Full Length Research

Challenges of Women with Late Marriage As Perceived By Married Adults in Kwara State, Nigeria

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Marriage is seen as one of the most significant rite of passage from childhood dependence and freedom to adult responsibility and commitment. Despite all these, it has been observed that some women marry lately and this may have grave consequences on their family and society at large. Late marriage has been identified as one of the major factors responsible for infertility and other related problems. Thus, the study examined challenges of women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara State. It also examined the relative influence of moderating variables of educational qualification, age at first marriage and religion on respondents' views. A descriptive design was adopted for this study; using purposive and stratified sampling technique to select the participants. The instrument was a researcher designed questionnaire entitled "Challenges of Women with Late Marriage' (CWLM)". The instrument has reliability co-efficient of 0.69, using a test re-test method. The data collected were analysed with t-test and Analysis of Variance statistics. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level. The findings of this study revealed the challenges faced by women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara state but the most significant are difficulty in child upbringing, poor marital communication, societal rejection and sexually transmitted diseases among others. There was no significant difference in challenges faced by women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara state on the basis of religion. There was a significant difference in the challenges faced by women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara state on the basis of educational qualification and age. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that counsellors should educate the women with late marriage on how to cope with challenges of late marriage, women with late marriage should be encouraged by professional counsellors on how to cope with financial difficulties and improve their communication problems as well as shun extra marital affairs and counselling association should conduct a seminar, lecture, symposium for women on the advantage of early marriage and ways to cope with challenges of late marriage.

Key words: Challenges of women, Late marriage, Married Adults.

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is seen as one of the most significant rite of passage from childhood dependence and freedom to adult responsibility and commitment. The societal expectation on marriage makes it go beyond individuals.

Marriage marks the beginning of a new family (Dvora, 2009). Marriage occupies a central place in God's plan. This made Him (God) to create Eve to provide companionship for Adam (Genesis 2:18-23). It is however surprising that some individuals have relegated this institution to the background as they defer the consummation of marriage till later time to focus on those things they think are pressing. The upward increase in the age at first marriage has been one of the major demographic trends in U.S. landscape in recent years (Evelyn & Yu, 2012).

The average age at first marriage has increased from 20 and 23 for women and men respectively between the year 1950-1960 to 27.4 and 29.5 in 2017 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Rotz (2011) opined that the average age of first-time brides increased by almost five years from 1970 until the early 2000s; first-time grooms also married more than four years later in 2000 than they did in 1970s. Age at marriage has been on the increase especially among women aged within the range of 25 and 49. The median age at marriage among women at this age bracket has increased by 1 year or 7 per cent between 1990 and 1999 (Onipedede, Ezebunwa & Ntoimo, 2015).

Late marriage is the marriage first contracted after the ages of 35 and 40 for female and male respectively. The increase in the age at marriage has been associated to some factors. According to Adedokun (1999), the duration of schooling is a strong determinant of the age at which an individual marries. He observed an increase in the mean age at marriage of women from 20 years for 0–5 years of schooling to 22.6 years for 11–15 years of schooling. It has been discovered that higher median age at marriage is directly correlate with higher rate of girls in school (UNICEF, 2005). It has also been noted that in many societies the economic status of the family is significant in determining the age at which people marry (Garenne, 2004). It has been discovered that Muslims in Nigeria have a mean age at marriage of 21.5 years compared with Christians (non-Catholic) who have an average age at marriage of 22 years, while Catholics have 22.5 years. This supported the fact that religious affiliation can lead to increase in the age at marriage.

Yap (2015) opined that infertility is associated with late marriage. In the study carried out on the factors influencing marriage and marital fertility in Singapore found that the decline in fertility among married people is connected with late marriage. Hina, Abid, Adil and Mishal, (2015) conducted a study on whether late marriage affects fertility or not. 65.7% of the respondents answered positively in accord that late marriage cause infertility. Infertility has been identified as the major cause of divorce as it is ranked first among the causes of divorce in African homes (Adeniran, 2015). This underlines the reason why this study was set to examine the challenge of women with late marriage.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The importance of marriage is emphasized by the fact that most human communities see marriage as a social task expected of every healthy adult. Among the practices that seem to threaten the continual existence of marriage is cohabitation which may be an offshoot of delayed marriage. It has been noted in the recent time that the societal values and beliefs are undergoing a notable shift from those of the former years. The societal values previously held in high esteem are fast giving way to new ones. Marriage as a social institution is now being undermined by alternative lifestyles.

Yap (2008) carried out a research on the factors influencing marriage and marital infertility. The finding established a strong link between late marriage and infertility. Adeniran (2015) examines the major causes of divorce in African homes, and infertility was rank first. As if that was not enough, Centre for Population and Urban in America indicated that family break-up is the major cause of poverty. Despite these, people still delay marriage till later time thereby exposing them to dangers inherent in late marriage. These made it a point of interest to the researcher.

Bandele (2002) who studied causes and consequences of late marriage in Kwara State, found health reasons as the major cause of late marriage and illegal sexual relationship as the major consequence of late marriage. It is noteworthy that the previous studies focused on the causes and consequences of late marriages without bearing in mind those areas of life where women with late marriage may need counselling. Therefore, the present study investigated challenges of women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara State.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The following research question was postulated to guide the study:

•   What are the challenges faced by women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara State?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were examined in this study:

1.   There is no significant difference in challenges faced by women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara State on the basis of religion.
2.   There is no significant difference in the challenges faced by women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara State

on the basis of age at first marriage.

3.   There is no significant difference in the challenges faced by women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara State on the basis of educational qualification.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to find out the challenges and counselling needs of women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara State, Nigeria. The study also tried to find out if educational qualification, age at first marriage and religion influence the challenges of women with late marriage.

Research Design

The research design that was adopted for the study was a descriptive survey. According to Shuttleworth (2008) descriptive research design is a scientific method which involves observing and describing the behaviour of a subject without influencing it in any way. Therefore, the descriptive survey which allows for the use of questionnaire was considered as being appropriate for this research which aimed at finding out the challenges of women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Population, Sample and Sampling Procedure

Population is a complete set of data which possesses some observable characteristics, or a theoretical set of potential observations (Dunn, 2001). According to Daramola (2006) sampling procedure as a systematic process employed to select a required proportion of the target population. Population is the entire group which the researcher is interested in gaining information from and upon which subsequent conclusions is drawn. The population of this study consisted of 1,135,103 (NPC, 2010) married adults in Kwara state; while the target population was all married adults in 3 selected Local Government Areas of Kwara State. The sample size for the study was 400 married adults in Kwara State.
A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select the respondents that participated in the study. According to Battaglia (2010), the multi-stage procedure is one in which sampling is done sequentially across two or more hierarchical levels usually determined by the nature of the population. It is a procedure in which various sampling techniques are employed at different levels of sample selection.

Instrumentation

The instrument which was used for this study was a researcher-developed questionnaire tagged ``Challenges of Women with Late Marriage' (CWLM). The CWLM was designed to elicit the required information from the respondents. The items were generated from the relevant literature.

The instrument consists of three sections; Section A, Section B and Section C. Section A, seeks information on the demographic data of the respondents using variables such as educational qualification, age at first marriage and religion. Section B contained 20 items each on the challenges of women with late marriage. The respondents expressed their opinion using the keys provided on the questionnaire.

Validity of the Instrument

Validity refers to the degree to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure. Abimbola (2001), define validity of an instrument as the extent to which a test instrument measure what it is purported to measure. A measuring instrument is considered valid when it measures truly and accurately what it is designed to measure (Abiri, 2006). The questionnaire underwent screening and scrutiny by experts.

Reliability of the instrument

Reliability of an instrument refers to the consistency of scores obtained by the same person when re-examined with the same set of equivalent items or under similar examination condition (Abiri, 2006). There are different types of reliabilities, however, for the purpose of this study, the test-re-test reliability techniques was adopted. It involves the administration of the same instrument on twenty randomly selected respondents twice at an interval of four weeks. The score obtained from the two administrations were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient formula. Co-efficient of 0.69 was obtained which made the instrument to be considered suitable for the study.

Procedure for Scoring Instrument

The questionnaire items were scored based on the format of each section. Section A contains the demographic information of the respondents and it was scored using frequency counts and mean score. Section B. A four Point Type Likert scale was used for scoring with highest score for item being four (4) and lowest one (1). Allotment of point is as follows.

Strongly Agree (SA) = 4points
Agree (A) = 3points
 Disagree (D) = 2points
Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1point

Method of Data Analysis

The data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The hypotheses generated to guide the study were tested with Analysis of variance (ANOVA). All null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha levels.

RESULTS

Demographic Data

This section covers demographic data using frequency counts and percentages.

Table 1 indicates that 57 (14.3%) of the respondents were between 25-29 Years, 226 (56.5%) were between 30-34 years, 101 (25.3%) were between 35-39 years while 16 (4.0%) were between 40 years and above. 22 (5.5%) of the respondents were African Traditional Religious adherents, 108 (27.0%) are Muslim while 270 (67.5.8%) are Christians; 100 (25,0%) were OND / NCE certificate holders, 281 (70.3%) were HND/First Degree certificate holders while 19 (4.8%) were Post Graduate certificate holders.

Research Question: *What are the challenges faced by women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara state?*

Table 2 presents the mean and rank order on challenges of women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara state. The table indicates that items 12 (with mean score of 2.88), 4 and 10 (with same mean score of 2.84) and 3 (with mean score of 2.83) ranked 1st, 2nd and 4th respectively. These items stated that "difficulty in child upbringing", "poor marital communication" "societal rejection" and "sexually transmitted diseases" are challenges of women with late marriage respectively. However, items 11 (with mean score of 2.65), 8 (with mean score of 2.58) and 19 (with mean score of 2.55) were ranked 18th, 19th and 20th respectively. The items stated that "marriage dissolution", "financial stress" and "marital maladjustment" respectively are equally challenges of women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara state. Since all the items have mean scores that are above the mid-mean score of 2.50, it implies that all the respondents subscribed to the items as being the challenges of women with late marriage.

Hypotheses Testing

In this study, three (3) null hypotheses were formulated and tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical procedure. Significant differences were determined at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis 1: *There is no significant difference in the challenges faced by women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in* Kwara *state on the basis of religion.*

Table 3 presents the calculated F-value. of 2.56 which is less than the critical F-value of 3.00 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the p-value of 0.79 is greater than 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the challenges faced by women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara state on the basis of religion.

Hypothesis 2: *There is no significant difference in the challenges faced by women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in* Kwara *state on the basis of age.*

Table 4 presents the calculated F-value of 3.73 which is greater than the critical F-value of 2.60 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the p-value of 0.011 is less than 0.05, the hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference in the challenges faced by women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara state on the basis of age. In order to determine the mean value(s) that led to the significant difference observed in the ANOVA results in table 8, the Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) was used as a post-hoc test. The results of the DMRT procedure are displayed in Table 5.
Table 5 presents Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) results to show group mean scores that led to the significant difference noted in the ANOVA result on table 4. Group 1, 3 and 4 are similar with mean scores of 54.12, 54.72 and 54.62 respectively unlike Group 2 with mean score of 42.22. Thus, Group 2 has least perception of challenges faced by women with late married.

Hypothesis 3: *There is no significant difference in the challenges faced by women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in* Kwara *state on the basis of qualification.*

Table 6 presents the calculated F-value. of 24.22 which is greater than the critical F-value of 3.00 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, the hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference in the challenges faced by women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara state on the basis of qualification. In order to determine the mean value(s) that led to the significant difference observed in the ANOVA results of table 6, the Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) was used as a post-hoc test. The results of the DMRT procedure are displayed in Table 7.
Table 7 presents Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT)

Table 1: The distribution of respondents on variables

Item	Variable	Frequency	Percentage %
Age at first Marriage			
	25-29 years	57	14.3
	30-34 years	226	56.5
	35-39 years	101	25.3
	40 years above	16	4.0
	Total	**400**	**100**
Religious Affiliation			
	Christianity	270	67.5
	Islam	108	27.0
	African Trad. Rel	22	5.5
	Total	**400**	**100**
Educational qualification			
	OND /NCE	100	25.0
	HND / First Degree	281	70.3
	Post Graduate	19	4.8
	TOTAL	**400**	**100.0**

Table 2: Mean and Rank order analysis on challenges of late married people as perceived by married adults in Kwara state.

Item No.	As far as I am concerned, people who married late face the following challenges:	Mean score	Rank
12	difficulty in child upbringing	2.88	1st
4	poor marital communication	2.84	2nd
10	societal rejection	2.84	2nd
3	sexually transmitted diseases	2.83	4th
16	poor mental health	2.78	5th
6	extra-marital sex	2.78	5th
13	poor spousal interaction	2.76	7th
7	low self esteem	2.75	8th
5	intimidation by in-laws	2.73	9th
9	isolation from families and friends	2.73	9th
20	lack of trust	2.73	9th
2	abnormal children	2.73	9th
18	difference in parent-child values	2.71	13th
14	heart attack	2.70	14th
15	masturbation problems	2.67	15th
17	low productivity at work	2.66	16th
1	Infertility	2.64	17th
11	marriage dissolution	2.65	18th
8	financial stress	2.58	19th
19	marital maladjustment	2.55	20th

results to show group mean scores that led to the significant difference noted in the ANOVA result on table 6. The DMRT results indicated that group 1 with mean score of 49.26 differed slightly from group 2, with mean scores of 54.56 and Groups 3 with mean score of 54.26.

Hence, all groups significantly differed from each other. However, group 2 (First Degree/HND) perceived the highest challenges for women with late marriage.

Table 3: ANOVA comparing respondents on the challenges faced by women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara state on the basis of religion

Sources	SS	df	MS	Cal. F-val.	Crit. F-val.	p-value	Decision
Between Group	244.833	2	122.42				
				2.56	3.00	0.079	Accepted
Within Group	19024.364	397	47.92				
Total	19269.198	399					

Table 4: ANOVA comparing respondents on the challenges faced by women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara state on the basis of age

Sources	SS	df	MS	Cal. F-val.	Crit. F-val.	p-value	Decision
Between Group	529.578	3	176.53				
				3.73*	2.60	0.011	Rejected
Within Group	18739.619	396	47.32				
Total	19269.197	399					

*Significant; p<0.05.

Table 5: Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) showing differences among respondents in the challenges faced by women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara state on the basis of age

Age	Group	N	Mean	Duncan Groupings
25-29 years	1	57	54.12	A
30-34 years	2	226	42.22	B
35-39 years	3	101	54.72	A
40 years above	4	16	54.62	A

Table 6: ANOVA comparing respondents on the challenges faced by women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara state on the basis of qualification

Sources	SS	df	MS	Cal. F-val.	Crit. F-val.	p-value	Decision
Between Group	2095.113	2	1047.56				
				24.22	2.60*	0.000	Rejected
Within Group	17174.084	397	43.26				
Total	19269.198	399					

*Significant; p<0.05.

Table 7: Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) showing differences among respondents in the challenges faced by women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara state on the basis of Educational qualification

Educational qualification	Group	N	Mean	Duncan Groupings
OND/ NCE	1	100	49.26	B
HND/ First Degree	2	281	54.56	A
Post graduate	3	19	54.26	A

DISCUSSION

The result of the findings revealed that the women with late marriage have several challenges, however, the most prominent of the problems are that difficulty in child upbringing", "poor marital communication" "societal rejection" and "sexually transmitted diseases after marriage age. This finding support by Hina, Abid, Adil and Mishal (2015) who conducted a study on whether late marriage affects fertility or not. 65.7% respondents answered positively in accord that late marriage cause infertility. The difficulty in child upbringing may be as a result of differences in parent-child values which are capable of putting a strain in their relationship thereby affecting the upbringing of the child. The poor marital communication may result from the previous experiences of the couples which may make them to assume or misinterpret their spouse while social rejection may be due to inability of some of the women with late marriage to conceive which sometimes (especially in African homes) make them social outcast and relegated to the background.

The result of hypothesis one revealed that there was no significant difference in challenges faced by women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara state on the basis of religion. This implies that in all the religion there is no significant difference in the perception of the challenges faced by women with late marriage. This supported the view of Adeniran, (2015), out a research on the causes of in African homes which identified infertility as the major cause of divorce as it is ranked first among the causes of divorce in African homes. Centre for Population and Urban Research indicated that family break-up is the major cause of the rise in poverty levels in the country and not unemployment. This result may be due to the fact that marriage comes with its own challenges and irrespective of the religious affiliation, such challenges are bound to present themselves

Hypothesis two revealed that there was significant difference in the challenges faced by women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara state on the basis of age at first marriage. This result revealed that (30-34 year) has least perception of challenges faced by women with late married and this view supports Westoff (2003) who opined that while 25 to 28 percent success rate of in vitro fertilization (IVF) is recorded among women under age 35, only 6 to 8 percent success is recorded among those women that are more than age 40. One study found that the rate of cesarean sections was close to double among women ages 30 to 34 than among those in their 20s. The differences in the challenges of women with late marriage on the basis of may not be unconnected with the fact that women are faced with different challenges at different ages. Women in their early twenties may not be faced with the

challenge of conception compare to those in their forties. On the other hand, women in their early twenties may be faced with financial problem because as at that time they might not have consolidated earning capacity whereas those in their forties may not face such challenge.

The result of hypothesis three indicated that there was significant difference in the challenges faced by women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara state on the basis of educational qualification, the result revealed that First Degree / HND perceived the highest challenges for women with late marriage and this supported the view according Kecskes (2017) that the higher the level of education, the lower the divorce rate. This is because higher education guarantee job security and this affords them to cater for the family. Married persons with high educational levels certainly have spent much time in pursuing their higher degrees and as they do, age also increases. Those who are highly educated may be equipped with the necessary information which can guide them in term of marital conflict resolution, IVF treatment for conception, dealing with differences in parent-child values compare to their counterparts with low level education.

CONCLUSION

The study investigated challenges of women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara State, Nigeria. The result shows that challenges faced by women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara state but the most significant are difficulty in child upbringing, poor marital communication, societal rejection and sexually transmitted diseases among others. However, there was no significant difference in challenges faced by women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara state on the basis of religion. There was a significant difference in the challenges faced by women with late marriage as perceived by married adults in Kwara state on the basis of qualification and age.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made;

- Counsellors should educate the women with late marriage on how to cope with challenges of late marriage through marital counselling programmes.
- Women with late marriage should be encouraged by professional counsellors on how to cope with financial difficulties and improve their communication problems as well as shun extra

marital affairs.

- Counselling unit or clinics should establish with the community to provide pre-marital and marital counselling for women with late marriage.
- Counselling Association should conduct a seminar, lecture, symposium for women on the advantage of early marriage and ways to cope with challenges of late marriage.

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