



A Study on Parental Roles and Responsibilities among African Youths Intending to Marry

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How to cite this paper: Avwerhota, M. O., Bassey, U., Ayosanmi, O. S., Amoo, O. E., Bello, A. M., Ayosanmi, T. T., Paul, A. O., & Sanni, O. F. (2022). A Study on Parental Roles and Responsibilities among African Youths Intending to Marry. *Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Language*, 2(2), 83-94. <http://dx.doi.org/10.20375/0000-000F-739B-1>

Article Info

Received: 2022-04-03

Accepted: 2022-06-04

Abstract

Knowledge of parental roles and responsibilities is key to responsible parenting. This study examined the parenting and confidence level of persons intending to marry in Oyo State, Nigeria. The study is a cross-sectional descriptive study carried out in two (Akinyele and Ibadan North) Local Government Areas in Oyo State, Nigeria. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data analyzed using IBM SPSS version 25.0 for Windows. The study comprised 300 respondents; 190 (63.2%) were males, and 110 (36.8%) were females. Less than half (42.3%) were fully aware of parental roles and responsibilities. Age and exposure to training were significantly associated with the knowledge of parental roles and responsibilities ($p < 0.001$), while gender, type of marriage, and educational attainment were not ($p > 0.05$). Training on parenthood was significantly higher among Christians (45.0%) and traditional worshippers (33.3%) than Muslims (13.6%). Less than half of all respondents (31–45%) could confidently say they would fulfil all expected parental roles and responsibilities assessed in this study. We advocate that parental education be included and well established in the educational curriculum and religious institutions, down to the marriage registries, to prepare the intending couples for parenthood.

Keywords: Intending to marry, registry, parental roles and responsibilities, wedding, parenthood.

Introduction

A good family is a significant builder of any great society. For this sole purpose, building a family has to be well planned by intending parents, as they lay a solid foundation for the future generation. Parents are supposed to cater to their children financially, morally, and legally responsible for their children's characters (do-Rosario, 2007; Mihelic et al., 2018). The parents are expected to comport themselves as role models to their children to avoid high-risk antisocial behaviours (such as aggression, rudeness, drug, and abuse). Children can



quickly adopt antisocial activities due to the high rate of behavioural learning, forming rapidly in their young, innocent minds (Dogan et al., 2018; Vieno et al., 2009). Being better prepared for parenting has been associated with understanding childhood literacy and developmental languages (Cabrera et al., 2014). Unfortunately, youths are unprepared for the challenges related to parenting as they lack the requisite knowledge, purpose and self-confidence to effectively manage a good family (Breiner et al., 2016; Cabrera et al., 2014). A purposeful marriage is held by thinking long and hard. The mind and logic must be together with the feelings for this (Baston & Wray, 2012). There is peace in the family as 'purpose' was considered in marriage. There will be problems resulting from the unions without purpose and consideration, leading to poor parenting knowledge (Lanzi et al., 2012). Also, intending couples might have different career pursuits and have little time to care for their young ones, leaving them at the mercy of housemaids, day caregivers, and neighbours (Muhammad, 2015). Parental attitudes significantly impact a child's education, especially during the early years (Li & Qiu, 2018). A favourable attitude toward schoolwork is fostered by parents who support their children's academics (Muhammad, 2015). It has been reported that parents in affluent environments inspire and motivate their children to push the boundaries of their academic abilities by encouraging and rewarding them for success (Proulx & Aboud, 2014; Shute et al., 2011). Academic performance is often regarded as a waste of time for those who are raised by parents that show little interest in their children's education (Proulx & Aboud, 2014; Shute et al., 2011). Galiullina (2015) reported how well-adjusted children are the ones who their parents encourage to experiment with their surroundings and those who have solid academic aspirations and parental support for schoolwork. A decline in academic achievement is often caused by a lack of parental encouragement and support (Galiullina, 2015). The family's attitude toward formal education significantly influences the formal education of the child (Koops et al., 2017). No matter how well-off a family maybe, if they have a distaste for formal education, it will show in the way they treat their children in school (Koops et al., 2017). Parental attitudes toward their children's education can have positive or negative consequences.

Before marriage, intending couples are meant to know the roles and responsibilities involved in parenting (Gadsden et al., 2016). The couples have to be mentally and morally prepared for parenting (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019). They must show maturity in taking up parental roles and responsibilities. Educating youngsters about incredible acts of parenthood aids the groundwork for good parenting (Biktagirova & Valeeva, 2015). It empowers them to ponder how they were nurtured and consider what kind of parent they would like to be. It presents opportunities for breaking patterns of harmful nurturing and strengthening more helpful and supporting types of parenting (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019; Muhammad, 2015). Although, there have been suggestions by well-known and respected Islamic scholars about having a purposeful marriage, marriage training and certification before the marriage (Hill et al., 2022; Suhbah, 2022). Unfortunately, there has been no organized system for training and disseminating information on good parenting for persons

intending to marry, which is why studies like this are essential in assessing and promoting awareness of parental roles and responsibilities among persons planning to marry.

This study aims to determine the level of knowledge of parental roles and responsibilities among persons intending to marry in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, and their confidence to carry out these responsibilities effectively when married to make a better society in the foreseeable future.

Methodology

Research Design

The study is a cross-sectional descriptive study aimed at determining the level of knowledge of parental roles and responsibilities among young people about to marry.

The Study Area

The Research was carried out in two (Akinyele and Ibadan North) local government areas (LGAs) of Ibadan, Oyo State. Ibadan North LGA is one of the largest and most important LGA in Ibadan. The majority of the residents are the Yoruba ethnic group. A high proportion of this local government area population is mainly civil servants, traders, and artisans. Akinyele is one of the developing local government areas of Ibadan due to its composite nature of being semi-urban and rural. Like Ibadan North LGA, Yoruba ethnic groups are the predominant residents as other tribes and foreigners make up the minorities. The occupation of the people includes petty trading, farming and civil service.

Sample Size

The sample size for the study was determined using the formula $n = \frac{z^2pq}{d^2}$ and 26% knowledge of parental roles among people intending to marry (Kish & Leslie, 1995)

Where n = sample size; d = degree of accuracy = 5% or 0.05; z = confidence level; 1.96; p = reasonable estimate of key proportion which is 26% (Young, et al, 1996). The calculated sample size was 296, but 300 valid responses were obtained from the survey.

Data collection technique and data analysis

Structured questionnaires were used to collect data regarding the knowledge of parenting among persons intending to marry. Six research assistants were employed for data collection. Data were collected and analyzed without any breach of confidentiality of the research participants. Three hundred questionnaires were completed and analyzed using IBM-Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA) version 25.0 for Windows and Microsoft Excel. Chi-square was used to determine the relationships between the dependent and independent variables setting a statistically significant association as $P < 0.05$.

Determination of Knowledge of Parenting

Knowledge of parental roles and responsibilities was assessed with nine questions. The respondents were asked to state their awareness about the following parental roles by choosing from 'fully aware', 'partially aware', and 'not aware.' The questions are

Are you aware that you are to:

1. Provide all the financial and material needs of your children?
2. Provide physical and material protection for your children?
3. Arrange and provide appropriate education at all levels for your children?
4. Provide suitable clothing and good food till the child is fully-grown and independent?
5. Provide a comfortable and conducive home for the proper up bring of your children?
6. Be a role model, a good example of good behaviours (void of antisocial/high-risk behaviours) to your children?
7. Appropriately and effectively, listen, communicate, answer all questions, and educate your children on life issues and right behaviours, including matters of sexuality and reproductive health?
8. Spend at least 2 hours daily communicating and playing with your children?
9. Give regular and close supportive supervision to your children?

The options were scored as Fully aware = 2; partially aware = 1, and not aware = 0. The maximum score was $2 \times 9 = 18$. A 50% and above score was considered good knowledge, while scores below 50% were regarded as poor knowledge of parental roles and responsibilities.

Ethical considerations

Following international best standards on human rights relating to scientific principles and international ethical guidelines, this study ensured that the respondents' information was confidential and no data that could be used to identify the respondents was collected. Furthermore, informed consent and voluntary participation of respondents were obtained. Data collected was kept secure from access to unauthorized persons.

The last stage is the process of obtaining these goals and achievements. Here, a training program was implemented over the video conference program with 20 teachers who voluntarily participated in the research. Considering the harsh conditions, three units were prepared, and the program was limited to six sessions (one hour each).

Findings

Socio-demographic characteristics

The study comprised 300 respondents, of which 190 (63.2%) were males and 110 (36.8%) were females. Their mean age was 25.3 ± 4.5 years and mostly between 23 –27 years (49.6%). Most of them were graduates and predominantly from the Yoruba ethnic group. The majority (74.3%) were Christians, and hence, more than half (54.0%) proposed Christian marriages, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Socio-demographic profile of participants

Parameters	Number	Per cent
Sex		
Male	190	63.2
Female	110	36.8

Age category		
18-22	77	25.7
23-27	149	49.6
28-32	53	17.7
33-37	9	3
38-42	9	3
43-47	3	1
Educational Level		
No formal education	4	1.3
Primary	4	1.3
Secondary	16	5.3
Tertiary	276	92
Ethnic Group		
Yoruba	194	64.7
Hausa	3	1
Ibo	50	16.7
Others	53	17.6
Religion		
Christianity	223	74.3
Islam	68	22.7
Traditional	6	2
Others	3	1
Proposed type of marriage		
Christian	168	56
Islamic	49	16.3
Civic	83	27.7

Respondent's awareness of parental roles and responsibilities

Less than half (42.3%) of the respondents were fully aware of parental roles and responsibilities. From Table 2, about two-fifth (42.1%) of the male respondents were fully aware of parental roles and responsibilities, similar to 41.7% of the female participants ($p = 0.686$). A significantly higher proportion of the participants aged 33 years or more (61.9%) were aware of parental roles and responsibilities than those in the lower age categories ($p = 0.010$). Below half (47.5%) of participants who preferred civic marriage were aware of parental roles and responsibilities, followed by those who intended to have Islamic marriage (41.7%) and Christian marriage (41.6%). A higher proportion (44.6%) of those who had tertiary education were aware of parental roles and responsibilities than 26.7% of those who had secondary education ($P = 0.172$). About half (45.7%) of Christian respondents were more

aware of parental roles and responsibilities than about two-fifth (39.1%) of those who practice Islam ($p = 0.346$). The majority (57.1%) of those who are trained in parenting were aware of parental roles and responsibilities than 34.6% of those who were not trained ($P < 0.001$).

Table 2. Respondents' awareness of parental roles and responsibilities by selected variables

	Variables	Fully Aware (n = 127)	Partially Aware (n = 167)	X²	P-value
Sex	Male	82 (42.1%)	104 (55.9%)	0.163	0.686
	Female	45 (41.7%)	63 (58.3%)		
Age	18-22	25 (32.5%)	49 (63.6%)	14.443	0.010*
	23-27	73 (49.7%)	74 (50.3%)		
	28-32	16 (30.8%)	36 (69.2%)		
	33 & above	13 (61.9%)	8 (38.1%)		
Type of Marriage	Civic	38 (47.5%)	42 (52.5%)	0.829	0.661
	Mosque	20 (41.7%)	28 (58.3%)		
	Church	69 (41.6%)	97 (58.4%)		
Educational level	Non/Primary	2 (25%)	6 (75.0%)	1.868	0.172
	Secondary	4 (26.7%)	11 (73.3%)		
	Tertiary	121 (44.6%)	150 (55.4%)		
Religion	Christianity	101 (45.7%)	120 (54.3%)	0.887	0.346
	Islam	25 (39.1%)	39 (60.9%)		
	Traditional	1 (11.1%)	8 (88.9%)		
Exposure to training on parenting	Yes	64 (57.1%)	48 (42.9%)	14.340	<0.001
	No	63 (34.6%)	119 (65.4%)		

Distribution of respondents who indicated to have been trained on parenting by demographic variables

Table 3 shows the socio-demographic distribution of trained and untrained youths intending to marry on parenting. A slightly higher proportion (40.9%) of female participants have been trained on parenting than 35.3% of the male participants ($P = 0.330$), showing no significant difference. A low proportion (19.0%) of participants aged 33 years and above have been trained on parenting compared to 39.0% of those in lower age categories ($P = 0.353$), showing no significant difference. Those who practice Christianity have the highest proportion (45.0%) that have been trained on parenting compared with those practising other religions ($P < 0.001$), showing a significant difference. Moreover, participants who preferred Church marriage have the highest proportion (45.2%) trained on parenting compared with those who opted for other types of unions; ($P = 0.006$), showing a significant difference. A higher proportion of about

two-fifth (37.5%) of participants with secondary and (37.7%) tertiary education have been trained on parenting compared with 25% of those with non/primary education; ($P = 0.166$), showing no significant difference.

Table 3. Distribution Of respondents who have been trained on parenting by Demographic variables

	Variables	Yes (n = 112)	No (n = 188)	X²	P-value
Sex	Male	67 (35.3%)	123 (64.7%)	0.949	0.330
	Female	45 (40.9%)	65 (59.1%)		
Age	18-22 years	30 (39.0%)	47 (61.0%)	3.260	0.353
	23-27 years	57 (38.3%)	92 (61.7%)		
	28-32 years	21 (39.6%)	32 (60.4%)		
	33 & above	4 (19.0%)	17 (81.0%)		
Religion	Christianity	100 (45.0%)	122 (55.0%)	18.228	<0.001*
	Islam	9 (13.6%)	57 (86.4%)		
	Traditional	3(33.3%)	6 (66.7%)		
Type of Marriage	Church	76 (45.2%)	92 (54.8%)	10.220	0.006*
	Mosque	13 (26.5%)	36 (73.5%)		
	Civic	23 (27.7%)	60 (72.3%)		
Educational level	None & primary	2 (25.0%)	6 (75.0%)	5.076	0.166
	Secondary	6 (37.5%)	10 (62.5%)		
	Tertiary	104 (37.7%)	172 (62.3%)		

Respondents' level of confidence in fulfilling expected parental roles and responsibilities

Respondents' confidence level in fulfilling expected parental roles and responsibilities is shown in Table 4. A lower proportion (31.0%) of the respondents reported a higher level of confidence in providing financial and material needs of children compared with 68.3% of respondents who have little confidence. Similarly, very low proportions had confidence that they could provide physical and moral protection (41.3%), appropriate education (42.0%), suitable clothing and good food (43.7%), proper up-bringing (40.7%), and regular and close supportive supervision (45.0%) for their children.

Table 4. Respondents perceived level of confidence in fulfilling expected parental roles and responsibilities

Expected parental roles and responsibilities	Very confident	Little confident	No confidence at all
Provide all the financial and material needs of your children?	93 (31.0%)	205 (68.3%)	2 (0.7%)
	124 (41.3%)	174 (58.0%)	2 (0.7%)

Provide physical and moral protection for your children?				
Provide appropriate education at all levels for your children	126 (42.0%)	171 (57.0%)	3 (1.0%)	—
Provide good clothing and food until the child is fully grown and independent.	131 (43.7%)	167 (55.6%)	2 (0.7%)	—
Provide a comfortable and conducive home for proper up-bringing of your children	122 (40.7%)	177 (59.0%)	1 (0.3%)	—
How confident are you to be a role model, a good example of good behaviours?	133 (44.3%)	165 (55.0%)	2 (0.7%)	
How confident are you to appropriately and effectively listen and communicate with your child?	129 (43.0%)	167 (55.7%)	4 (1.3%)	
How confident are you to spend at least 2 hours daily communicating and playing with your children?	120 (40.0%)	177 (59.0%)	3 (1.0%)	—
How confident are you in giving regular and close supportive supervision to your children?	135 (45.0%)	164 (54.7%)	1 (0.3%)	

Discussion

Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This study found that most persons intending to marry were primarily people in their twenties (23 – 27 years) with an average age of 25.3 years. Most of them have tertiary education and belong to the Yoruba ethnic group. The respondents are predominantly Christians, and most of them intended to be wedded in the Church, which might be due to the higher number of Christians compared to other religions. The average age found in this study is similar to what was reported in America by Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2016). The average age of first-time mothers was 26.3 years, meaning that most of them married at 25. This is slightly lower than the report from Canada, which showed that the average age of first-time Canadian parents was 28.5 years (Cohn, 2013). This finding also corroborates that most young people aged 18 – 29 years aspired to have children and agreed that one of the essential things in life is being a good and responsible parent (Lally & Valentine-French, 2019; Taylor et al., 2011).

Respondent's awareness of parental roles and responsibilities by selected variables

The research findings showed that participants aged 33 years and above are more fully aware of parental roles and responsibilities than younger ones. This may be due to advanced experience that sometimes comes with age. This is in line with previous studies that reported a strong association between good parenting and age advancement (Johansen et al., 2020; Lally & Valentine-French, 2019; UNICEF, 2013). Training on parenting is designed to help intended fathers and mothers understand their roles and responsibilities and their children's

personal needs and development (Gadsden et al., 2016). In this study, those exposed to parental training indicated a high awareness of parental roles and responsibilities. This is also consistent with the previous report that education on parenting gives parents adequate knowledge, resources, and support to promote parenting skills needed to train children and improve their well-being (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019). However, the respondents general show a low level of knowledge or awareness of parental roles and responsibilities, indicating a lack of preparedness. This agrees with the findings of a previous study (Biktagirova & Valeeva, 2015) that most parents are not well prepared due to a lack of information on parenting before getting married.

This research showed a direct correlation between the knowledge of parental roles and responsibilities and the confidence level to fulfil expected parental roles and responsibilities, like the provision of basic needs, education, care, and attention. This finding agrees with a previous study that the primary outcome of knowledge of parenting is parental confidence and perceived competence. In contrast, the secondary results include parental sensitivity and closeness to the child (Mihelic et al., 2018). Participants generally have low confidence levels because of fear of uncertainties that may arise from little or no knowledge of expected parental responsibilities. The study revealed that respondents who opted for a Church wedding are the most confident in fulfilling expected parental roles and responsibilities, probably because they have been trained during marriage seminars and workshops. This finding shows that parental education and training are paramount in building knowledge of parental roles and responsibilities among persons intending to marry. This result agrees with McDermott et al. (2002), who stated that parenting education is expected of persons planning to marry.

The study advocates that parenting education and training should be incorporated into various institutions such as Religious centres (such as Churches and Mosques), local government marriage registries and schools. This finding agrees with the recommendations of previous studies requesting parental education class lessons. (Biktagirova & Valeeva, 2015; Brotherson, 2004).

Conclusion

This study determined the level of knowledge of parental roles and responsibilities among persons intending to marry. There is generally a low level of knowledge of parenthood among persons planning to marry and a low level of confidence in fulfilling expected parental roles and responsibilities due to inadequate education and training on parenting. Factors like age and education on parental roles contributed to the knowledge of persons intending to marry, as good parenting knowledge was common among participants aged 33 and above. The study also explained the effects of parents' attitudes on their children's education, as parents who have been educated on parental roles were more aware of their responsibilities as parents. However, parental training and education should be established at strategic points, from educational institutions to marriage registries, to inform intending couples about responsible

parenting. Education on parenting gives parents adequate knowledge, resources, and support to promote parenting skills needed to train children and improve their well-being.

Conflict of interests

The author(s) declare no conflict of interest.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial for the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

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