



Influence of Parents on the Choice of Marriage Partners among Yorubas in Atiba Local Government Area of Oyo State

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Abstract

This research work was carried out on the influence of parent on the choice of marriage partners among Yorubas in Oyo state. A study of Atiba local government Area of Oyo state. Questionnaire was adopted to sample one hundred and seventy unmarried singles in Atiba local government Area. Moreover the hypotheses was tested and the result was analyzed with T-test statistics tools at the level of 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed that the hypotheses were rejected. This implies that parental influence have great impact on the choice of marriage partners among unmarried adults in Atiba local government Area of Oyo state. More so, due to the outcomes of the findings, the following recommendations were made; Marriage counselors should try their possible best in educating the children and parents on how to make a right choice. They should make them know or understand that each ward will be able to make their own choice rather than parents' choice. Counseling should be offered to the parents and wards that they should not be after the materials wealth in making marriage choice for the children. Also wards must make love and not money the bases of their choice of marriage partner. Parent should serve as a role model for their wards so that the children will be able to copy and live a successful life rather than end divorce in their long marital life. School counselors should try to take note of the children from broken homes in the school and

educate them on the importance of parental care to the parents. This can be done by inviting their parents for that on through Parent- Teacher Association forum.

Introduction

The word “marriage” is not easy to define because of the diversity in the system of marriage throughout the world. In other worlds the system of marriage varies among the various societies. Sometimes we can find some di-similarities in the way and manner of organizing marriage in societies whose marriage systems are exactly the same. However, marriage can be regarded as an institution ordained by God as well as by the culture of any society. It is a social institution that is cherished and highly preserved in every culture, though it varies from culture to culture .

In the Africa context, marriage is for procreation and entered into by mutual consent. A successful marriage is viewed as one that brings personal satisfaction and happiness to the people who marry. It is believed that happiness in marriage is based upon many things such as mutual respect, sharing similar goals in life, companionship similar moral and spiritual values, mutuality in sexual satisfaction and the meeting of psychological needs. In African

society, marriage could be by prescription or preference. In prescribed marriage, it is the situation where by a man must marry his wife with in a particular group. Preferential marriage is the situation whereby the man may think it is desirable for him to marry from a particular group or lineage. Both forms of marriage work commonly in the traditional African societies.

Marriage has its religious importance marriage is the focus of existence, it is the point where all the members of a given community meet, the living and those yet to be born marriage is a drama in which everyone becomes an actor or an actress and not just a spectator. In a typical African society, marriage is not just limited to the husband and the wife alone. It involves a family of the couples (that is, their immediate and extended family).

Here in Nigeria, marriage is not a transaction between the two parties concerned but between their respective parents. This is why parents play the leading role in the

selection of their children's marital partner. The attempt is to inquire much about the family of their daughter's or son's prospective spouse. In making such choice, some families especially that of the husband resort to consulting oracle. This is to enable them to know the background of their ward's fiance in term of ailments and other shortcomings that are common in the family. Some families were regarded as no go areas as they were tagged 'out casts'. The marriage institution has been in existence since the creation of man with the Biblical account of Adam and Eve. Since then, a great number of people have been involved in the contraction of marriage vows in diverse ways either in the traditional or Western approach.

Review of the Related Literature

The Yoruba constitute one of the major ethnic groups in West Africa sub-region. Yoruba land is said to be between parallels 5.860 and 220 and between 2.650 and 5.720 Eat. It comprises of some six states in the south-west region of geopolitical zones of Nigeria. Amongst them are Oyo, Osun, Ogun, Ondo, Ekiti, Lagos part of Kwara, Kogi and Edo state (Yetunde, 2003).

Large concentration of the Yorubas are also found in the diaspora like Sierra Leone, Gambia, Brazil, West India and the Americas. It is estimate worldwide to have about 60 million populace. They have excited interest because of their large population which form a district group with their own unique history and culture in which marriage is inclusive. To Yorubas every man or woman must strive to be an Omoluabi. The reason is that it is a qualities expected of a well-bred, well-behaved of them.

The institution of marriage is one to which the Yorubas attach much significance. The family (ebi) ensures not only that a child is well brought up and well fed, but that at the right time the son takes a wife and the daughter is given in marriage. To Yoruba people, marriage is a serious conjugation between man and woman who have attained certain marriage age and matured enough to take responsibilities in life.

Marriage has been given a lot of definition by different people at different time. Marriage according to Encyclopedia Britannica (2008) is a legally and socially sanctioned union between one or more husbands and one or more wives that accords status their offspring and is regulated by laws, rules, customs, belief and attitude that prescribed the rights and duties of the partners.

Audu (2005) defines marriage as a community consisting of a master, a mistress and the two slaves making two in all. Odetola and Ademola (2010) define marriage as a union between a man and a woman such that children born within the union are regarded as the legitimate offspring of the parents. Owuamanam (2004) defines marriage as a universal institution which is recognized and respected all over the world. As a social institution, marriage is founded on and governed by social and religious norms of the society.

Marriage is a topic that is integrally tied to adolescents concerned for interpersonal and sexual intimacy and of course for autonomy from parent thus, giving them imminent and adult responsibility. Red Saliffe (2009), Oxford Dictionary (1995) defines marriage as the union of a man and a woman by a ceremony in law.

Marriage is a special association between two people whose relationships are highly personalized, deeply significant and profoundly influential upon the personality of each of them.

Thomas (2009), Aofolaju (1993) defines marriage as the barometer for the continuity of the society. It keeps the society in a continuous axis. The importance of marriage to the Africans is best seen in the description given to it by John Mbiti which expresses the totality of the African people. Marriage is the focus of existence. It is the print where all members of a given community meet the living and those who are yet to be born. All dimension of time meet here and the whole drama of history is replicated, renewed and revitalized.

Marriage is a drama in which everyone becomes actor or actress not just a spectator. Therefore, marriage is a duty, a requirement from the cooperate society and a rhythm of life in which everyone must participate otherwise, he who does not participate is a cursed, a rebel and law breaker.

The universality of marriage with different societies and culture is attributed to the many basic social and personal functions it perform such as procreation and provision for sexual gratification and regulation, care of children and their education and socialization, regulation of lines of descent, division of labour between the sexes, economic production and consumption and provision for satisfaction of personal needs for affection, status and companionship.

The kind of institution and customs that a society develops to fulfil these functions depends on a number of characteristics as size and complexity of the society, level of economics, economic development, form of kinship system and the nature of economic, political and religious institutions.

The marriage stage is very important and that is why an elaborate preparation is made towards it. It is societal rather than individualized. It is between two families and not just the couple alone. The choice of partners was the responsibility of the parents in the past, therefore, individual were not important. The parents finance the marriage including the payment of their bride wealth. The couples themselves had no hand in the decision that would affect their lives whether they love each other or not was irrelevant.

This type of marriage is the duty of both parties. The families concerned, the bond of unity is forever not even terminated by death, parents do lead the road to marital stability and seeing to the careful selection of compatible mates.

Encyclopedia Britannica (2009), since marriage in an African context is a transaction not between the two partners immediately concerned but between their respective parents, the husband's parents would approach the intended wife's parents for the hand of their daughter in marriage.

Parents when used in this case involve the older and respected person in the extended family, not necessarily the real parents of the husband.

Betrothal of female child at birth or ripe age were common in those days. When one gives birth to a female child, the parents of the male child will go to the parents of the female child for marriage contract. During the period the would-be parents in-law would be taking care of the baby girl and also by presentation of gift to the bride's family. Such gifts are sign of appreciation on the part of the bridegroom's family to the girl's family for taking care of her.

They did not count choice of marriage companion based on mutual attraction to be proper. Rather, elders prefer to make a judgement of the personal character of the proposed spouse. The African societies considered the choice of mates as a matter that is too crucial to be left to the whim of the young.

Akinboye (2009) in his study of the Yoruba marriage customs pointed out that there are three stages to be observed. These are; (i) An early intimation (2) A formal betrothal and (3) The Marriage proper

In some cases, some parents are so much concerned when their children attain marriage age and still remain unmarried. At the same time some even make sacrifices in getting them married.

The majority of the marriage throughout the world are arranged by the parents that is betrothal marriage and partners do not do the choosing- parents do arrange the marriage that will be satisfactory to the two families. The trend of parents involvement in the choice of marriage today is changing fast due to the

dynamic nature of the society. The institution is being threatened due to involvement of parents in the choice of their ward's partner and that is now generating a lot of controversies. This is a result of the important roles which the parents used to play in the marital choice of their wards. Coupled with this is the fact that youth of today are more civilized and would want to be given free hands in choosing their life partners. Many youths are breaking away from the custom of arranged marriages.

In making choice these days parents' role are often neglected. Their roles are no longer defined. All that is required of them is to find moral and financial support if need be.

The influence of parents in choosing or dictating for the children these days always results in conflict. A traditional school of thought believes that parents have more knowledge and experience and they should continue to play a prominent role. They support their argument with the fact that they are older and are able to read the desirable qualities of a suitable companion.

Another reason given is that parents investigate the type of family background their ward is going in terms of any dangerous ailment like psychiatric illness which could be inherited through the genes. Not this alone leprosy, tuberculosis, genetic factor like sickle cell anaemia could also be inherited. They should also inquire whether there is any traces of criminal record or barrenness or any dubious character and this investigation must be complete before the families can agree to marry.

Parents also look into the life span of their would be in-law's family. Whether people from such family do not live long. They also consider whether any member of the two families had ever died a terrible death which was regarded as punishment for an abominable act against the gods. For example those who were killed by thunder or those who committed suicide.

Parents also consider educational background, marriage tends to be considered where both partners have the same educational background so as to discuss and share views on different matters.

Religion is also considered. Though people do not consider this factor to be important, it has often led to dissatisfaction in some marriages. When couples do not have the same religious belief, conflict may arise as whether the children should follow their fathers belief or their mother's. Couples may be happier if they are compatible religiously.

For accurate information on these important issues, parents have active roles to play in choosing marriage companion for their wards and they should not object, considering that would be free to go to them for help in case there is any serious problem.

The second school of thought believed it is the responsibility of the intending couples to make their choice based on love and mutual understanding. Parental role is to advice when it is necessary. Today in Nigeria, one could see that the choice of life partner has taken a new dimension.

The would- be couples find each other in places like parties, churches, Cinema houses, mosques, stadium, markets, place of work, schools, inside bus, social network and some other places. They later inform their parents for approval. It is assumed that love precedes marriage. In the situation where the parents object to the association on tribal, religious or social or economic group, the relationship may end up. But some still stick to each other at all costs. When the situation happens like this, the wife may be impregnated by the would-be husband. This would force the parents to allow them marry.

At times, the woman may run to the husband if her parents do object. If the husband's parents object to the marriage the would-be husband will arrange with his friends to accompany him to his wife's house to perform the necessary rites.

Finally, parents are very anxious to see that their children not only get married but also to remain happy and successful in their marital life which is their greatest joy.

Statement of the Problem

The study is aimed at discussing influence of Yoruba parents when it comes to the choosing of partner among youth for the purpose of marriage. The researchers found out that most mostly in our society today there is challenges of choosing marriage partners among our youth especially among Yorubas. Many of our children have fall victim of broken marriage as a result of parent negative influence in choice of partner for their wards.

This research work would try to shed more light on various problems affecting choice of marriage partner through the influence of parents by using Yorubas as a study in our society. Our youths are seriously facing emotional problems when it comes to choice of marriage partner and there is need for urgent solution to this societal problem to be discussed.

Significance of the Study

This research study will be of immense benefits to every individual be it youth male or female, young and adult, literate and illiterate fellow in Atiba Local Government Area of Oyo state and globally. Since marriage is a serious business because it forms the basis of a new and permanent alliance between two families not just between two individuals.

It would also update our knowledge on the importance of allowing our youth on the choice of marriage partner because it forms the foundation for increasing membership of the lineage and sustaining them in their future. It would make parent to understand that marriage should be a matter of for better-for-worse among would-be-couples to be very carefully in their choice of partner to avoid divorce which is the order of the day in our society.

Scope and Limitation of the Research

The research work was carried out in Atiba Local Government Area of Oyo state where majority of the people reside there are Yorubas. The headquarter of the local government area is Ofa-Metta. It comprises of ten wards altogether. The research work was carried out on single mature males and females to elicit their responses while some parents were granted interview to elicit their views on choice of marriage partner among their children.

Research Hypothesis

The following research hypotheses were formulated to guide the conduct of the study.

- 1) There is no significant difference in the influence of parents choice of marriage partner between male and female in Yoruba land.
- 2) There is no significant difference in influence of parent in the choice of marriage partner based on religion in Yoruba land.
- 3) There will be no significance difference in the influence of parent choice of marriage partner among educated and non educated parent in Yoruba society.

Research Methodology

The questionnaire was designed by the researcher with the help of the project supervisor to collect information from the subjects. The questionnaire was made up of two sections.

Section A was made up of question relating to personal data, which include among other things, the sex, age, marital status and the religion of the subject. Section B of the questionnaire contains twenty (20) items in which the subjects were required to rate each. Item on a four points scale.

The four points scale are:

- 1 Strongly Agree (SA)
- 2 Agree (A)
- 3 Disagree (D)
- 4 Strongly disagree (SD)

The questionnaire item talked about the influence of parent on the choice of marriage partners on point by point scale.

Whether parental approval or disapproval may encourage or discourage one from marrying a chosen partner.

Validity and Reliability of Instrument

The items of the questionnaire were prepared after a thorough review of relevant literature in the study and copies of it were given to the project supervisor who studied them and made necessary corrections and confirmed them as being relevant to the study.

The corrections were incorporated in the final draft of the questionnaire in order to ensure its validity.

A pilot test was conducted using few selected subject. The essence of the test to the questionnaire, whether the items are clear enough, easily understood and if there is need to include more items in certain areas or whether there are some item to which they will not like to respond to. The data from the questionnaire were analyzed and this was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and to determine whether the methods of data analysis proposed for the main study are workable.

In all, one hundred and seventy (170) copies of questionnaires were distributed to matured singles in Atiba local government Area of Oyo state. The procedure for filling the questionnaire was thoroughly explained to them. The distribution and collection of the instrument took a period of one week. Also the questionnaire copies were sorted out according to the scale point, strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and strongly disagree and copies were taken to analyst for analysis.

Data obtained for the research was analyzed using t-test techniques. Each hypothesis was tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Results

Hypotheses Testing

H01: There is no significant difference in the influence of parents in the choice of marriage partner between male and female in Yorubaland.

Table 4.6

Gender	N	X	SD	DF	Cal. t-value	Critical t-value	Sig
Male	80	56.844	6.773				
Female	90	56.341	6.759	168	2.519	1.96	<0.05

The result from table 4.6 depicts that the hypothesis which states that, there is no significant difference in the influence of parents in the choice of marriage partner between male and female in Yoruba land was rejected because the calculated t-value of 2.519 was greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance

H02: There is no significant difference in influence of parents in the choice of marriage partner based on religion in Yoruba land

Table 4.7

Age	N	X	SD	DF	Cal. t-value	Critical t-value	Sig
Christian	113	54.019	6.276				
Muslim	57	57.547	7.422	168	3.321	1.96	<0.05

The result from table 4.7 depicts that the hypothesis which states that, there is no significant difference in influence of parents in the choice of marriage partner based on religion in Yoruba land was rejected because the calculated t-value of 3.321 was greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance

H03: There will be no significant differences in the influence of parents of choice of marriage partner among educated and non-educated parents.

PEL	N	X	SD	DF	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value	Sig
Literate	137	56.278	6.253	168	2.844	1.96	

The result from table 4.8 depicts that the hypothesis which states that, there is no significant difference in the influence of parents of choice of marriage partner among educated and non-educated parents was rejected because the calculated t-value of 2.844 was greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance.

Discussion of Findings

From the findings above, it reveals that the three hypotheses tested were rejected. This implies that influence of parents has little to do with choice of marriage partners among Ekiti state University students. However, this is support with the contribution of Glenn (2000) which revealed that the desire for marriage partner in female is difference from that of male because they do consider some certain factors like age, educational qualification, good character, physical attractiveness etc. from their marriage partner in the sense that age becomes greater in modern societies because intimacy and companionship than in most traditional society.

Likewise, hypothesis two was also rejected which state that there is no significant difference in the choice of marriage partner based on religion in Yoruba land, this is in support with the contribution of Levis-Straus which postulates that people are so particular about the demography characteristics of their prospective spouses. Surveyed indicated that they will not marry from another religion group that is not from the same religion group.

Lastly, hypothesis three was rejected as a result of the outcome of the findings and this corroborate with the contribution of Mischel (1989) which found that adolescent do complain that the adult do not listen to them nor do they allow them sufficient privacy but often interfere with their dating partners.

The previous studies show that influence of parents in the choice of marriage partner is their readiness to respond favourably or unfavourably to influence of parents in the choice of marriage partner.

Various schools of thought have shown that parents in the past have played vital roles in the choice of marriage partners of their wards. These days, the preference for influence of parents has reduced considerably among youths in the choice of marriage partner. Parental roles are no longer recorded with rather youths throughout the world now want to be left alone to make their own choice

of marriage partner. All that is required of their parents is to give moral and financial support if need be.

In most societies of the past, individuals were not important, therefore marriage at least in past were arranged by the parents, where or not the couple loved each other was generally irrelevant. Marriage by proxy like this provided for alliance between various families.

Whether a marriage will be pre-arranged or not depends on the types of parents because it is the disposition of parents that determines their attitude and actions in such a situation.

Conclusion

The youths are seriously facing emotional problem when it comes to the matter of choosing marriage partners. For this problem to be minimized, efforts are made by the government through the mass media to educate the parents on the need to give their wards free hand to choose their life partners. For stable marriage in our society today, there is need for all stakeholders in marriage institution to allow our youths to have free mind when it comes to choice of partner.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and discussion of this research work, the following recommendations were made as a way forward for improvement in reducing problems of choosing marriage partner among our youths.

Parents should desist from forcing their children to marry themselves without considering their consent in marriage. We can reduce cases of divorce after marriage if the bringing together of who be-couple is not influence by the both parents negatively thereby provides considerable degree of stability for the union.

Marriage counselors should try their possible best in educating the children and parents on how to make a right choice. They should make them know or understand that each ward will be able to make their own choice rather than parents' choice. Counseling should be offered to the parents and the wards that they should not be after the materials wealth in making marriage choice for the children, also wards must make love and not money the bases of their choice of marriage partner. Parent should serve as a good model for their wards so that

the children will be able to copy and live a successful life rather than end divorce in their long marital life.

Counselors should try to take note of the children from broken homes in the school and educate them on the importance of parental care to the parents. This can be done by inviting their parents for that on through parent- teacher association. Also counselors should educate the parents that they should make sure that their wards are mature enough before planning to marry. This will aid them in settling misunderstanding that may occur in their matrimonial homes without bringing into the notice of the third party. Their level of maturity will enable them know how loyal they are or how they demonstrate love to each other.

However, marriage should be a matter for-better-for-worse so that the would-be-couples would be very careful to avoid disputes which may eventually lead to divorce.

Religion should have little or no effects on the choice of marriage partner. Children too should take note of what the parents like and what they do not, rather than go against their wish and run into problems later. In fact, this is the most serious problem in the society. Each denomination has its own view, so the would – be-couple should be very careful to avoid disputes which may eventually lead to divorce.

The wards too on the other hand should not say this is the jet age and their parents should mind their own business. Since marriage is a life long relationship which must be built on a solid foundation, youths should not regard and advice given by their parents as old fashioned and unnecessary, instead, they should modify their parents opinion where it is necessary instead of ignoring it totally.

Lastly, government should try as much as possible that our- religions institutions should stress how to manage home in their doctrines always and not on the wedding day alone.

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