

regarding the use of contraceptive and husband's earnings, which might be attributed to possibly no need to control child bearing at this age and the fact that decisions on husbands earnings is taken jointly by the couples. From Table 2, women with age and education gap of less than five with their partners participated more in making household decisions. Women with 3 to 5 number of children who have

secondary or higher education and are from the urban areas has greater ability to participate in household decision-making as shown clearly in the table. Similarly, women who are from a rich background and are working participate more in decision making.

Table 2: Distribution of Decision-making variables by socio-demographic characteristics of women in Nigeria

Socio demographic Characteristics	Final say on contraceptive use	Final say on health care	Final say on large HH purchases	Final say on daily HH purchases	Final say on visit to family/relative	Final say on husband's earnings
Respondent Age						
15 - 34 years	10.2	39.0	34.4	44.3	50.8	55.6
35 - 49 years	13.4	47.6	42.0	53.7	58.9	32.3
Age at first marriage						
15 - 34 years	13.8	47.4	41.9	53.8	58.9	76.9
35 - 49 years	5.6	68.2	62.6	74.8	74.8	50.5
Age at first birth						
15 - 34 years	12.9	43.8	38.6	49.7	55.5	67.9
35 - 49 years	9.4	52.1	46.9	63.5	64.6	37.5
Couples age gap						
<= 5 years	12.3	51.1	45.1	58.1	62.5	36.7
> 5 years and above	8.4	39.0	34.4	44.1	50.8	27.6
Women's parity						
0 - 2 children	8.5	41.1	36.0	45.8	51.9	30.5
3 - 5 children	14.0	44.5	37.9	49.8	56.0	31.3
Above 5 children	12.7	42.3	37.8	48.6	54.5	27.9
Respondents education						
No education	2.9	27.3	24.1	30.5	39.8	21.0
Primary	14.1	52.0	46.4	60.7	63.9	35.0
Secondary/Higher	25.1	62.3	54.4	70.1	72.1	43.1
Couples education gap						
< 5 years	16.7	57.1	50.4	65.6	68.1	39.4
5 years above	4.4	34.5	31.7	40.8	48.2	25.7
Residence						
Urban	20.9	52.1	44.1	57.1	61.6	33.8
Rural	7.8	38.4	34.6	44.2	50.8	28.6
Wealth status						
Poor	3.6	30.7	27.7	35.0	43.0	23.2
Middle	9.5	44.8	40.9	51.8	57.9	33.3
Rich	24.4	58.1	49.4	64.9	67.9	38.4
Work status						
Not working	5.9	29.2	26.4	31.9	39.4	23.0
Working	14.3	49.0	42.9	56.2	61.5	33.8

Table 3 gives the distribution of women's autonomy based on the number of decisions the women, their partners or they jointly participate in making in their households. It can be observed from Table 3 that larger percentage (74.6%) and (46.1%) of the women considered in the study does not participate alone in making any of the six household decisions and none of them participate in all six decisions variables considered. It can be clearly seen that about 35.7% of men participate in making five of the household decisions, and only 15.9% of decisions were made jointly by the couples. This indicates based on the result that in general, women in Nigeria has very low participation in household decision making and hence have low autonomy in their households that leads to their low level of empowerment.

Table 3: Distribution of women's autonomy based number of household decision participated by women (N = 23954)

Number of decision participated	Women		Men		Jointly	
	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency
0	74.6	17871	21.9	5239	46.1	11046
1	14.0	3349	12.5	2985	13.4	3211
2	5.3	1273	8.7	2081	8.0	1921
3	3.1	732	8.4	2014	6.4	1526
4	1.6	383	12.4	2962	8.2	1959
5	1.4	337	35.7	8543	15.9	3809
6	0.0	9	0.5	130	2.0	482

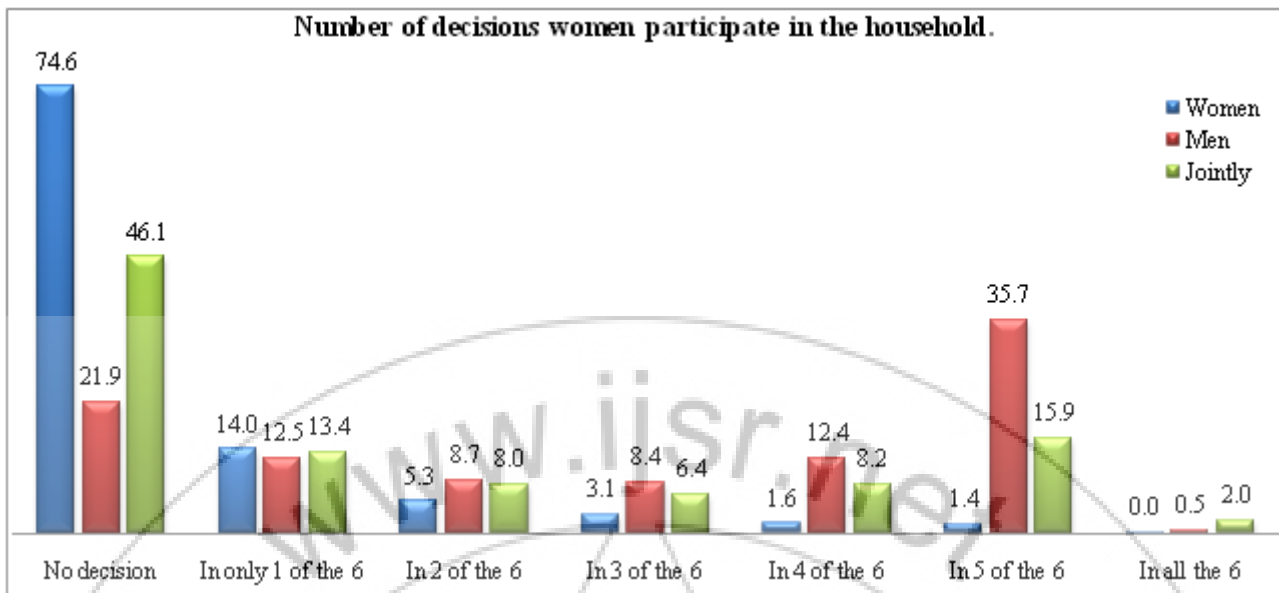


Figure 3

Table 4 presents the results of the percentage participation of women, men and jointly in making each of the decisions in the household. From the results, it observed that higher proportion of women (65.4%) has final say with regards to money earned by their partners and lower percentage (5.4%) and (8.7%) is recorded in making decisions on large household purchases and their health care respectively. For decisions taken by only men, most of the decisions in the

household were made by men alone (as shown by high percentages) except for decisions on contraceptive use (17.8%) and on their earnings (14.5%). Finally, for decisions most of the decisions on the use of contraceptive were made jointly by the couples (64.1%). This can be clearly seen from the Table 4 and figure 4.

Table 4: Percentage participation of women, men and jointly (women/men) in household decision making in Nigeria.

Characteristics	Women		Men		Jointly	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Final say on						
Contraceptive use	495	18.1	485	17.8	1748	64.1
Own Health care	2068	8.7	13690	57.5	8032	33.8
Making large HH purchases	1289	5.4	14870	62.5	7619	32.0
Making small HH purchases	3587	15.1	12340	51.9	7852	33.0
Visit to family/relatives	2464	10.4	10916	45.9	10423	43.8
Husband's earnings	8514	65.4	1883	14.5	2620	20.1

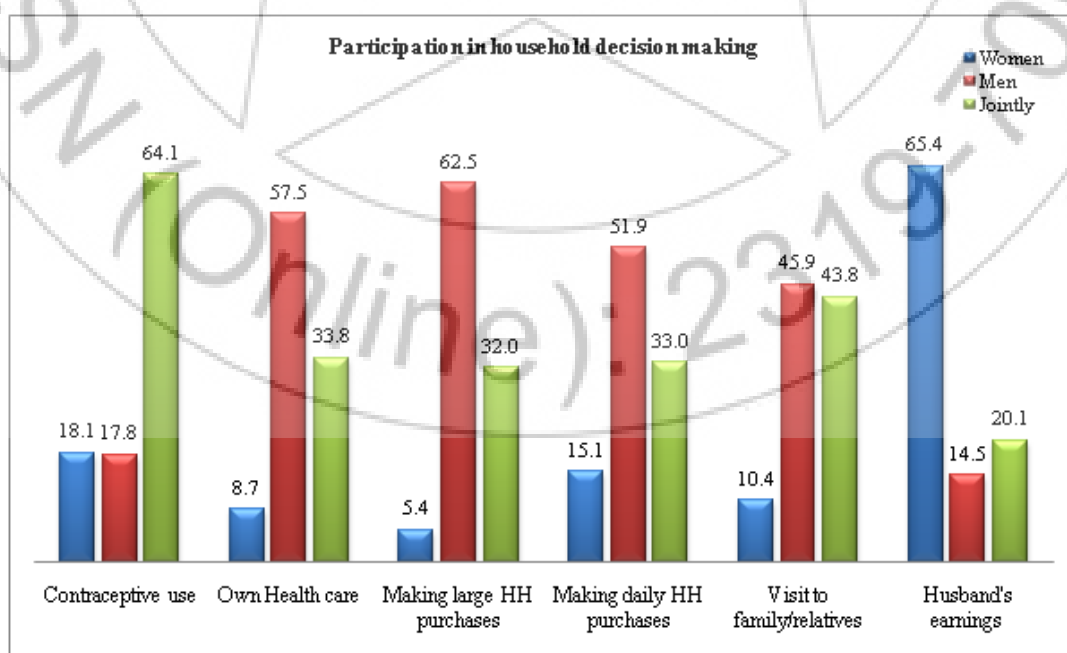


Figure 4

Table 5 is a logistic regression result giving the odds ratios and confidence interval of women’s autonomy in household decisions made by women, men or jointly. From the result, women’s age is having a significant contribution to her autonomy. It can be observed that in decisions made only by women, women of higher age group (35 – 49) years are 45% more likely to be autonomous than women in the lower age group (15 – 34) years. In decisions made only by men, older women are 79% less likely autonomous than younger women as given by values of OR (CI) 0.785** (0.702-0.877), similarly women of older age are 35% more likely to be autonomous if household decisions were made jointly by the couples 1.246** (1.114-1.394). The result shows that age at marriage and age at first birth has no significant contribution to women’s autonomy and hence their empowerment as can be observed from the low odds and confidence interval presented in Table 5. Women with age gap with their partners greater or equal to 5 are 89% less likely to be autonomous in household decisions made by women alone as well as 80% less likely but significant for those made jointly, but about 25% more significantly likely

for the autonomy of women if decisions were made by their partners 1.246** (1.137-1.365). Table 5 also reported that for household decisions made by women alone, their autonomy level is likely to be 17% higher for women with 3 to 5 children than those with more (15%) or less number of children. In the case of decision making by partner alone, women’s autonomy is slightly high for women having more than five children than those with less number of children. It can be observed that respondent education has a significant relationship with the autonomy of women. Women with secondary or higher education level were two times more likely to be autonomous [2.096** (1.723-2.549)] than those in the lower level or no education. Similar case can be observed in decisions made either by women, men or jointly. Couples education gap has no significant effect on women’s autonomy in all decisions made by either woman alone, men alone or jointly. Autonomy increases as women’s standard of living increases; similarly, working women were 97% more likely to have autonomy in household decision than those that are not working.

Table 5: Odds Ratios and Confidence Interval from Logistic Regression of Women's Autonomy on Household Decisions made by women, men, and jointly by the couple

<i>Socio demographic Characteristics</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Jointly</i>
Respondent Age	Odds ratio (95%CI)	Odds ratio (95%CI)	Odds ratio (95%CI)
15 - 34 years (REF)			
35 - 49 years	1.445** (1.302 - 1.603)	0.785** (0.702 - 0.877)	1.246** (1.114 - 1.394)
Age at first marriage			
15 - 34 years (REF)			
35 - 49 years	0.681 (0.355 - 1.308)	1.072 (0.557 - 2.0632)	0.903 (0.456 - 1.785)
Age at first birth			
15 - 34 years (REF)			
35 - 49 years	0.899 (0.513 - 1.574)	0.835 (0.477 - 1.459)	0.928 (0.505 - 1.705)
Couples age gap			
< 5 years (REF)			
> 5 years and above	0.933 (0.855 - 1.018)	1.246** (1.137 - 1.365)	0.803** (0.732 - 0.881)
Parity			
0 - 2 children (REF)			
3 - 5 children	1.165** (1.052 - 1.288)	1.064 (0.956 - 1.183)	1.097* (0.989 - 1.216)
Above 5 children	1.145** (0.993 - 1.321)	1.133 (0.974 - 1.317)	1.069 (0.922 - 1.239)
Respondents education			
No education (REF)			
Primary	1.841** (1.517 - 2.234)	0.678** (0.553 - 0.830)	1.784** (1.501 - 2.121)
Secondary/Higher	2.096** (1.723 - 2.549)	0.936 (0.749 - 1.169)	2.555** (2.141 - 3.049)
Couples education gap			
< 5 years (REF)			
5 years above	1.0541 (0.851 - 1.305)	0.934 (0.749 - 1.169)	1.073 (0.890 - 1.294)
Residence			
Urban (REF)			
Rural	1.0544 (0.956 - 1.1631)	0.832** (0.749 - 0.923)	1.133* (1.022 - 1.257)
Wealth status			
Poor (REF)			
Middle	1.189** (1.045 - 1.354)	0.894 (0.782 - 1.022)	1.164* (1.025 - 1.321)
Rich	1.341** (1.183 - 1.519)	0.941 (0.826 - 1.073)	1.258** (1.109 - 1.426)
Work status			
Not working (REF)			

Working	1.966**(1.765 - 2.190)	0.873*(0.784 - 0.972)	1.685**(1.527 - 1.859)
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*p< 0.05; **p<0.01; REF = Reference group; CI = confidence interval

5. Conclusion

Women's rights and autonomy especially at the household level has become a subject of serious concern for both researchers and policy makers. Though the concept of women's autonomy is not easy to capture in just a word, sentence or even by definition because of its varying usage. Women's autonomy may be termed as the combinations of both financial, political, social, cultural, physiological and sexual decision making power exercised by the women folk. As a matter of fact, women's autonomy is referred to as a process of gaining control over their life, body and well-being at a given point in time. It is the ability of the women to gain greater autonomy at a point in time. The study found that women's autonomy in decision making at the household level has direct and significant relationship with their socio economic and demographic characteristics such as age, education, wealth status, type of residence, number of children and work status. We can conclude on the basis of this study that higher proportion of women does not nor have less participation in most of their household decision making either alone or jointly with their spouse and this leads to their low level of empowerment. This finding from the study leads us not to reject our stated hypothesis.

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