

CORRELATES OF DELAYED MARRIAGE AMONG MARRIAGEABLE YOUTHS IN SAGBAMA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF BAYLESA STATE

Umukoro, Friday

umukorofriday7@gmail.com

and

Perekeniye, Electric Kubuye

Perekeniye19@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The study investigated correlates of delayed marriages among marriageable youths in Sagbama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. A sample of 400 unmarried youths was used for the study. Correlational research design was used for the study. Simple random sampling technique was used to draw the sample. Four research questions were answered while four corresponding null hypotheses were tested in the study at 0.05 level of significance. Two instruments were used for the study; they are the Psychosocial Inventory (PI) and Marital Delay Survey (MDS). The instruments were validated by the research supervisor and two experts in Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instruments was estimated using Cronbach alpha reliability method of internal consistency. Psychosocial Inventory (PI) at 0.74 score and Marital Delay Survey (MDS) at 0.77 coefficient reliabilities. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested using p-value associated with Pearson product moment correlation. It was found among others that there is relationship between unemployment and delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. It was also found that there is relationship between materialism and delayed marriage among marriageable youths. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that youths should put hindering religious beliefs aside when it comes to marital affairs. The study established empirically that unemployment, socio-economic status, materialism, and religion are major causes of delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

Keywords: *Delayed marriage, unemployment, socio-economic status, materialism, religion, marriageable youths.*

Introduction

Marriage is seen as a thing of joy as it is the foundation upon which the family and indeed the society are built. It unites families, communities and even kingdoms and as such plays a very important role not just as a means for instituting a family but also fosters peace and diplomacy between individuals, families and communities as the case maybe. Marriage is seen as a permanent affair between a man and a woman. The relationship in actual fact is between the lineages of the couples who participate in the different rites that seal such a marriage (Modo, 2014). Marriage has for ages, been regarded as an acceptable way of

adding more members to the lineage and at the same time expanding the scope of relations. Marriage is uniquely beneficial to society because it is the foundation of the family and the basic building block of society as a whole. As a social institution which can be found in every human culture, marriage is peculiar and particular, though the forms and rules may differ. Marrying has historically been one of the clearest markers of adulthood and the most significant statement of independence from parents. Hartley (2012) says it signifies the shift from family of origin to forming a household of one's own.

Marriage is a calling which takes a great deal of energy and devotion. Husbands and wives are called to live together, not only physically, but on every level of life. Economically, socially, recreationally in matters of faith and lifestyle, they are to keep faith with each other. Since each person is unique, with his or her own difference, like and dislikes, it takes a great deal of sensitivity, commitment and work to develop a way of being together which is not only enriching for them as a couple but also individually. When husbands and wives respect, accept and understand each other as persons in their own rights, rather than as people who can meet respective needs, they are able to form a way of being together, a way of affirming and being affirmed, of yielding to and receiving from. There is no room for threats and manipulations. When each of the partners feels accepted and understood, they can safely open up more and more of themselves to each other and deepen their sharing. In Africa, marriage is a sacred union. This is because it solidifies relationship that enriches communities and nations by bringing forth new life and new hope. Marriage is that cultural process which ushers in new life. It is a cherished and most celebrated rite since the dawn of African civilization. Traditionally, throughout Africa, the principal purpose of marriage was for the raising of children. Sex for fun had no place in the life of the community. Sexual intercourse is expected to take place only within marriage therefore sex is seen as the most important factor in marriage (Omoyajowo, 2011). However, marriage in Africa is not a human right in that it does not need licences or certificates. It is a privilege afforded by communities, between man and woman for those who meet the criteria. African weddings are spiritual and social and involve the combination of two lives, two families, and even two communities.

Marriage provides for new social relationships to be established between the families and relatives involved (George, 2013). It puts the individual and his family on the social, religious and physical map of his community. Everyone recognizes that the individual is a full person when he or she is married and has children. In the words of George, marriage is one experience, without which a person is not considered to be complete, 'perfect', and truly a man or a woman. Without marriage, a person is only a human being minus in the African view of man (George, 2013). A man and a woman create a positive energy which leads to fulfillment in all areas of their lives both in the physical and the spiritual. "Communication, intimacy and companionship are three of the big draws to a permanent relationship" (Hecht, 2012). The warmth of knowing that someone cares and will be there to listen is a common pull to settle down and marry.

Furthermore, people marry to get company that they would not get if they were single. Nobody wants to return to an empty home, which is what happens if one is not married. More so, marriage provides a safe avenue for sex, a way to guarantee regular access to sex. It serves as remedial way of preventing immorality and leads to the formation of a

warm family relationship. Echebe (2014) sees marriage as a social relationship that is institutionalized and is very important as it gives the man and woman legal sexual union and the children that are born out of such unions are considered as the legitimate children of their parents. Late marriage among adult youths is one of the challenges in Nigeria. It affects the image of the church and the spiritual growth of the people concerned. Many of the youths marry at late thirties to late forties. Late marriage here refers to situations when a person who has attained the state of maturity in every facet of life that is; mentally, spiritually, financially and physically is not married probably as a result of unavailability of spouse, low income, comfortable home, culture/cultural beliefs. Although there are a few deliberately choose to delay their marriage probably because of academic, career or ministerial pursuit but majority of those who are experiencing or associated with late marriage are not prepared for it. They have their life planned out only to find it difficult to settle into blissful homes. Many of those with delayed marriage are being mocked by their relatives and peers; many times, they are seen as people with peculiar problem.

From interaction with so many single youths, they seem to be giving similar excuses especially in Sagbama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. Many youths usually make mistake in selecting life partner and some of their mistakes are tragic. Very often, however, such mistakes are not the result of not finding the right person but result from other causes. Some adults routinely make the mistake of looking for and praying for the right person to come along while giving little or no attention to themselves being the right person for others. Some do not have good interpersonal relationship with people in their places of work. Some find it difficult to make some sacrifices, self-denial, that is necessary to keep friends and sustain relationships. Others do not give enough attention to their outward appearance and dressing.

Another suspected reason for delay marriage among some youths could be that they have become too emotionally attached to their parents and find it difficult to break the home ties. There is the issue of career development and educational attainment which has become a major determinant in deciding when to marry. Delaying marriage, that is, pushing the age of marriage into the late thirties and higher is now an increasing trend in the society as a result of opportunity for career development especially among women. Also women liberation movements have created the awareness that there are so many things that can give a woman fulfillment other than marriage. The need for women to get involved in politics, decision-making and leadership at all levels both in the home, society and the church as being campaigned by women liberationists could be a distracting factor for a good number of women from thinking or planning for marriage early. Meanwhile, some women may also see the inequality in the treatment of genders especially in African homes intolerable and could decide to remain single.

It is from some of the above trivial and suspected reasons that the researcher became interested in carrying out this research on the possible causes of delayed marriages among the youths but different from those factors mentioned by other researchers. Factors such as unemployment, socio-economic status, materialism, religion and custom are assumed by the researcher to contribute to delayed marriages. Hence, the need for this study.

According to Jumbo (2008), Unemployment is caused by various reasons that come from both the demand side, or employer, and the supply side, or the worker. Demand-side

reductions may be caused by high interest rates, global recession, and financial crisis. From the supply side, frictional unemployment and structural employment play a great role. Unemployment causes workers to suffer financial hardship that impacts families, relationships, and communities. An individual that has reached the age to get married could refuse getting married because he/she is unemployed and would not want to face more hardship upon getting married.

Socioeconomic status (SES) encompasses not just income but also educational attainment, financial security, and subjective perceptions of social status and social class. Socioeconomic status can encompass quality of life attributes as well as the opportunities and privileges afforded to people within society. Poverty, specifically, is not a single factor but rather is characterized by multiple physical and psychosocial stressors (Morgan, Farkas, Hillemeier & Maczuga, 2009). Further, SES is a consistent and reliable predictor of a vast array of outcomes across the life span, including physical and psychological health. SES affects overall human functioning, including our physical and mental health. Low SES and its correlates, such as lower educational achievement, poverty and poor health, ultimately affect our society (Aikens and Barbarin, 2008). This could also be a contributor of delayed marriage. This could be so because many persons would not like to attempt marriage without having a source of income.

A materialistic viewpoint on life can have a negative effect on a person's relationship. Money has been shown to play a key role in marital conflicts (Carroll, 2012). Jason (2014) reported that materialistic couples are unhappier and tend to have more arguments than other couples. Materialists will never feel satisfied with their possessions because their current possessions will eventually become a baseline for new and improved items. Material possessions will never leave a person feeling truly happy. A new item will only make a person happy for a moment, but eventually, they will get bored with it and strive for more. A new possession will only keep a person happy until they start feeling covetous and depressed again. An individual could wait to acquire materials before he/she embarked on marital life. Most male youths have stated that they must have a car and house before going into marriage. The process of getting these materials could in one way or the other bring about delayed marriage.

This study is anchored on the theory of Planned Behaviour propounded by Icek Ajzen in 1991. The theory explains human behaviour as a product of deliberate planning and intention, which are shaped by individual attitudes, perceived social expectations, and perceived control over the behaviour. In this study, marriage is viewed as a conscious and intentional decision rather than a spontaneous life event. According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, an individual's attitude toward a behaviour influence whether the behaviour will be performed or postponed. Bringing this to this study, marriageable youths may develop cautious or negative attitudes toward marriage due to fear of marital responsibilities, economic pressure, or exposure to marital instability such as conflict and divorce. When marriage is perceived as burdensome or risky, youths are more likely to delay entering into it. The theory also emphasizes the role of subjective norms, which refer to perceived social pressure from family members, peers, and the wider society. In Sagbama Local Government Area, changing cultural values, increased emphasis on education and career development, and growing societal acceptance of late marriage may reduce pressure

on youths to marry early. As a result, the influence of traditional expectations regarding early marriage may weaken, encouraging marriage postponement. Furthermore, perceived behavioural control plays a crucial role in explaining delayed marriage among youths. This refers to individuals' beliefs about their ability to successfully perform a behaviour based on available resources and opportunities. Factors such as unemployment, low income, high cost of marriage ceremonies, housing challenges, and educational commitments may reduce youths' confidence in their readiness for marriage. When marriageable youths perceive that they lack the financial, emotional, or social capacity required for marriage, they are more likely to delay it until they feel adequately prepared.

The aim of the study is to establish correlates of delayed marriages among marriageable youths in Sagbama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. In specific terms, the objectives of the study are to:

1. Find the relationship between unemployment and delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama L.G.A.
2. Examine the relationship between socio-economic status and delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama L.G.A.
3. Investigate the relationship between materialism and delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama L.G.A.
4. Determine the relationship between religion and delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama L.G.A.

This study was guided by four research questions as follows:

1. What is the relationship between unemployment and delayed marriage among marriageable youths?
2. What is the relationship between socio-economic status and delayed marriage among marriageable youths?
3. What is the relationship between materialism and delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama?
4. What is the relationship between religion and delayed marriage among marriageable youths?

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance to guide this study.

1. There is no significant relationship between unemployment and delayed marriage among marriageable youths.
2. There is no significant relationship between socio-economic status and delayed marriage among marriageable youths.
3. There is no significant relationship between materialism and delayed marriage among marriageable youths.
4. There is no significant relationship between religion and delayed marriage among marriageable youths.

Methodology

The researcher adopted a correlational research design. This is a design that has crucial importance that must be applied in any investigation that is directly aimed at showing the relationship between two variables (independent and dependent) (Kpolovie, 2016). The

design is considered appropriate since the researcher is interested in determining how unemployment, socioeconomic status, materialism, and religion independently correlated with delayed marriage among the youths. The population of the study comprises all unmarried youths above the age of 35 years in the 38 villages in Sagbama L.G.A of Bayelsa State. The sample size for the study is 400 unmarried youths from ten villages. Simple random sampling technique was employed to sample ten villages. Forty youths were randomly selected per the selected villages. This sampling technique was adopted because the researcher wants all the youths in the selected villages have equal opportunity of being part of the sample. Two instruments were used for data collection. The first was the Psychosocial Inventory (PI) and Marital Delay Survey (MDS), the instruments were adapted. Both instruments were reviewed and validated by experts in Educational Psychology and measurement and evaluation to ensure cultural relevance and clarity of items. The reliability of the instruments was established using Cronbach's alpha. A pilot study conducted with 30 youths outside the research area yielded coefficients of 0.72 for (PI) while (MDS) at 0.77, indicating good internal consistency. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested using p-value associated with Pearson product moment correlation. All statistical analyses were conducted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.

Research Question 1: To what extent does unemployment relate to delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama L.G.A?

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between unemployment and delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama L.G.A.

Table 1: Pearson product moment correlation of the relationship between unemployment and delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama L.G.A.

Unemployment	Pearson Correlation	1	.596
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	700	700
Delayed marriage	Pearson Correlation	.596	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	700	700

Table 1 above shows that the correlation between unemployment and delayed marriage is 0.60 which indicates a moderate relationship. For two-tailed test, the observed correlation has probability level (p-value) of .000. The p-value of .001 is less than the chosen 0.05 alpha. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between unemployment and delayed marriage among marriageable youths is rejected. Thus, there is statistically significant relationship between unemployment and delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

Research Question 2: To what extent does socio-economic status relate to delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama L.G.A?

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between socio-economic status and delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama L.G.A.

Table 2: Pearson product moment correlation of the relationship between socio-economic status and delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama L.G.A.

Socio-economic status	Pearson Correlation	1	.423
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	700	700
Delayed marriage	Pearson Correlation	.423	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	700	700

Table 2 above shows that the correlation between socio-economic status and delayed marriage is 0.42 which indicates a low relationship. For two-tailed test, the observed correlation has probability level (p-value) of .000. The p-value of .001 is less than the chosen 0.05 alpha. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between socio-economic status and delayed marriage among marriageable youths is rejected. Thus, there is statistically significant relationship between socio-economic status and delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

Research Question 3: To what extent does materialism relate to delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama L.G.A?

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between materialism and delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama L.G.A.

Table 3: Pearson product moment correlation of the relationship between materialism and delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama L.G.A.

Materialism	Pearson Correlation	1	.571
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	700	700
Delayed marriage	Pearson Correlation	.571	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	700	700

Table 3 above shows that the correlation between materialism and delayed marriage is 0.57 which indicates a moderate relationship. For two-tailed test, the observed correlation has probability level (p-value) of .000. The p-value of .001 is less than the chosen 0.05 alpha. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between materialism and delayed marriage among marriageable youths is rejected. Thus, there is statistically significant relationship between materialism and delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

Research Question 4: To what extent does religion relate to delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama L.G.A?

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between religion and delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama L.G.A.

Table 4: Pearson product moment correlation of the relationship between religion and delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama L.G.A.

Religion	Pearson Correlation	1	.789
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	700	700
Delayed marriage	Pearson Correlation	.789	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	700	700

Table 4 above shows that the correlation between religion and delayed marriage is 0.79 which indicates a high relationship. For two-tailed test, the observed correlation has probability level (p-value) of .000. The p-value of .001 is less than the chosen 0.05 alpha. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between religion and delayed marriage among marriageable youths is rejected. Thus, there is statistically significant relationship between religion and delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

Discussion of findings

The findings of the study are discussed as follows:

Relationship between unemployment and delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. There is significant relationship between unemployment and delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. This indicates that youths are not married as a result of joblessness. This finding is not far from the researcher's expectation as most youths he encountered were willing to marry if they find a job. This finding agreed with that of Nduonofi and Nwala-Cadger (2015) where they revealed a significant relationship between poor unemployment of eligible adult males and the age at first marriage. Similarly, this finding also agreed with that of James (2019) where he revealed that unemployment significantly relate with delayed marriage among youths.

Relationship between socio-economic status and delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. There is significant low relationship between socio-economic status and delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. This indicates that a youth's socio-economic status could determine when they get married. This finding is far from the researcher's expectation as youths from high, moderate and low socio-economic status do not actually differ in delayed marriage. This finding disagreed with that of Nduonofi and Nwala-Cadger (2015) where they revealed that socioeconomic status is a necessary but insufficient condition affecting late marriage amongst eligible adult males. Furthermore, this finding agreed with Babalola, Olubiyi, Ibrahim (2020) where he revealed that educational level and poor economic status affect the age at which men get married in Ekiti State.

Relationship between materialism and delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. There is significant relationship between

materialism and delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. This finding indicates that a youth's zeal for material things could determine when they get married. This finding is not far from the researcher's expectation as most youths could be seen listing the type of things like car, houses, land etc they want to acquire before getting married. This finding differs from that conducted by Babalola, Olubiyi and Ibrahim (2020) where they revealed that materialism do not affect the age at which men get married. Furthermore, this finding agreed with that of Nduonofi and Nwala-Cadger (2015) where they revealed a significant relationship between materialism and the age at first marriage.

Relationship between religion and delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. There is significant relationship between religion and delayed marriage among marriageable youths in Sagbama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. This finding indicates that a youth's religious belief could delay their marriage. This finding is not far from the researcher's expectation as it has been observed from most youths that marrying someone with a different faith from yours is not good. This finding agreed with that of Jack (2020) where he revealed that religious activities significantly relate with late marriage among men in New York City. Furthermore, this study also agreed with that of Morreall, John; Sonn, Tamara (2013) where they revealed a significant prediction between religion and the age at first marriage.

Conclusion

It was concluded that lack of stable employment and income discourages youths from entering into marriage due to fear of financial hardship and inability to meet marital responsibilities. Income level, educational attainment, and living conditions influence marital decisions, they are not the sole determining factors of delayed marriage. Excessive desire for material possessions such as cars, houses, and luxurious lifestyles leads many youths to postpone marriage until these goals are achieved. Finally, it was concluded that strict religious beliefs, denominational differences, and doctrinal restrictions influence youths' decisions on when and whom to marry.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government at both state and local levels should create more employment opportunities for youths through skill acquisition programmes, vocational training centres, and youth empowerment schemes.
2. Parents, community leaders, and religious bodies should educate youths on the importance of responsible financial planning rather than waiting to attain very high economic status before marriage.
3. Youths should be sensitized through seminars, schools, churches, and community programmes on the dangers of excessive materialism and unrealistic marital expectations.
4. Religious leaders should provide balanced teachings that encourage marriage without unnecessary restrictions or prolonged delays.

References

- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179-211. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90020-T](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T)
- Aikens, N. L., & Barbarin, O. (2008). Socioeconomic differences in reading trajectories: The contribution of family, neighborhood, and school contexts. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 100(2), 235-251. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.100.2.235>
- Babalola, S. O., Olubiyi, K. S., & Ibrahim, A. O. (2020). Socioeconomic factors influencing age at first marriage among men in Ekiti State, Nigeria. *Journal of Social Sciences Research*, 6(3), 112-120.
- Carroll, J. S. (2012). Financial stress and marital conflict: Examining the role of materialism in relationship satisfaction. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, 33(3), 367-379. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10834-012-9305-8>
- Echebe, C. (2014). *Marriage and family life in contemporary African society*. Onitsha: Africana Publishers.
- George, A. (2013). *Marriage and social integration in African communities*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.
- Hartley, R. (2012). *Family transitions and marital development*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Hecht, M. L. (2012). *Communication in close relationships*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education.
- Jack, R. T. (2020). Religious involvement and delayed marriage among urban adults in New York City. *Journal of Sociology and Religion*, 41(2), 155-170.
- James, O. A. (2019). Unemployment and marital timing among Nigerian youths. *Nigerian Journal of Social Psychology*, 12(1), 45-58.
- Jason, P. R. (2014). Materialism and relationship dissatisfaction among young couples. *Journal of Marriage and Family Studies*, 18(4), 301-315.
- Jumbo, E. A. (2008). *Unemployment and social challenges in Nigeria*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press.
- Kpolovie, P. J. (2016). *Advanced research methods in education and social sciences*. Owerri: Springfield Publishers.

- Modo, I. V. (2014). *African traditional marriage systems and social cohesion*. Uyo: Heritage Publishers.
- Morgan, P. L., Farkas, G., Hillemeier, M. M., & Maczuga, S. (2009). Risk factors for learning-related behavior problems at 24 months of age. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 37(3), 401-413. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10802-008-9279-8>
- Morreall, J., & Sonn, T. (2013). Religion and marital timing: A sociocultural perspective. *Journal of Family Studies*, 19(1), 25-39.
- Nduonofi, E. C., & Nwala-Cadger, A. I. (2015). Socioeconomic determinants of age at first marriage among adult males in Southern Nigeria. *African Journal of Population Studies*, 29(2), 2153-2166.
- Omoyajowo, J. A. (2011). *Marriage and sexuality in African traditional society*. Lagos: Concept Publications.