

# 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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## 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 (Austthroplotheous) 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 This study adopts the descriptive survey, as it deal with the investigation of the relationship  
174 between education and selection of marriage partner among undergraduate students in Usmanu  
175 Danfodiyo University, Sokoto. The population of this study is made up of all undergraduate  
176 students of the Department of Educational Foundations, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto.  
177 Therefore, the population of the study comprises of four levels (100L to 400L). Nevertheless, the  
178 total number of the students is five hundred and sixty-four (564). The population distribution  
179 according to levels and courses of the students is presented below in a tabular form:

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

189	<b>Courses</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Total</b>
191	B.A. Ed. Arabic	100	5	1	6
192		200	5	0	5
193		300	2	0	2
194		400	8	2	10
195	B.A. Ed. English Lang.	100	16	15	31
196		200	25	19	44
197		300	38	14	52
198		400	98	37	135
199	B.A. Ed. Hausa Lang.	100	16	3	19
200		200	8	0	8
201		300	9	1	10
202		400	22	1	23
203	B.A. Ed History	100	1	0	1
204		200	0	0	0
205		300	0	0	0
206		400	1	0	1
207	B.A. Ed. Islamic Studies	100	39	14	53
208		200	52	14	66
209		300	23	2	25
210		400	54	19	73
211					
212		<b>Total</b>	422	142	564
213					

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

215 However, a sample of two hundred and twenty-six (226) students, which represents percent  
 216 (40%) of the target population, is used to represent the five hundred and sixty-four (564)  
 217 undergraduate students of the Department of Educational Foundations, Usmanu Danfodiyo  
 218 University, Sokoto.

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

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

229 The first research Question

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

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

233 S/N	234 Item Statements	235 Yes	236 No	237 Undecided
238	239 1. Will you willingly choose an undergraduate 240 female student as a marriage partner?	241 78%	242 17%	243 5%
244	245 2. Would you advice anyone to choose an 246 undergraduate female student as a marriage partner?	247 78%	248 19%	249 3%
250	251 3. Do you have the plan of marrying a university 252 graduate?	253 82%	254 10%	255 8%
256	257 4. Would you advice and/or support your sister(s) and/or daughter(s) to study in the university?	258 77%	259 13%	260 10%

261 Item 1 in table 2 indicates that 78% of the participants agreed to choose undergraduate as  
 262 marriage partner willingly. However, item 2 in table 2 shows that 78% of the participants will  
 263 like to advice anyone to choose an undergraduate as marriage partner, furthermore item 3 in table  
 264 2 indicates that 82% of the participants have plan of marrying a university undergraduate.  
 265 Moreover, item 4 in table 2, indicates that 77% of the participants will like their sisters or  
 266 daughters to study in the university.

### 267 6.3 Second Research Question

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

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

271



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

260 S/N	261 Item Statements	262 Yes	263 No	264 Undecided
265	266 1. Do female university graduate fulfill marital			
267	268 responsibilities more than other females selected			
269	270 as marriage partners?	271 65%	272 25%	273 11%
274	275 2. Are female graduates selected as marriage partners			
276	277 arrogant compared to other females who have not			
278	279 attended university?	280 30%	281 62%	282 8%
283	284 3. Do female graduates selected as marriage partners			
285	286 help their husbands more than other females who			
287	288 have not attended university?	289 68%	290 23%	291 9%
292	293 4. Are female graduates selected as marriage partners			
294	295 easy going compared to other females who have not			
296	297 attended university?	298 77%	299 13%	300 10%

278

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 287 **6.4 Summary of the Major Findings**

- 288 1. Majority of male undergraduate students of the Department of Educational Foundation,
- 289 Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto have positive attitudes towards choosing female
- 290 undergraduate students as marriage partners.
- 291 2. There are factors responsible for positive attitudes of the male undergraduate students
- 292 towards selection of female undergraduates as marriage partners, which among others

293 include, fulfilment of marital responsibilities (thus, university graduates fulfil marital  
294 responsibilities more than wives who did not attend university education).

## 295 **6.5 Discussion of the Research Findings**

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

302 Contrarily, the data obtained from this study shows that, undergraduate students have positive  
303 attitudes towards choosing such females (who attended higher education) as marriage partners.  
304 This is as indicated in item 1 of table 2, where 78% of the respondents are on this stand. More so,  
305 82 of the respondents have the plan of marrying university graduates. As earlier noted by Levi-  
306 Strauss, (2006) that graduates who marry partners of lower educational level have difficulties in  
307 both interpersonal and the public communications as well; this is likely the reason of the positive  
308 attitudes of the male undergraduate students in choosing female undergraduates as marriage  
309 partners. This is contrary to the findings of Koehler (2005) who established that male  
310 undergraduates indicated that it is not too important that their partners should be graduates.

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

319 However, table 3 takes us through the possible reasons of positive attitudes of undergraduate  
320 students towards choosing female undergraduates as marriage partners. Item 1 in the table 3  
321 shows that wife graduates fulfill marital responsibilities more than wives who did not attend

322 higher schools. Similarly, such wives (graduates) support their husbands considerably, as  
323 affirmed by 68% of the respondents in item 3 of table 3. As noted by Welten & Lloyd (2000) in  
324 Sani & Yahaya (2018) that, desire to participate in a socially sanctioned, mutually rewarding,  
325 intimate relationship is the most common factor that determined the selection of marriage  
326 partners. Hence, there is every reason for the respondents' preference of choosing female  
327 undergraduates as marriage partners.

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

## 333 **6.6 Conclusion**

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

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

349

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UNDER PEER REVIEW