

Attitudes of Male Undergraduate Students Towards Choosing the Female Under/Graduate Students as Marriage Partners Within the Hausa-Folk

Abstract: Marriage partner selection, though something very close to us, has not been as simple and straight forward as the name denotes. Rather, it involves a lot of specialty and competence to accomplish. In fact, it has been a very serious and contentious subject of debate. Various factors determine the selection of marriage partners, which vary from a society to another. This study is set to investigate into the attitude of undergraduate male students towards selection of female graduate and or undergraduate students as marriage partners, with the view of ascertaining if level of females' education in Northern Nigeria (and especially within the Hausa-folk) is a determining variable for a female to be chosen in marriage. The population of the study consists of all the students of the Department of Educational Foundations, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Nigeria, which equals to 560 students. Total number of 226 students are selected as the sampled population. Moreover, questionnaire is used as the research instrument. The instrument was submitted to experts in the departments of Science and Vocational Education, and Educational Foundations respectively for validity check. However, the findings of the study indicate among others that, male undergraduate students have positive attitudes towards the selection of female under/graduate students as marriage partners. Finally, the research upper some suggestions among which one is that, there should be further study on the attitudes of other Hausas of different socio-economic status towards females' education.

Keywords: Marriage, Marriage Partner, Attitudes, Hausa-Folk

Background to the Study

Entry upon the role of husband and wife in an institution like marriage depends on being chosen as a life partner (Oguegbe & Onuecheta, 1995). Omari in Sani & Yahaya (2018) saw marriage as the coming together of a man and woman as husband and wife. In African society, marriage is considered to be essential because it protects the morals of the people and discourages adultery and fornication. It makes couple live responsibly, promote peace and harmony among members of a society (Yahaya, 2009). In Nigeria, and within the Hausa folk specifically, it is generally believed that the success of a family largely depends on the relationship between the man and the woman (marital relationship), which is highly dependent on choosing the right spouse. However, selection of marriage partner is one of the most important decision people make during their lifetime. Selection of marriage partner can be as the mental process of selecting amidst other individuals likeable partner in marriage or legal union. O'neil in Oguegbe & Onuecheta, (1995) explained that, education is an important factor in marriage partner choice in many societies. It

40 has been observed that, in a marriage partnery surveys, women consistently express a preference
41 for marriage partners who are of high educational qualification as themselves. Also, Kalmijn in
42 Yahaya & Dandare (2018) revealed that, college graduates prefer to marry college graduates like
43 themselves.

44 However, this research gets its background from the phenomenon that, marriage is an event of
45 necessity, which the selection of its partner is determined by various factors. One of such factors
46 is education, that brings about the need to study the relationship between education and selection
47 of marriage partner within the Hausa folk. The study will focus on undergraduate students in
48 Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto. The result of which could be generalized to other similar
49 situations.

50 **Research Problems**

51 Marriage is considered a phenomenon next to necessity in many societies. It is necessary for the
52 fact that, it is the only means by which a man and a woman come together legally as a husband
53 and a wife. There and then, they form a family by the means of which they produce legal
54 offspring(s), there by maintaining as well as promoting the population of the society in question.
55 However, many factors are considered when selecting a marriage partner. This is for the fact
56 that, marriage is a lifelong event. Within the Hausa-folk, character and personality of a girl is
57 highly considered during the selection. Moreover, among such factors that determine the
58 sharpens the personality of a girl, as held, by the Hausas, is formal education. This could be
59 either positively or otherwise.

60 Educated females are sometimes considered too socialized to be easy going in marital homes.
61 Sani and Tsaure (2016) have pointed some gender and marital controversies, which are mainly
62 on the question of equality versus equity. In this regard, it could be noted that, feminist as well as
63 African womanist are mostly graduates. Moreover, family is the first school to a child where as
64 mother is the first teacher (Sani, 2016). In this regard, individuals tend to be very careful in
65 partnerry selection during marriage. With all these therefore, it is worthy to study the relationship
66 between education and selection of marriage partner among the Hausas.

67 **Research Questions**

68 This research is guided by the following research questions:

- 69 i. What is the attitude of the undergraduate male students of Usmanu Danfodiyo
70 University, Sokoto towards choosing undergraduate female students as marriage
71 partners?
- 72 ii. What are the factors responsible for the positive or negative attitudes of male
73 undergraduate students in Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto towards the selection
74 of female undergraduate students as their marriage partners?

75 **Objectives of the Study**

76 The central objective of this research is to study the relationship between education and selection
77 of marriage partner amongst the Hausas. However, undergraduate students in Usmanu
78 Danfodiyo University, Sokoto are chosen as experimental group. Hence, the study is specifically
79 concerned with finding:

- 80 i. the attitude of the undergraduate male students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University,
81 Sokoto towards choosing undergraduate female students as marriage partners,
- 82 ii. the factors responsible for the positive or negative attitude of male undergraduate
83 students in Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto towards the selection of female
84 undergraduate students as their marriage partners,

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87 **Marriage and Marriage Market**

88 Marriage can be as: “The act by which a man and a woman unite to discharge their duties
89 towards one another and society. Thus duties, however, which result from the relation of the
90 husband and the wife. The act of union having been once accomplished, the word comes
91 afterward to denote the relation itself” Schouler in Yahaya & Dandare. According to Reiss as
92 quoted by Sani & Yahaya, (2018), marriage is “A socially acceptable union of individuals as
93 husband and wife roles with the key function of legitimating of parenthood”.

94 By these definitions, it is obvious that marriage is a universal phenomenon, and as institution, it
95 performs almost similar set of functions in different societies. It is the foundation of all social
96 relations of human society. Man is social by nature and cannot live in isolation, but marriage is

97 the only institution, which recognizes and certifies these relationships with legal authority.
98 Therefore, in spite of varied cultural patterns, religious orientations and ethical considerations,
99 significance of marriage is universally accepted.

100 There is also obvious evidence, which suggests that, marriage market considerations play an
101 important role in students` educational choice. For instance, top universities in the U.S. explicitly
102 advertise to prospective students. The increased probability of finding a high-quality spouse that
103 comes with the admission to their institutions. Gregory refers to Harvard University as *the*
104 *nation`s mosteute dating services*. Finally, there is an increasing number of dating websites
105 designed exclusively for the purpose to help students from top universities to find partners from
106 top universities.

107 **Factors Influencing the Selection of Spouse**

108 There has been the predication that Female undergraduates may have a stronger preference for
109 partners who are college graduates to non-college graduates while male undergraduates indicated
110 that it`s not too important that their partners should be college graduates. However, the process
111 of spouse selection encompasses not just the act of choosing a mate but what really motivates or
112 pushes youngsters into the desire of selecting a spouse. Factors that make this possible were
113 examined the most common among them is the desire to participate in a socially sanctioned,
114 mutually rewarding, intimate relationship.

115 Mate selection is the most important event in the life of a person. Various factors influence this
116 process globally. They include; educational background, parental influence, religion and
117 occupation. Observations have shown those graduates who marry partners of lower educational
118 level have difficulties in both interpersonal and the public communications as well. This could
119 thus result into problem in the marriage. This is supported by the studies carried out by Kalmijin,
120 (2001) and that of Levi-strauss, (2006). They revealed that the college graduates prepare to
121 marry college graduates like themselves.

122 In addition, religion is one of the important factors to consider in selection of spouse. The studies
123 carried out by Muhammad in Sani & Yahaya, (2018) presents a popular Muslim dogma called
124 “Bukhari & Muslim” in which prophet Muhammad S.A.W recommended Muslims to select
125 those partners who are best in religion and character: “A woman may be married for four

126 reasons: for her property, her rank, for her beauty, and for her religion (and character). So, marry
 127 the one who is best in religion and character and you shall prosper.” People are expected to
 128 marry an individual who shares the same faith with them. Yahaya (2009) submitted in his view
 129 that religion is an essential part of a believer’s life.

130 **Methodology**

131 The population of this study is made up of all undergraduate students of the Department of
 132 Educational Foundations, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto. Therefore, the population of
 133 the study comprises of four levels (100L to 400L). Nevertheless, the total number of the students
 134 is five hundred and sixty-four (564). The population distribution according to levels and courses
 135 of the students is presented below in a tabular form:

136
 137
 138 **Table 1:** Population of Undergraduate Students in the Department of Educational Foundations,
 139 Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, 2016/2017 Session

141 Courses	142 Level	143 Males	144 Females	145 Total
146 B.A. Ed. Arabic	147 100	5	1	6
	148 200	5	0	5
	149 300	2	0	2
	150 400	8	2	10
151 B.A. Ed. English Lang.	152 100	16	15	31
	153 200	25	19	44
	154 300	38	14	52
	155 400	98	37	135
156 B.A. Ed. Hausa Lang.	157 100	16	3	19
	158 200	8	0	8
	159 300	9	1	10
	160 400	22	1	23
161 B.A. Ed History	162 100	1	0	1
	163 200	0	0	0
	164 300	0	0	0
	165 400	1	0	1
166 B.A. Ed. Islamic Studies	167 100	39	14	53
	168 200	52	14	66
	169 300	23	2	25
	170 400	54	19	73
Total		422	142	564

166 **Source:** UDUS Web Team, (2014)

167 However, a sample of two hundred and twenty-six (226) students, which represents percent
168 (40%) of the target population, is used to represent the five hundred and sixty-four (564)
169 undergraduate students of the Department of Educational Foundations, Usmanu Danfodiyo
170 University, Sokoto.

171 The instrument use for the study is questionnaire. On the questionnaire however, provisions were
172 made to the respondents to choose from amongst yes, no or undecided by simply ticking on any.
173 Thereafter, their opinions are expressed in form of data, which are relevant and subject to further
174 manipulations. The questionnaire is designed in such a way that, items of information required
175 from the respondents are minimal, to enable them appropriately fill and return them accordingly.
176 The questionnaire contains 8 items, which are responded using yes, no or undecided.

177 To ensure the validity of the instrument, it was submitted to experts at the departments of
178 Science and Vocational Education, and Educational Foundations respectively, for adequate
179 scrutiny and corrections. Their comments were taken carefully into due consideration in areas
180 relevant for success of the research work.

181 The first research Question

182 RQ1: Attitude of undergraduate students towards choosing undergraduate as marriage partner?

183 **Table 2.** Students' interest in choosing undergraduate as marriage partner.

184 S/N	185 Item Statements	186 Yes	187 No	188 Undecided
189 1.	190 Will you willingly choose an undergraduate 191 female student as a marriage partner?	192 78%	193 17%	194 5%
195 2.	196 Would you advice anyone to choose an 197 undergraduate female student as a marriage partner?	198 78%	199 19%	200 3%
201 3.	202 Do you have the plan of marrying a university 203 graduate?	204 82%	205 10%	206 8%
207 4.	208 Would you advice and/or support your sister(s) 209 and/or daughter(s) to study in the university?	210 77%	211 13%	212 10%

199 Item 1 in table 2 indicates that 78% of the participants agreed to choose undergraduate as
 200 marriage partner willingly. However, item 2 in table 2 shows that 78% of the participants will
 201 like to advice anyone to choose an undergraduate as marriage partner, furthermore item 3 in table
 202 2 indicates that 82% of the participants have plan of marrying a university undergraduate.
 203 Moreover, item 4 in table 2, indicates that 77% of the participants will like their sisters or
 204 daughters to study in the university.

205 6.3 Second Research Question

206 RQ2. Factors Responsible for positive or negative attitude towards the selection of
 207 undergraduate student as a marriage partner?

208 The answer to this research question is presented below in tabular form (i.e. table 3)

209
 210 **Table 3:** Positive or negative attitude of undergraduate towards choosing a marriage partner
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212 S/N	213 Item Statements	214 Yes	215 No	216 Undecided
217 1.	218 Do female university graduate fulfill marital 219 responsibilities more than other females selected 220 as marriage partners?	221 65%	222 25%	223 11%
224 2.	225 Are female graduates selected as marriage partners 226 arrogant compared to other females who have not 227 attended university?	228 30%	229 62%	230 8%
231 3.	232 Do female graduates selected as marriage partners 233 help their husbands more than other females who 234 have not attended university?	68%	23%	9%
235 4.	236 Are female graduates selected as marriage partners 237 easy going compared to other females who have not 238 attended university?	239 77%	240 13%	241 10%

230
 231 Item 1 in table 3 shows that 65% of the participants believes that the university undergraduate
 232 fulfills marital responsibilities more than other selected as marriage partners. However, item 2 in
 233 table 3 indicates that 62% of the participants believes that undergraduate partners are not
 234 arrogant compared to others who have not attended university. Moreover, item 3 in table 3

235 indicates that 68% of the participants believes that the university graduate selected as marriage
236 partners help their partners more than others who have not attended university. Furthermore,
237 item 4 in table indicates that 60% of the participants believe that the undergraduates selected as
238 marriage partners are not easy going compared to those who have not attended university.

239 **6.4 Summary of the Major Findings**

- 240 1. Majority of male undergraduate students of the Department of Educational Foundation,
241 Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto have positive attitudes towards choosing female
242 undergraduate students as marriage partners.
- 243 2. There are factors responsible for positive attitudes of the male undergraduate students
244 towards selection of female undergraduates as marriage partners, which among others
245 include, fulfilment of marital responsibilities (thus, university graduates fulfil marital
246 responsibilities more than wives who did not attend university education).

247 **6.5 Discussion of the Research Findings**

248 Among the Hausas, girls' formal education is not much encouraged. This may be due to the
249 cultural bounded division of labor existing in the Hausa societies, as indicated by CCF, (2009).
250 For the fact that formal education is considered manly, girls that attended higher schools,
251 especially universities usually face challenges regarding marriage. Hence, western education
252 generally is not adequately supported among the Hausas. This has to do with the Hausas
253 perception of the educational system as being contrary to their cultural norms and ethics.

254 Contrarily, the data obtained from this study shows that, undergraduate students have positive
255 attitudes towards choosing such females (who attended higher education) as marriage partners.
256 This is as indicated in item 1 of table 2, where 78% of the respondents are on this stand. More so,
257 82 of the respondents have the plan of marrying university graduates. As earlier noted by Levi-
258 Strauss, (2006) that graduates who marry partners of lower educational level have difficulties in
259 both interpersonal and the public communications as well; this is likely the reason of the positive
260 attitudes of the male undergraduate students in choosing female undergraduates as marriage
261 partners. This is contrary to the findings of Koehler (2005) who established that male
262 undergraduates indicated that it is not too important that their partners should be graduates.

263 Similarly, the fact that 77% of the respondents supports females' education indicates their
264 positive attitudes towards selection of females graduates as marriage partners. This is as
265 indicated under item 4 of table 2. However, noting that the population of the study consists of
266 undergraduate students, this result shall not be a conclusion regarding the topic. There should be
267 further studies dealing with the respondents' educational as well as socio-economical influence
268 (as variables) on the findings of the study. Therefore, further research should be carried out
269 taking care of other factors such as influence of character, education, economic status, family
270 background, parental influence, culture and ethnicity as it affects selection of spouse.

271 However, table 3 takes us through the possible reasons of positive attitudes of undergraduate
272 students towards choosing female undergraduates as marriage partners. Item 1 in the table 3
273 shows that wife graduates fulfill marital responsibilities more than wives who did not attend
274 higher schools. Similarly, such wives (graduates) support their husbands considerably, as
275 affirmed by 68% of the respondents in item 3 of table 3. As noted by Welten & Lloyd (2000) in
276 Sani & Yahaya (2018) that, desire to participate in a socially sanctioned, mutually rewarding,
277 intimate relationship is the most common factor that determined the selection of marriage
278 partners. Hence, there is every reason for the respondents' preference of choosing female
279 undergraduates as marriage partners.

280 Here, the researchers proffer suggestions that may prove to be instrumental in future research on
281 choice of spouse. First and foremost, they advocate that research be carried out on this topic
282 extensively and should include factors such as religious faith, cohabitation and self-esteem and
283 their influence on choice of spouse. Also, the researchers suggest that the study be replicated
284 using a larger of participants and involving students from several faculties.

285 **6.6 Conclusion**

286 Marriage has been a global phenomenon as the only means by which man and woman come
287 together as legal partners, differences in the processes involved notwithstanding. Marriage
288 partner selection is usually a careful and determined process. It is in fact a strive towards
289 selection a partner with whose support, a better life is expected. Factors considered therefore for
290 such choice includes personality and interest alongside other physical and social characteristics.
291 Within the Hausa folk however, a girl's character is a highly regarded factor in the process of

292 marriage. Consequently, western education is considered unfit for girls. Hence, Hausa girls who
293 attended higher schools, especially universities, are considered too exposed and generally
294 feminist. Contrarily though, the result obtained from this study shows that, male undergraduate
295 students have positive attitudes towards their (females') education. This study therefore suggests
296 further studies to investigate into:

- 297 i. The attitude of other Hausas of different socio-economic status towards females'
298 education,
- 299 ii. The effect, which such attitude could have on their academic achievements and
- 300 iii. The future of females' education in days to come.

301

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UNDER PEER REVIEW