

Profile of the Modern Female Family Planning Method User

The modern family planning method user puts a high premium on her self-worth. She knows she is capable not only of taking care of her children, but also of helping meet the financial needs of her family. She values freedom and sees the practice of modern family planning as a means to help her achieve this.

She enjoys sex while avoiding the risk of getting pregnant. Her husband recognizes this, as well as the need to take care of her body.

Her primary reason for avoiding pregnancy is to space her children. The second is to limit their number. If she is newly married, she wants to delay having them. And she is able to talk to her spouse openly about when to start a family.

"The children are still too young."

— MARRIED FEMALE, PILL USER

"Me, I don't want anymore [children]. I have five kids already. I have suffered enough."

— MARRIED FEMALE, PILL USER

"We were married for three years before we had a child. We needed to take care of our careers first."

— MARRIED FEMALE, PILL USER

As a first time family planning user, she decides for herself which method to use and merely informs her husband of her decision. Her husband's role in her decision and selection process is minimal. She actively seeks out information about the different family planning methods, including what brands are available, and she knows more about family planning methods than the women who use withdrawal or calendar/rhythm. Compared to them she is perceived to be more empowered. If her husband is a condom user, he is just as knowledgeable about which brands work best.

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This paper is based on findings in "Project Dynasty," a qualitative research study carried out in January-February 2003 by AC Nielsen for The Social Acceptance Project-Family Planning (TSAP-FP). TSAP-FP is being implemented in the Philippines by the Academy for Educational Development (AED) with funding support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The study was conducted among 230 respondents composed of male and female, 15-34 years old, single and married, belonging to Class DE and Broad C, and residing in Metro Manila, Cebu and industrial areas in Cavite, Batangas and Laguna. Most of the respondents were working, while the youngest respondents (15-18 years old) were usually still studying. Married respondents had one to six children.

Combining focus group discussions and in-depth interviews, the study aimed to accomplish the following objectives:

- Identify knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about family planning and related issues, including sex, pregnancy, and children
- Determine constraints and barriers to acceptance and use of family planning methods in terms of myths, misconceptions, taboos, fears, and cultural norms
- Understand perceptions of modern vs. traditional methods
- Understand perceptions of modern vs. traditional method users
- Identify channels of information/ influence that impact on the family planning decisions of the target segments





The modern family planning method user is usually an ex-traditional family planning method user. She converts to more effective methods after the traditional methods fail to protect her from an unplanned pregnancy.

The first time a modern family planning method user hears and learns about family planning is from her female friends. Or she may have consulted a health care provider.

The basic requirement she looks for in a family planning method is that it is convenient or easy to use. Another requirement is that it has no side effects. She also wants a method that is safe, i.e., not harmful to the mother (“hiyang”) and her child (“will not cause deformities”), and is effective. It would help too, she says, if the method were affordable and would not get in the way of pleasurable lovemaking. On her wish list, however, is a brand that would make her look beautiful (“make her skin glow”).

The pill user finds most of these qualities in her method of choice. She finds the pill safe, convenient to use and easy to keep track of, has no major side effects, and is suitable for her (“hiyang”).

All things considered, the modern family planning method user enjoys a positive image among other family planning method users — modern and traditional. She is well regarded as a mother, wife, and worker. ■

This publication is brought to you by The Social Acceptance Project-Family Planning (TSAP-FP). This project aims to promote greater social acceptance of family planning as part of one's lifestyle.

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