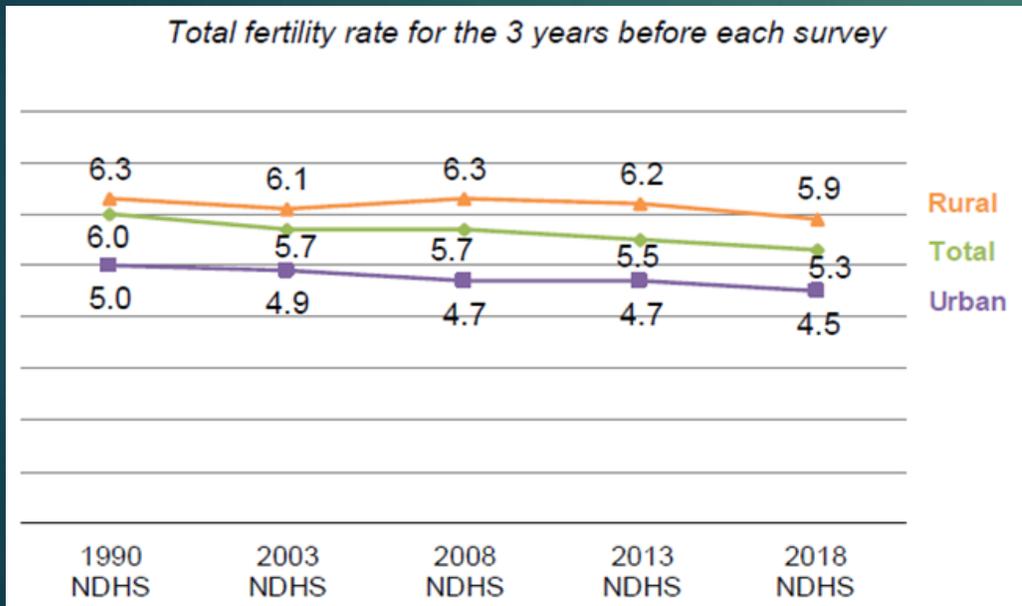
[obinuo@edu.hse.ru](mailto:obinuo@edu.hse.ru)

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# PROBLEM STATEMENT

- 83% of married women are non-users of contraceptives
- 62% of this subgroup jointly decided with husband or husband solely decided.

-NDHS 2018



# DEFINITION OF KEYWORDS

- ▶ **Reference network:** The group of people whose behaviours and expectations matter to the decision maker given a specific situation.
- ▶ **Personal normative belief:** The belief about what one or others within a reference network should do in a particular context.
- ▶ **Normative expectation:** This is the belief about what others within a reference network think one should do in a specific situation.
- ▶ **Empirical expectation:** This is the belief one has about what others do given a particular context.
- ▶ **Social norms:** A collective behaviour that is practised conditionally due to social expectations.

# Pluralistic Ignorance

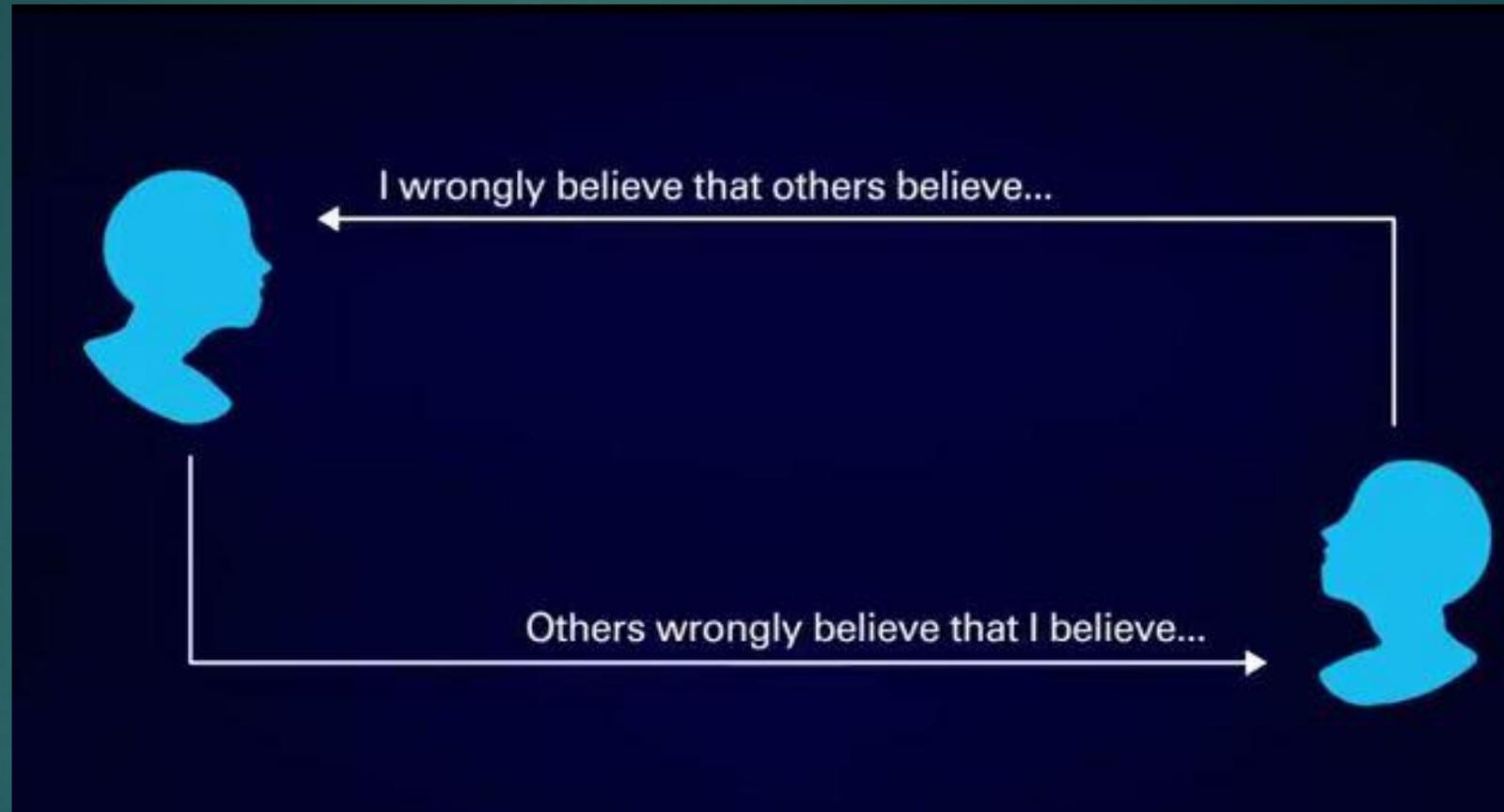
Many people privately condemn a behavior but  
wrongly believe their peers endorse it.



# Pluralistic Ignorance

- ▶ Daniel Katz & Floyd H. Allport (1931)
- ▶ Conditions for Pluralistic Ignorance:
  - ▶ Shared behavior (social norm)
  - ▶ No transparent communication
- ▶ High Knowledge level, High support, Low prevalence might indicate the presence of a pluralistic ignorance. (Bicchieri 2016)
- ▶ Prevalence of females having little or no bargaining power or choice in certain areas could also suggest a social norm/pluralistic ignorance. (Mackie et al 2015)

# Pluralistic Ignorance



Cristina Bicchieri 2016. Social Norms, Social Change

**Personal Normative Beliefs is not in line with Normative Expectations.**

# Research Objectives

- ▶ Explore the non-use of contraceptives as a social norm in Nigeria.
- ▶ Detect the presence (or absence) of pluralistic ignorance in the non-use of modern contraceptives in Nigeria.

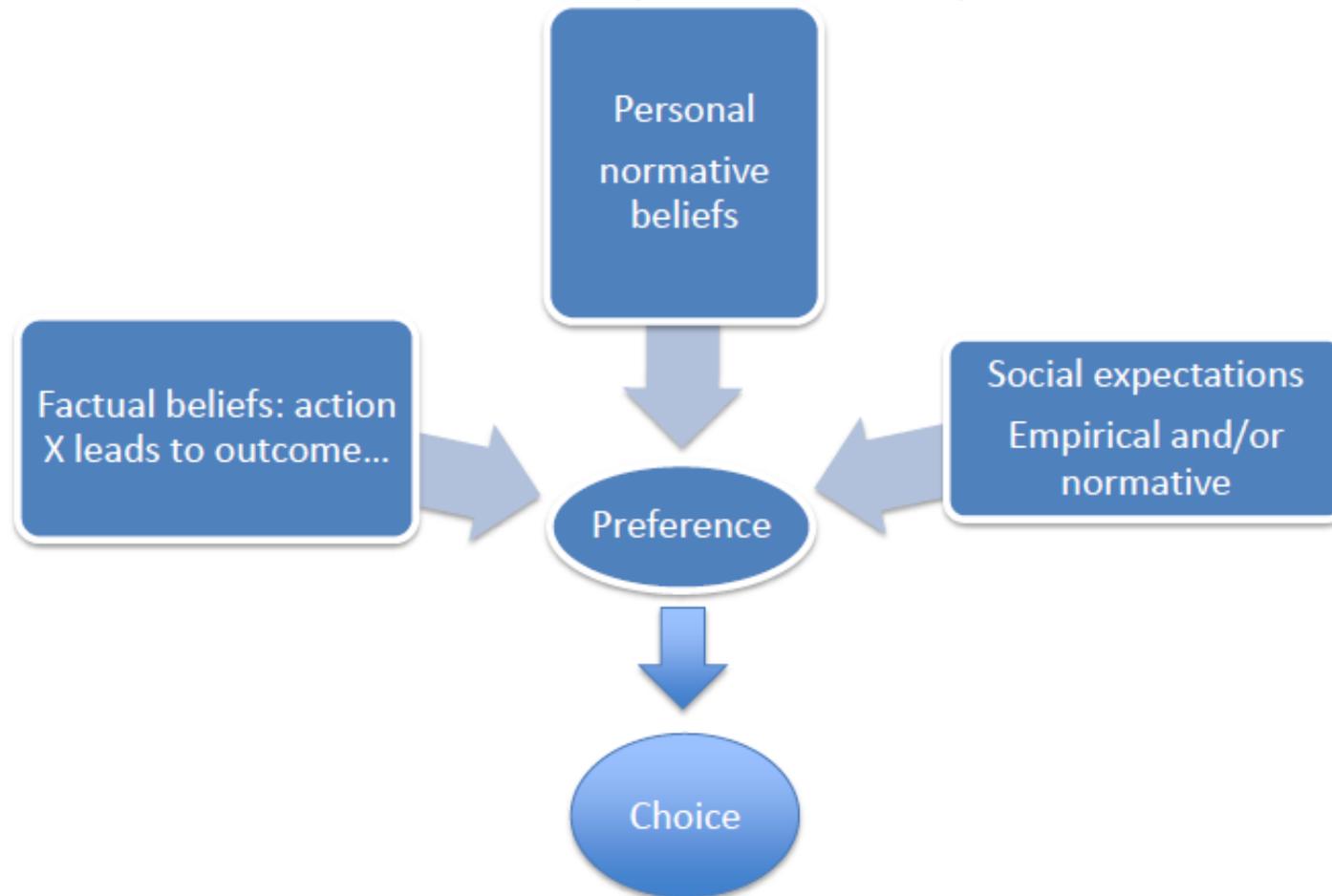
# Literature Review

- ▶ Family planning is central to the attainment of the SDGs. (Starbird et al. 2016; Choi et al. 2015; Osotimehin 2015)
- ▶ Socio-demographic variables largely contribute to the non-utilization of modern contraceptives. (Solanke 2017)
- ▶ Fertility preference is also a major factor for non-use of modern contraceptives in Northern Nigeria. (Gillespie 2012)

# Literature Review

- ▶ Religion, marriage type and female empowerment are contextual factors limiting the use of modern contraceptives in Nigeria. (Ejembi et al. 2015; Blackstone et al. 2017)
- ▶ Gender stereotypes have an influence in the non-utilization of modern contraceptives and reproductive health services. (Mishra et al. 2014; Vouking et al. 2014)
- ▶ Myths and misconceptions limits the use of modern contraceptives in Nigeria. (Gueye et al 2015; Eshak 2019)

# Theoretical Framework: Social Norms Theory- Modified Belief/Preference Model (Bicchieri 2006)



# Research Design

- ▶ Qualitative method: Vignettes (Interviews with stories)
- ▶ 10 Respondents (Nigerian and non-users of contraceptives)
- ▶ Framework: Social Norm Analysis Plot (SNAP)

## CARE's Social Norms Analysis Plot (SNAP)

Narration	<b>Setting the background</b>	Participants are introduced to the scenario: The main character is faced with a situation when a social norm under diagnosis would come into play, and he/she needs to decide whether or not to comply.
Question	<b>Descriptive norms</b> (What I think others do)	Participants are asked what they think others in their setting would do if they were the main character (or another character engaging in the behaviour of interest).
Question	<b>Injunctive norms</b> (What I think others expect me to do)	Participants are asked what they think others in their settings expect the main character (or another character engaging in the behaviour of interest) to do.
Narration	<b>Non-compliance of the main character</b>	Participants are presented a twist in the narration: The main character (or a new character) does not comply with the (potential) norm.
Question	<b>Sanctions</b> (Anticipated positive or negative reactions to non-compliance)	Participants are asked about the opinion or reaction of others (to the non-compliance) – specifically others whose opinions matter to participants.
Question	<b>Sensitivity to sanctions</b> (Strength of sanctions over decision to comply or non-comply)	Participants are asked: If the character incurs negative sanctions for non-compliance, would he/she comply in the future.
Question	<b>Exceptions</b>	Participants are asked: Under what circumstances would it be okay for the non-complying character to break the norm.

# Vignette: The Joy Story

## **Narration (Setting the background)**

Joy is a beautiful woman in her thirties living happily in Lagos with her partner, Bobby. Bobby prefers to have sex with Joy without any form of modern contraceptive in place. Joy's friends at work and in her place of worship also announced to her that they have never used condom, pills, implants or any method of modern contraceptives. They encouraged Joy not to use modern contraceptives due to several stories they have heard about it.

1. What do you think most women in your community would do in Joy's position in this situation? (**Empirical expectation**)
2. What do you believe Joy's friends (and most women in your community) would expect Joy to do in this situation? (**Normative expectation**)

## **Narration (Non-compliance of the main character)**

However, Joy wants to use modern contraceptives having read an online article on the benefits of family planning. Having given birth to three promising kids already, she told Bobby and her friends that she wants to use modern contraceptives.

3. What do you think Bobby, and her friends would say about Joy's decision? How would they react? (**Sanctions**)
4. Would the reactions of her friends and her partner make Joy change her mind about using modern contraceptives? (**Sensitivity to sanctions**)
5. In your view, are there any circumstances where it would be considered more or less acceptable for Joy to use modern contraceptives? If yes, what are the circumstances? (**Exceptions**).

# Pilot Study Findings

## ▶ Demographics

- ▶ Number of respondents: 10; 8 Females, 2 Males ; All in their late 20s/ early 30s.
- ▶ Education Level: All educated above secondary level.
- ▶ Religion: Christian, Muslim
- ▶ Location: Southwestern region of Nigeria

# Study Findings

Using vignette The Joy Story,

- ▶ Normative expectations should be consistent amongst most of the population. It was seen that normative expectation (the answer to question 2) was consistent amongst ALL of the respondents.
- ▶ The answer to question 4 reveals conditional preference which **establishes the fact that a social norm exist.**
- ▶ Around 6 out of 10 respondents demonstrate a strong conditional preference for the non-use of modern contraceptives due to the social expectations from friends and sexual partner.

“Yes, in some cases, if the peer pressure is too much and the reactions of her partner goes to the extreme like breakup of friendship and even the end of relationship, then joy will definitely change her mind about the use of contraceptives.” - **Respondent 8.**

“Yes she can because her decision is not accepted in any of her places of work and worship. So to follow any Nigerian culture, she must change it. Besides, our culture do not encourage contraceptives.” - **Respondent 2**

# Study Findings

- ▶ The possibility of pluralistic ignorance is seen when respondent believes contraceptives are beneficial but thinks friends and sexual partner will not want her to use contraceptives.
- ▶ So they do not use contraceptives, not because they do not want to, but because of their normative expectation (What others think they should do). If this concept is prevalent, then it is called pluralistic ignorance.
- ▶ 4 out of 6 respondents showed a discrepancy between their personal normative belief (mostly reflected in question 5 and in the tone of the respondent) with their normative expectation (question 2).
- ▶ This confirms **the presence of pluralistic ignorance** amongst those who see non-use of modern contraceptives as a social norm

# Study findings

- ▶ 8 out of 10 respondents believe the decision of the male partner is the final no matter what the lady wants.

“Her husband will claim she’s bossy and proud and she could be threatened with extra marital affairs from her husband.....In most cases, she will have to change her mind especially because of the husband. “ - **Respondent 7**

- ▶ This shows largely that women are yet not empowered to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health.

# Recommendations

- ▶ Update people's normative expectations in order to let them know that modern contraceptives use is supported by the majority. This will increase the uptake of modern contraceptives.
- ▶ Design family planning programs with the social norms and values of the community in mind to facilitate social trust.
- ▶ Involvement of men in reproductive health programs in order to increase support for modern contraceptives.
- ▶ Education and empowerment of females in order to make reproductive health decisions on their own.

# Relevance of the Study

- ▶ Designing effective intervention programs to promote family planning and gender equality.
- ▶ Contribution to existing scarce literature on modern contraceptives as a social norm.
- ▶ Theoretical framework is novel in the area of modern contraceptive use.
- ▶ Innovative methodological tool (SNAP FRAMEWORK) in the analysis of modern contraceptives uptake.

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THANK YOU