



FACTORS INFLUENCING THE UTILIZATION OF TRADITIONAL BIRTH ATTENDANTS AMONG PREGNANT WOMEN IN OGBA/EGBEMA/NDONI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the factors influencing the utilization of traditional birth attendants among women in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State. Five objectives, five research questions and four hypotheses were stated to guide the study. Literature was reviewed under conceptual framework, theoretical framework and empirical review. The study adopted the descriptive research design with a population which consisted of 19,900 pregnant women in ONELGA. A sample size of 431 was selected using a three-staged sampling technique. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire with a reliability coefficient of 0.87. Data was analyzed with the aid of the Statistical Product for Service Solution (SPSS) version 23.0 using percentage and chi-square at 0.05 level of significance. The finding of the study showed that, the utilization of traditional birth attendants' services among women in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State was high (87.5%). The utilization of TBAs services was influenced to a very high extent and significant related with availability of services ($= 595.75$, $df = 15$, $p < 0.05$), accessibility of services ($= 627.94$, $df = 15$, $p < 0.05$), cost of services ($= 890.35$, $df = 15$, $p < 0.05$) and attitude of healthcare workers ($= 469.31$, $df = 15$, $p < 0.05$). It was concluded among others that the factors influencing the utilization of traditional birth attendants' services among women in ONELGA were: availability of services, accessibility of services, cost of services and attitude of healthcare workers. It was recommended that the ministry of health should improve the services of TBAs by training them and integrating their services in the mainstream maternal healthcare delivery since they are mostly patronized by women.

KEYWORDS: Factors, Traditional Birth Attendant, Pregnant Women, ONELGA.

INTRODUCTION

Cardiovascular The period of childbirth is very crucial for a pregnant woman as it involves life and death hence, must be attended by skilled professionals who would be able to handle any complication that may arise during the delivery process. Every day, approximately 830 women die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth and 99% of all maternal deaths occur in developing countries (WHO, 2015). In developing countries, maternal mortality ratio has remained unacceptably high. It was estimated that 52,900 Nigerian women die every year from pregnancy-related

complications and a pregnant woman's chance of dying from pregnancy and childbirth in Nigeria is 1 in 13 (National Population Commission, 2018). According to Ugboaja et al. (2018), these deaths occur as a result of unavailable, inaccessible, unaffordable, or poor-quality care, especially at the point of delivery. Yet, only about 39% of all births in the country are assisted by skilled birth attendants (National Population Commission, 2013). Suggesting that several women in developing countries give birth outside of health facilities with the help of unskilled professionals such as traditional birth attendants, which could be according Adeniran (2012) due to the fact that, many women in developing countries

like Nigeria do not have access to skilled care during pregnancy and childbirth thus such women rely on traditional birth attendants.

Traditional birth attendants assist women during delivery but they are not skilled health professional. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2015) defined traditional birth attendant (TBA) as “a person who assists the mother during childbirth and initially acquired her skills by delivering babies herself or through an apprenticeship to other TBAs. Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA), is a person who provides basic pregnancy and birthing care and advice based primarily on experience and knowledge acquired informally through the traditions and practices of the communities where they originated (WHO, 2019). The main role of the TBAs in Nigeria are referral and accompanying the women in labor to the health centers in the rural areas (Ohaja & Murphy-Lawless, 2017; Chizoba et al., 2017). Yet, women patronize them for both prenatal, intranatal and postnatal care. Patronage of unskilled birth attendants had resulted in the re-emergence of birth complications as the women are left in the hand of these birth attendants unsupervised, and poor health care services delivery in poor resource regions.

Several studies have highlighted the reason why most women in the resource-poor regions, especially in the rural areas prefer to deliver outside the hospitals which includes financial, cultural, and physical barrier to access to health care (Sarker et al., 2016; Manyeh et al., 2017; Kibria et al., 2017). Other factors highlighted in the study of Ughoja et al. (2018) were low maternal education, rural residence, unemployed status, having more than five children, age, having visited a health facility in the past twelve months, and watching television once a week. Other factors found were lower socioeconomic status, service proximity and lower cost of TBA services (Awotunde et al., 2017). Factors such as availability and accessibility of health care services, and attitude of health care workers could also influence women’s decision to utilize the services of traditional birth attendants. Contextually, factors such as cost of healthcare services, attitude of healthcare workers, accessibility and availability of health care services guided the study

Health care services provided cannot be utilized if they are not made available; women may prefer to use TBA if they more readily available than the skilled care. Baird et al. (2015) noted that, availability of services is key to its utilization. Dhakal et al. (2018) posited that, the

availability of health care services is a major determinant of health care service utilization. On the other hand, Adewemimo et al. (2014) noted that, even if trained staff is of main importance, and the equipment availability makes a difference. Likewise, Esmailnasab et al. (2014) noted that, non-availability and poor accessibility to health care services were the main barrier to the use of health services. Thus, it is important that, the health care services provided are made available and accessible to the users.

Women’s easy access to TBA without much stress of having to pass through several protocols or travelling at a distance could also be a factor influencing their utilization of TBA. Jammeh et al. (2011) reported that, transportation, distance, and road infrastructure are strong determinants of utilization of health care facilities by women. In the same vein, Baral et al. (2012) indicated distance as a determinant of choice of health care service facility. Line (2017) supported the impact of proximity by saying that, availability of the transport, physical distance of the facility and time taken to reach the facility undoubtedly influences health seeking behavior and health services utilization. The World Health Organization (2019) stipulated that for easy access, health facility should not be more than 5km away from residents. However, even when such services are in a close distance to residents, its utilization may not be optimal if the cost is not affordable by the women.

Women may prefer to utilize TBA if their service cost is cheaper, particularly in the present economic situation of the country. The affordability of health care services depends on the socio-economic status of the users (Esen et al., 2013); this is paramount to the choice of health care facility. The fees charged for health care often put pregnant women off from choosing to utilize health care facilities. According to Bohren et al. (2014), the cost of health care service is a key factor influencing pregnant women's choice to utilize a health care service. Adeniyi et al. (2015) opined that, wealth status can determine women’s choice of health care service. In the same vein, Singh et al. (2012) noted that, the utilization of TBA services was observed to increase among women with low socio-economic status. The affordability of health care services is paramount to the choice of health care services, whether skilled or TBA.

The utilization of traditional birth attendant services has left the health care facilities in ONELGA less busy,

despite the continues increase in population of children born in the area. Despite the advocacy for the utilization of skilled birth attendant some women still utilize the services of traditional birth attendants; this is indicative of the fact there are factors which influenced their decision to use such services. In ONELGA where the study was carried out, such factors are unknown thus, the need for this study to find out such factors in order to give a clear direction to any intervention aimed at increasing the utilization of skilled birth attendants.

Maternal and infant mortality ratio has remained high especially, this period where the world is being ravaged by the outbreak of COVID-19, where almost all efforts both on the part of the government and the health sector are geared towards curbing the disease with minimal focus on other aspects including maternal or reproductive health. Yet, personal observation in ONELGA has shown that several women suffer complications before, during or after delivery which were of preventable causes that would have been easily taken care of by skilled birth attendants. But, some of them prefer to continuously use the services of traditional birth attendance even in critical conditions rather than seeking help in a health care facility, subsequently to be rushed to the hospital almost at the point of death, some of which cases have gone so worse that it even led to death. This has attracted attention over the years and efforts have been made to ensure that women utilize skilled care rather than traditional birth attendance yet, women prefer TBA than professional care. Certainly, several factors would have influenced their decision but, such factors to some extent remain unknown. Therefore, this study was focused on the factors influencing the utilization of traditional birth attendants among women in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State. The study sought to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. What is level of utilization of traditional birth attendants' services among women in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State?
2. To what extent is availability of services influence the utilization of TBA among women in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State?
3. What is the extent to which accessibility of services influence the utilization of TBA among women in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State?

4. To what extent is cost of services influence the utilization of TBA among women in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State?
5. What is the extent to which attitude of healthcare workers influence the utilization of TBA among women in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Hypotheses: The following hypotheses postulated were tested at 0.05

1. There is no significant relationship between availability of services and the utilization of TBA among women in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State.
2. There is no significant relationship between accessibility of services and the utilization of TBA among women in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State.
3. There is no significant relationship between cost of services and the utilization of TBA among women in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State.
4. There is no significant relationship between attitude of healthcare workers and the utilization of TBA among women in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the descriptive research design. The descriptive research design was adopted in this study because the study was aimed at using a representative sample of the women of reproductive age in ONELGA and describing the factors influencing their utilization of traditional birth attendant services. The population for the study consisted of nineteen thousand, and nine hundred (19,900) pregnant women in ONELGA. The sample size of 431 was selected using a three-staged sampling technique. The first stage included the use of stratified sampling technique to group the Local Government Area into two strata based on the existing two districts, Ogba/Egbema district and Ndoni district. At the second stage, the simple random sampling technique was used to select three communities from each of the strata and the non-proportionate sampling was used to determine how many respondents to be selected from each community, which is 72. At the third stage, a purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample size.

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire title: Utilization of Traditional Birth Attendant Services Questionnaire (UTBASQ). The questionnaire has five sections A, B, C, D, and E. Section A focused on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents such as age, marital status, employment status, religion and educational level on a multiple response format. Section B focused on the utilization of traditional birth attendance on a multiple response format. Section C was focused on the availability of TBA services on a response format of either of High Extent or Low Extent. Section D was designed to gather information on the accessibility of TBA services also on a response format of either of High Extent or Low Extent; Section E and F focused on cost of services, and attitude of healthcare workers on four point modified Likert Scale of Strongly, agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree,

which were regrouped as high or low cost for cost of services and positive or negative for attitude.

The reliability coefficient found for the whole instrument was 0.87. Specifically, section B which focused on utilization has a reliability coefficient of 0.87, Section C on availability of healthcare services has 0.90, Section D on accessibility of services has 0.86, Section E on attitude of healthcare workers has a coefficient of 0.94, and Section F on cost of services has 0.79. Data collected was analyzed with the aid of the Statistical Product for Service Solution (SPSS) version 23.0. The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents were analyzed using percentage; the research questions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 were answered using percentage while the five hypotheses, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 were tested using chi-square at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

TABLE 1- Percentage Distribution Showing Utilization of Traditional Birth Attendants' Services

Items	F	%
Who respondents go to for antenatal		
Traditional birth attendant	146	34.5
Professional healthcare provider	277	65.5
Total	423	100.0
Who attends to respondents during pregnancy for treatment of illness		
Traditional birth attendant	142	33.6
Professional healthcare provider	281	66.4
Total	423	100.0
Where respondents delivered their last baby		
Healthcare facility	53	12.5
TBA centre	370	87.5
Total	423	100.0

Table 1 showed percentage distribution of utilization of traditional birth attendants' services. The result showed that more than one quarter (34.5%) of the respondents went to traditional birth attendants for antenatal, 33.6% were attended to by traditional birth attendants for

treatment of illness during pregnancy while majority (87.5%) delivered their last baby at TBA centre. Thus, the utilization of traditional birth attendants' services among women in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State was high.

TABLE 2- Percentage Distribution Showing the Extent to Which Availability of Services Influenced the Utilization of TBA Among Women In ONELGA

Availability	Utilization of TBA		Total	Decision
	No F (%)	Yes F(%)		
Low extent	25(73.5)	9(26.5)	34	Very high extent
High extent	28(7.2)	361(92.8)	389	
Total	53(12.5)	370(87.5)	423(100)	

Table 2 revealed the extent to which availability of services influenced the utilization of TBA among women in ONELGA. The overall result showed that, majority (87.5%) of the respondents who indicated that the

services of TBA are availability to a high extent also utilized TBA services. Thus, to a very high extent, availability of services influenced the utilization of TBA among women in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State.

TABLE 3- Percentage Distribution Showing the Extent to Which Accessibility of Services Influence the Utilization of TBA Among Women In ONELGA

Accessibility	Utilization of TBA		Total	Decision
	No F (%)	Yes F (%)		
Low extent	27(71.1)	11(28.9)	38	Very high extent
High extent	26(6.8)	359(93.2)	385	
Total	53(12.5)	370(87.5)	423	

Table 3 revealed the extent to which accessibility of services influenced the utilization of TBA among women in ONELGA. The overall result showed that, majority (93.2%) of the respondents who indicated that the services of TBA are accessibility to a high extent also

utilized TBA services. Thus, to a very high extent, accessibility of TBA services influenced the utilization of TBA among women in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State.

TABLE 4- Percentage Distribution Showing the Extent to Which Cost of Services Influence the Utilization Of TBA Among Women In ONELGA

Cost	Utilization of TBA		Total	Decision
	No F(%)	Yes F(%)		
High cost	28(58.3)	20(41.7)	48	Very high extent
Low cost	25(6.7)	350(93.3)	375	
Total	53(12.5)	370(87.5)	423	

Table 4 revealed the extent to which cost of services influenced the utilization of TBA among women in ONELGA. The overall result showed that, majority (93.3%) of the respondents who indicated that the services of TBA are of low cost also utilized TBA

services. Thus, to a very high extent, cost of TBA services influenced the utilization of TBA among women in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State.

TABLE 5- Percentage Distribution Showing the Extent to Which Attitude Of Healthcare Workers Influence The Utilization Of TBA Among Women In ONELGA

Attitude	Utilization of TBA		Total	Decision
	No F(%)	Yes F(%)		
Positive	25(75.8)	8(24.4)	33	Very high extent
Negative	28(7.2)	362(92.8)	390	
Total	53(12.5)	370(87.5)	423	

Table 4.5 revealed the extent to which cost of services influenced the utilization of TBA among women in ONELGA. The overall result showed that, majority (92.8%) of the respondents who indicated that healthcare workers had negative attitude utilized TBA services.

Thus, to a very high extent, attitude of healthcare workers influenced the utilization of TBA among women in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State.

TABLE 6- Chi-Square Test Showing Relationship Between Availability of Services and Utilization of TBA Services Among Women In ONELGA

Availability	Utilization of TBA		Total	Df	χ^2	p-value	Decision
	No F(%)	Yes F(%)					
Low extent	25(73.5)	9(26.5)	34	1	125.52	.00*	H ₀ Rejected
High extent	28(7.2)	361(92.8)	389				
Total	53(12.5)	370(87.5)	423				

*Significant, p<0.05

Table 6 presented the Chi-square test of relationship between availability of services and utilization of TBA services among women in ONELGA. The result showed that there was a significant relationship ($\chi^2 = 125.52$, df

= 1, p<0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between availability of services and the utilization of TBA among women in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State was rejected.

TABLE 7- Chi-Square Showing Relationship Between Accessibility of Services and Utilization of TBA Among Women In ONELGA

Availability	Utilization of TBA		Total	Df	χ^2	p-value	Decision
	No F(%)	Yes F(%)					
Low extent	25(73.5)	9(26.5)	34	1	130.47	.00*	H ₀ Rejected
High extent	28(7.2)	361(92.8)	389				
Total	53(12.5)	370(87.5)	423				

*Significant, p<0.05

Table 4.7 presented the Chi-square test of relationship between accessibility of services and utilization of TBA services among women in ONELGA. The result showed that there was a significant relationship ($\chi^2 = 130.47$, df

= 1, p<0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between accessibility of services and the utilization of TBA among women in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State was rejected.

TABLE 8- Chi-Square Showing Relationship Between Cost of Services and Utilization of TBA Among Women In ONELGA

Cost of services	Utilization of TBA		Total	df	χ^2	p-value	Decision
	No F(%)	Yes F(%)					
High cost	28(58.3)	20(41.7)	48	1	103.64	.00*	H ₀ Rejected
Low cost	25(6.7)	350(93.3)	375				
Total	53(12.5)	370(87.5)	423				

*Significant, p<0.05

Table 8 revealed the Chi-square test of relationship between cost of services and utilization of TBA services among women in ONELGA. The result showed that there was a significant relationship ($\chi^2 = 103.64$, df = 1,

p<0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between cost of services and the utilization of TBA among women in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State was rejected.

TABLE 9- Chi-Square Showing Relationship Between Attitude of Healthcare Workers and Utilization of TBA Among Women In ONELGA

Attitude of healthcare workers	Utilization of TBA		Total	df	χ^2	p-value	Decision
	No F(%)	Yes F(%)					
Positive	25(75.8)	8(24.4)	33	1	130.56	.00*	Ho Rejected
Negative	28(7.2)	362(92.8)	390				
Total	53(12.5)	370(87.5)	423				

*Significant, $p < 0.05$

Table 9 revealed the Chi-square test of relationship between attitude of healthcare workers and utilization of TBA services among women in ONELGA. The result showed that there was a significant relationship ($\chi^2 = 130.56$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between attitude of healthcare workers and the utilization of TBA among women in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study are discussed below:

The finding of this study in Table 1 showed that the utilization of traditional birth attendants' services among women was high (87.5%). The high utilization of TBA for delivery is not expected as the government in recent time is putting more effort to refurbish maternal healthcare services at the grass root due to several voices on the need for improvement of maternal and infant health. This finding may be attributed to the prevailing economic situation which makes women unable to afford healthcare because, despite the economic crises faced by the citizens, the cost of maternal healthcare remains high particularly for women with low socio-economic status. The finding of the study is in line with the findings of Olufunke and Akintujoye (2012) where almost two-thirds of the respondents had used TBA services. This similarity could be explained by the homogeneity of the study population. The finding of this study is not in line with that of Ugboaja et al. (2018) (sample size - 7267) whose study on factors associated with the use of traditional birth attendants in Nigeria showed that the rate of delivery with traditional birth attendants among the respondents was 23.4%. The finding of this study is at variance with that of Dapaah and Nachinaab (2019) whose study on the utilization of maternal health care services in Ghana found that about 37.2% of women were assisted by untrained traditional birth attendant during delivery. The

finding of this study is also not similar to that of Ogbo et al. (2020) which showed that the utilization of traditional birth attendance in Nigeria was 20.5%. The variance between the previous studies and the present one could be due to the difference in study location and sample sizes.

The result in Table 2 revealed that availability of services influenced the utilization of TBA services to a very high extent and there was a significant relationship between the two variables ($\chi^2 = 595.75$, $df = 15$, $p < 0.05$). The finding of this study is not surprising because one cannot use what is not available, possibly the TBAs are always around to do their job, so women patronize them easily. The finding of this study is in line with that of Ugboaja et al. (2018) whose study on factors associated with the use of traditional birth attendants in Nigeria showed that the utilization of TBA is significantly associated with its availability at the rural areas (aOR: 1.3 95% CI: 1.12–1.51). The result of this study corroborates that of Allou (2018) which showed that one of the factors that influenced the utilization of TBAs is that they are readily available and they are more caring than orthodox health workers and being the only maternity care that women know. The finding of this study is in consonance with that of Dapaah and Nachinaab (2019) whose study on the utilization of maternal health care services in Ghana showed availability of traditional birth attendants in the area as one of the most significant factor for women's use of their services. The finding of this study is in consonance with that of Sowunmi et al. (2020) whose study among pregnant women in Lagos showed that the factors influencing the utilization of TBA services were TBAs are more understanding and available to care for women (89.0%). The finding of this study is akin to that of Ogbo et al. (2020) which showed that the availability of TBA at the rural areas was associated with the higher odds of utilization of traditional birth attendance. The similarity found between the present study and previous ones might be due to the homogeneity of the study populations as the studies were conducted among women.

The finding of this study in Table 3 revealed that accessibility of services influenced the utilization of TBA services to a very high extent and there was a significant relationship between the two variables ($\chi^2 = 627.94$, $df = 15$, $p < 0.05$). This finding could be explained by the fact that TBA in several places are accessible to the point they can even visit the women in their houses to see or attend to them. The finding of this study is in consonance with that of Sowunmi et al. (2020) whose study among pregnant women in Lagos showed that the factors influencing the utilization of TBA services were as follow: closeness of house to TBA centre (27.4%), and no means of transportation to the nearest facility (40.9%). The finding of this study is in line with that of Awotunde et al. (2017) whose study on the utilization of traditional birth attendant services by pregnant women in Ogbomoso showed that one of the factors associated with the utilization of TBA is proximity. The finding of this study is in consonance with that of Dapaah and Nachinaab (2019) whose study on the utilization of maternal health care services in Ghana showed accessibility of health care services and distance to health care center during pregnancy as a significant determinant of women's nonuse of maternal care services, and a significant number of women consider distance as an obstacle to accessing maternal health care services. The result of this study corroborates that of Allou (2018) which showed that one of the factors that influenced the patronage of TBAs included the fact that TBA services are more culturally accepted, and nearer to the homes of pregnant women than the hospital. The finding of this study is akin to that of Ogbo et al. (2020) which showed that the proximity of health facilities was one of the factors associated with the utilization of traditional birth attendance. The similarity found between the present study and previous ones might be due to the homogeneity of the study populations as the studies were conducted among women.

The finding of this study in Table 4 revealed that cost of services influenced the utilization of TBA to a very high extent and there was a significant relationship between the two variables ($\chi^2 = 890.35$, $df = 15$, $p < 0.05$). This finding is not surprising as the economic situation of the country is challenging to several families struggling on how to survive. The finding of this study is in line with that of Ugboaja et al. (2018) whose study on factors associated with the use of traditional birth attendants in Nigeria showed that the utilization of TBA is significantly

associated with cost of healthcare services as those with poor family wealth index (aOR: 1.29; 95% CI: 1.09–1.54) and unemployed status (aOR: 3.01; 95% CI: 1.50–6.03) utilized TBA services more. The finding of this study is in line with that of Awotunde et al. (2017) whose study on the utilization of traditional birth attendant services by pregnant women in Ogbomoso showed that one of the factors associated with the utilization of TBA is lower cost of TBA services. The result of this study corroborates that of Allou (2018) which showed that one of the factors that influenced the patronage of TBAs included the fact that TBA services are cheaper. The finding of this study is in keeping with that of Dapaah and Nachinaab (2019) whose study on the utilization of maternal health care services in Ghana showed that the cost involved in accessing health care services during pregnancy was a significant determinant of women's nonuse of maternal care services. The finding of this study is in consonance with that of Sowunmi et al. (2020) whose study among pregnant women in Lagos showed that one of the major factors influencing the utilization of TBA services was that traditional birth attendant services were cheap (86.6%). The finding of this study is akin to that of Ogbo et al. (2020) which showed that the cost of services whose affordability is linked to higher maternal employment and belonging to rich households was one of the factors associated with the utilization of traditional birth attendance. The finding of this study corroborates that of Tabong (2021) whose study on reasons for the utilization of the services of traditional birth attendants during childbirth in Ghana showed cost and the inability of women to procure all items required for delivery at biomedical facilities emerged as factor for utilization of traditional birth attendant delivery services. The similarity found between the present study and previous ones might be due to the homogeneity of the study populations as the studies were conducted among women.

The finding of this study in Table 5 revealed that attitude of healthcare workers influenced the utilization of TBA to a very high extent and there was a significant relationship between the two variables ($\chi^2 = 469.31$, $df = 15$, $p < 0.05$). This finding is not surprising because healthcare workers may be doing their work with the mindset that it is not their personal business so may not be bothered about portraying favourable attitude when it is not within their comfort or convenience, unlike the TBAs who are doing the work as their personal business. The finding of this study gives credence to that of Tabong

(2021) whose study on reasons for the utilization of the services of traditional birth attendants during childbirth in Ghana showed Poor attitude of midwives, maltreatment, and fear of caesarean section were barriers to skilled delivery. social support provided to mothers by traditional birth attendants are also an essential consideration for the use of their services. The result of this study corroborates that of Allou (2018) which showed that one of the factors that influenced the patronage of TBAs included the fact that TBAs are more caring with positive attitude than orthodox health workers. The finding of this study is in line with that of Awotunde et al. (2017) whose study on the utilization of traditional birth attendant services by pregnant women in Ogbomoso showed that one of the factors associated with the utilization of TBA is compassionate care given by the TBAs and their good attitude towards women. The finding of this study is in tandem with that of Dapaah and Nachinaab (2019) whose study on the utilization of maternal health care services in Ghana showed that one significant reasons cited by women for nonuse of maternal health care services and resorting to traditional birth attendants was attitude/behaviour of health staff. The finding of this study is in consonance with that of Sowunmi et al. (2020) whose study among pregnant women in Lagos showed that the factors influencing the utilization of TBA services were as follow: encouraging previous experience at the TBA centre (82.9%), midwives are rude and uncaring (72.0%), feeling more comfortable with TBAs (91.5%), TBAs are more understanding and caring (89.0%), TBAs have listening ear and are caring (96.3%), which are all indicative of positive attitude of TBA which influenced their utilization of the services. The similarity found between the present study and previous ones might be due to the homogeneity of the study populations as the studies were conducted among women.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the factors influencing the utilization of traditional birth attendants' services among women in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State were: availability of services, accessibility of services, cost of services and attitude of healthcare workers.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. The ministry of health should improve the services of TBAs by training them and integrating their services in the mainstream maternal healthcare delivery since they are mostly patronized by women.
2. Since availability and accessibility of TBAs attracted most women, the healthcare workers, particularly, community health extension workers should not relent in their duty to move from house to house to check on women and render healthcare services where necessary.
3. The primary healthcare board should prioritize and scaled-up maternal health efforts that target all women, especially those from low socioeconomic backgrounds, those who do not attend antenatal care, and/or those who reside in rural areas by ensuring that maternal health services are rendered free of charge as stipulated by the government.
4. Also, the government should empower women economically through education and employment.
5. Healthcare workers should be more professional in their attitude towards women by rendering their services compassionately and with utmost care.

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