

Original Research Article

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 **discussion amongst scholars**. 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 **Theoretical Framework**

68 This research is based on *Cultural Theory* which examines people within a given culture as well
69 as try to understand how or why they react to certain situations in certain ways. Serrat, (2010: 2)
70 defined culture as: “the totality of a society’s distinctive ideas, beliefs, values, and knowledge. It
71 exhibits the ways humans interpret their environment.” Therefore, this paper is concerned with
72 the stand of Hausa culture on female education especially when it comes to marriage partner
73 selection. As noted by Sani and Umar, (2018: 20): “Hausa society has strong division of labor
74 according to age and sex.” As such, and for the fact that the culture highly discouraged
75 interaction or association between opposite sexes, western education becomes a phenomenon of
76 question within the domain of the said culture (Hausa).

77 **Research Questions**

78 This research is guided by the following research questions:

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

85 **Objectives of the Study**

86 The central objective of this research is to study the relationship between education and selection
87 of marriage partner amongst the Hausas. Undergraduate students in Usmanu Danfodiyo
88 University, Sokoto are chosen as experimental group. Hence, the study is specifically concerned
89 with finding:

- 90 i. the attitude of the undergraduate male students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University,
91 Sokoto towards choosing undergraduate female students as marriage partners,
- 92 ii. the factors responsible for the positive or negative attitude of male undergraduate
93 students in Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto towards the selection of female
94 undergraduate students as their marriage partners,

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96

97 **Marriage and Marriage Market**

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

104 By these definitions, it is obvious that marriage is a universal phenomenon, and as institution, it
105 performs almost similar set of functions in different societies. It is the foundation of all social
106 relations of human society. Man is social by nature and cannot live in isolation, but marriage is
107 the only institution, which recognizes and certifies these relationships with legal authority.
108 Therefore, in spite of varied cultural patterns, religious orientations and ethical considerations,
109 significance of marriage is universally accepted.

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

117 **Factors Influencing the Selection of Spouse**

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

125 Mate selection is the most important event in the life of a person. Various factors influence this
126 process globally. They include; educational background, parental influence, religion and
127 occupation. Observations have shown those graduates who marry partners of lower educational
128 level have difficulties in both interpersonal and the public communications as well. This could
129 thus result into problem in the marriage. This is supported by the studies carried out by Kalmijin,
130 (2001) and that of Levi-strauss, (2006). They revealed that the college graduates prepare to
131 marry college graduates like themselves.

132 In addition, religion is one of the important factors to consider in selection of spouse. The studies
133 carried out by Muhammad in Sani & Yahaya, (2018) presents a popular Muslim dogma called
134 “Bukhari & Muslim” in which prophet Muhammad S.A.W recommended Muslims to select
135 those partners who are best in religion and character: “A woman may be married for four
136 reasons: for her property, her rank, for her beauty, and for her religion (and character). So, marry
137 the one who is best in religion and character and you shall prosper.” People are expected to
138 marry an individual who shares the same faith with them. Yahaya (2009) submitted in his view
139 that religion is an essential part of a believer’s life.

140 **The Hausa-Folk**

141 Hausa language belongs to the Western branch of the Chadic language super family within the
142 Afro-Asiatic language phylum. The home territories of the Hausa people lie on both sides of the
143 border between Niger and Nigeria. Chompson (2015) as quoted by Sani & Umar, (2018: 18)
144 noted that, about one-half of the population speaks Hausa as a first language in Niger, whereas
145 about one-fifth of the Nigerian population speaks it as a first language. However, the language is
146 carried and spread to almost all major cities in West, North, Central, and Northeast Africa. This
147 is indeed, among others, the result of their tradition of long-distance commerce and pilgrimages
148 to the Holy Cities of Islam (Ekkehard, 2012; Musa, 2013).

149 The origin of Hausa language is largely unknown. Notwithstanding, some legendary accounts of
150 its origin exist. The rise of the Hausa-speaking states occurred sometime between 500 and 700
151 A.D., but it was not until roughly 1200 A.D. that these states came to control the region of
152 Northern Nigeria and Northwestern Niger. There are a number of views about the origin of the
153 Hausa people. The famous of the views is the Bayajida legendry, though number of scholars
154 rejects the theory. Another view holds that all Hausawa once lived by Lake Chad, but were

155 forced to move westward when the water level in the lake dropped. However, a view also
156 identifies the Hausa people as desert nomads who lived in the Sahara. Some scholars believe
157 that there is a link between the Hausa and the people of Ethiopia based on shared worship of the
158 sun, practiced prior to the arrival of Islam and Christianity. Many Hausa themselves believe that
159 their ancestors were Arabs whose descendants founded the popular Hausa city-states.

160 Danmahe, (1985) and Birnin- Tudu (2002) are of the opinion that, the most accepted view of
161 Hausa origin is that of Thurstan Shawi. Thurstand is of the view that since there is strong
162 evidence showing the existence of creatures in the South and East Africa (Austthroploitheous) as
163 far back as about two million and six hundred years (2,000,600 years), the situation might be
164 similar in the West Africa, only that there exists no research-evidence to vindicate that.
165 Therefore, it is right at this juncture to say that, Hausawa migrate to their current cities neither
166 from Masar, nor from the East. Rather, they had lived for long with other peoples at the Lake
167 Chad. Desertification, which caused drainage to the lake, resulted into their permanent migration
168 to River Rima area. It is from there that they spread and formed cities such as Kano, Katsina,
169 Zazzau, Daura, Rano, Damagaram, and Agadas among others. However, many researches
170 account for the origin of Hausa. These researches include; Bunza, (1995), Birnin-Tudu, 2002,
171 Maiyawa (2008); Yusuf, (2012); Gobir, (2012) etc.

172 **Methodology**

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

178
179

180 **Table 1:** Population of Undergraduate Students in the Department of Educational Foundations,
181 Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, 2016/2017 Session

183 Courses	184 Level	185 Males	186 Females	187 Total
B.A. Ed. Arabic	100	5	1	6
	200	5	0	5
	300	2	0	2

188		400	8	2	10
189	B.A. Ed. English Lang.	100	16	15	31
190		200	25	19	44
191		300	38	14	52
192		400	98	37	135
193	B.A. Ed. Hausa Lang.	100	16	3	19
194		200	8	0	8
195		300	9	1	10
196		400	22	1	23
197	B.A. Ed History	100	1	0	1
198		200	0	0	0
199		300	0	0	0
200		400	1	0	1
201	B.A. Ed. Islamic Studies	100	39	14	53
202		200	52	14	66
203		300	23	2	25
204		400	54	19	73
205					
206		Total	422	142	564
207					

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

209 However, a sample of two hundred and twenty-six (226) students, which represents percent
 210 (40%) of the target population, is used to represent the five hundred and sixty-four (564)
 211 undergraduate students of the Department of Educational Foundations, Usmanu Danfodiyo
 212 University, Sokoto.

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

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

223 The first research Question

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

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

226

227 S/N	228 Item Statements	229 Yes	230 No	231 Undecided
232 1.	233 Will you willingly choose an undergraduate female student as a marriage partner?	234 78%	235 17%	236 5%
237 2.	238 Would you advice anyone to choose an undergraduate female student as a marriage partner?	239 78%	240 19%	241 3%
242 3.	243 Do you have the plan of marrying a university graduate?	244 82%	245 10%	246 8%
247 4.	248 Would you advice and/or support your sister(s) and/or daughter(s) to study in the university?	249 77%	250 13%	251 10%

252

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

254 6.3 Second Research Question

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

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

257 **Table 3:** Positive or negative attitude of undergraduate towards choosing a marriage partner

258

259 S/N	Item Statements	Yes	No	Undecided
260 1.	261 Do female university graduate fulfill marital responsibilities more than other females selected as marriage partners?	262 65%	263 25%	264 11%

265

260	2. Are female graduates selected as marriage partners			
261	arrogant compared to other females who have not			
262	attended university?	30%	62%	8%
263				
264	3. Do female graduates selected as marriage partners			
265	help their husbands more than other females who			
266	have not attended university?	68%	23%	9%
267				
268	4. Are female graduates selected as marriage partners			
269	easy going compared to other females who have not			
270	attended university?	77%	13%	10%
271				

272

273 Item 1 in table 3 shows that 65% of the participants believes that the university undergraduate

274 fulfills marital responsibilities more than other selected as marriage partners. However, item 2 in

275 table 3 indicates that 62% of the participants believes that undergraduate partners are not

276 arrogant compared to others who have not attended university. Moreover, item 3 in table 3

277 indicates that 68% of the participants believes that the university graduate selected as marriage

278 partners help their partners more than others who have not attended university. Furthermore,

279 item 4 in table indicates that 60% of the participants believe that the undergraduates selected as

280 marriage partners are not easy going compared to those who have not attended university.

281 **6.4 Summary of the Major Findings**

- 282 1. Majority of male undergraduate students of the Department of Educational Foundation,
- 283 Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto have positive attitudes towards choosing female
- 284 undergraduate students as marriage partners.
- 285 2. There are factors responsible for positive attitudes of the male undergraduate students
- 286 towards selection of female undergraduates as marriage partners, which among others
- 287 include, fulfilment of marital responsibilities (thus, university graduates fulfil marital
- 288 responsibilities more than wives who did not attend university education).

289 **6.5 Discussion of the Research Findings**

290 Among the Hausas, girls' formal education is not much encouraged. This may be due to the

291 cultural bounded division of labor existing in the Hausa societies, as indicated by CCF, (2009).

292 For the fact that formal education is considered manly, girls that attended higher schools,
293 especially universities usually face challenges regarding marriage. Hence, western education
294 generally is not adequately supported among the Hausas. This has to do with the Hausas
295 perception of the educational system as being contrary to their cultural norms and ethics.

296 Contrarily, the data obtained from this study shows that, undergraduate students have positive
297 attitudes towards choosing such females (who attended higher education) as marriage partners.
298 This is as indicated in item 1 of table 2, where 78% of the respondents are on this stand. More so,
299 82 of the respondents have the plan of marrying university graduates. As earlier noted by Levi-
300 strauss, (2006) that graduates who marry partners of lower educational level have difficulties in
301 both interpersonal and the public communications as well; this is likely the reason of the positive
302 attitudes of the male undergraduate students in choosing female undergraduates as marriage
303 partners. This is contrary to the findings of Koehler (2005) who established that male
304 undergraduates indicated that it is not too important that their partners should be graduates.

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

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

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

327 **6.6 Conclusion**

328 Marriage has been a global phenomenon as the only means by which man and woman come
329 together as legal partners, differences in the processes involved notwithstanding. Marriage
330 partner selection is usually a careful and determined process. It is in fact a strive towards
331 selection a partner with whose support, a better life is expected. Factors considered therefore for
332 such choice includes personality and interest alongside other physical and social characteristics.
333 Within the Hausa folk however, a girl's character is a highly regarded factor in the process of
334 marriage. Consequently, western education is considered unfit for girls. Hence, Hausa girls who
335 attended higher schools, especially universities, are considered too exposed and generally
336 feminist. Contrarily though, the result obtained from this study shows that, male undergraduate
337 students have positive attitudes towards their (females') education. This study therefore suggests
338 further studies to investigate into:

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

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