

Social-Cultural and Physiological Impact of Childlessness on Married Couple in Ado –Ekiti

Adebara Lanre*, Bolarinwa Folashade Adeola, Alabi Remilekun Enitan

Department Of Mathematics and Statistics, The Federal Polytechnic Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State

**Corresponding Author*

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Abstract: This paper examines the impact of childlessness on married couples in Ado Ekiti. Childlessness has been described as having the potential to have children but choosing not to, as well as having the desire to have children but they do not come. When a married couple is ready and willing to have children but is unable to do so, this is referred to as "involuntary childlessness" and is defined as not being able to have children. Couples have children for a variety of reasons, including religious, ideological, economic, and cultural expectations. According to the Bible, having children is a good event. This is evident to the fact that attempts to initiate a move which would have been directed towards adoption is taken with serious resistance in some places like Nigeria mostly by couples without even a child. This leads to addressing social-cultural and physiological problem married couples face and discrimination from the society because the married couples cannot procreate but in the same vein the society still views married couples as inferior with the objective to determine whether women's infertility is the main reason that couples don't have children, to determine how individuals in Ado Ekiti feel about childlessness and also to determine whether being childless is a benefit for childless married couples. Five hundred (500) questionnaire were administered to married couples. Chi-square, Multiple bar chart to determine major factor responsible for childlessness were used. Substantive issues were considered that include, social impact, cultural impact and psychological impact. The findings show that display of superiority by the couples with children against childless couples, childless woman is blamed for infertility, and depression are the most negative impact of social impact, cultural impact and psychological impact on childless couples. It is concluded that there is high negative impact of childlessness on married couples in Ado Ekiti

Keyword: Impact, Childlessness, Married Couples, Infertility, Multiple bar chart

I. Introduction

Childlessness is the act of willing to have children by couples but which are not forth coming. It is also the ability to produce children but decide not to do so Rowland (2001).

Zastrow (2001) explained that from the origin why couples decided to have children, biblically it is a blessing to have children. Historically, children were seen in agricultural and pre-industrial societies as economic asset. Because of farming work, parents wanted large families and that it was natural and desirable for married couples to procreate.

However, in every successful marriage in the society children are regarded as the most important asset and this has led to childless couples been an object of ridicule. Makinwa-Adebusoye, (2001).

Merlo (2002) discussed that function for each family is to procreate that is why each man will take a wife to have children for his name and lineage to be in existence continually for general productivity and development in the society. Sometimes in order to provide heir in case of childlessness, wealthy families take option of adoption of children. .

Commercial market for child laundering business exists due to westerner's desire for children and in the african societies to have children is necessary and essential for every married couples and is considered as a major necessity in marriage.

Gibson (2002) said that the reason for marriage took place is for procreation for continuity of lineage form one generation to another within the society based on cultural and traditional perspective. Childlessness that results from infertility or the death of a child has been referred as great personal tragedy Charlene (2007).

Gerrist (2009) discussed that negative implications of childlessness in the developing countries of the world are much stronger in the sense that childless couples are characterized mainly by personal suffering and social stigmatization.

Nwosu (2010) discussed that the socio-economic importance of a man depends on the number of children he has in his own family. 'The zeal to accumulate wealth were demoralizes for some affected childless couples for a reason that wealth accumulated would become community property after their death. Therefore, most of the couples while they are still alive squander their money,

childless couples are not recognized in the society and the number of children a man has is used to measure the political strength based on the culture

In marriage and family, diversity inherent aspect in contemporary experience is childlessness Rasak and Oladipo (2017). History has shown that when childlessness is resulted from failure to conceive or from the death of a child, it has been referred to as great personal tragedy that involves a lot of emotional pain and grief. This greater diversity of common pressures for childbearing has allowed remaining single or married without children for social acceptance. The blamed of childlessness before conception was well understood was usually put on the woman which resulted to high level negative emotional and social effects of childlessness Rasak & Oladipo (2017).

Most people do not know how involuntarily childless persons get happiness above the suffering they experience but they are only able to intimidate the condition of infertility experienced by involuntarily childless persons regardless of their psychological condition Arbita and Latipun (2020)

There are lots of psychological problems such as anger, betrayal guilt sadness depression which childlessness is associated with Namrata (2021). There are factors which are considered to be responsible for childlessness in Ado Ekiti which are infertility, sickness or disease, death of existing child, spiritual causes and lack of economic independent

When married couples are ready and willing to have children but are not able to do so, is refer to as involuntary childlessness while women of reproductive age who are fertile but have no intention to conceive is referred to voluntary childlessness Shabir (2021).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

According to Ugwuanyi (2000), this is evident to the fact that attempts to initiate a move which would have been directed towards adoption is taken with serious resistance in some places like Nigeria mostly by couples without even a child. Married couples faces a lot of problems and discrimination from the society because the married couples cannot procreate but in the same vein the society still views married couples as inferior, With this reasons there comes an addressing a social-cultural and physiological problems married couples face in Ado Ekiti

1.2 Objectives

1. To determine whether women's infertility is the main reason that couples don't have children.
2. To determine how individuals in Ado Ekiti feel about childlessness
3. To determine whether being childless is a benefit for childless married couples.

II. Material and Method

In this study frequency percentage and chi-square test were used. Out of 500 questionnaires administered, 450 were returned. Five (5) research questions were used in this study which are:

- (i) In your opinion, indicate one major factor that is responsible for childlessness in Ado-Ekiti,
- (ii) what is the most likely social consequences of childlessness on couples,
- (iii) What do you think is the cultural consequences of childlessness on childless couple?
- (iv) What do you think is the psychological consequences of childlessness on childless couple?
- (v) Is there a positive impact of childlessness on childless married couple?

2.1 Frequency Table

Table 1: Marital status of respondents

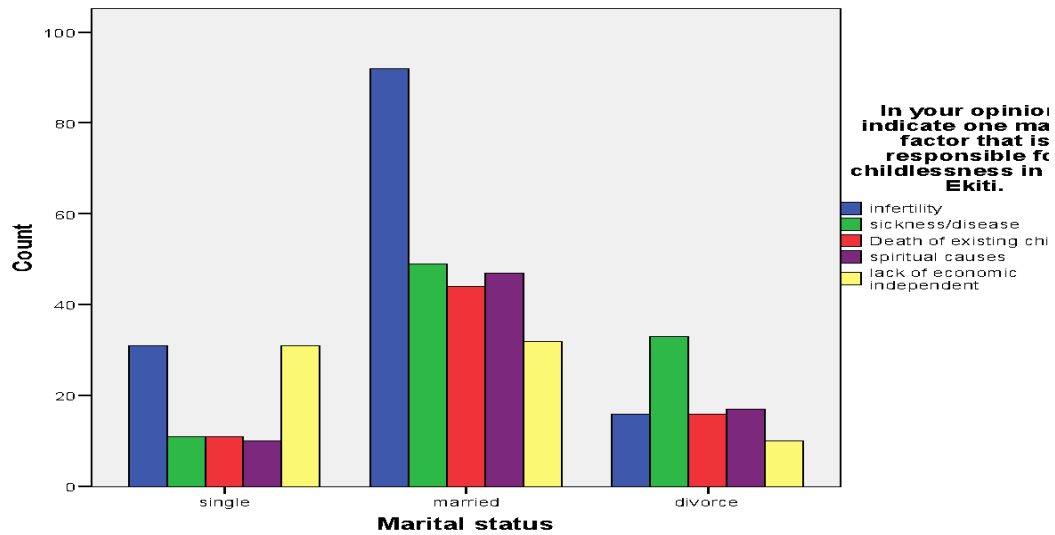
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	94	20.9	20.9	20.9
	Married	264	58.7	58.7	79.6
	Divorce	92	20.4	20.4	100.0
	Total	450	100.0	100.0	

58.7% of the respondents are married while 20.4% are divorce.

Table 2: showing factors responsible for childlessness in Ado-Ekiti

Factors	Single	Married	Divorce	Total
Infertility	30	94	15	139
Sickness or disease	12	47	34	93
Death of existing children	12	44	15	71
Spiritual Causes	10	46	18	74
Lack of economic independent	30	33	10	73

FIG 1.0 Multiple Bart Chart Showing Factors Responsible for Childlessness in Ado Ekiti



Above chart shows that infertility and lack of economic independent are the highest causes of childlessness under single perspective, infertility is the highest under married couples perspective and sickness or disease is the highest under divorce persons perspective.

III. Analysis of Substantive Issues

Table 3: Showing frequency and percentages of factors responsible for childlessness in Ado-Ekiti.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Infertility	139	30.9	30.9	30.9
	sickness/disease	93	20.7	20.7	51.6
	Death of existing children	71	15.8	15.8	67.3
	spiritual causes	74	16.4	16.4	83.8
	lack of economic independent	73	16.2	16.2	100.0
	Total	450	100.0	100.0	

The table above shows that 30.9% of the respondents asserted that infertility is a factor that is responsible for childlessness, 20.7% asserted that sickness/disease is a major factor that is responsible for childlessness, 15.8% asserted death of existing children, 16.4% believed its spiritual causes and 16.2% asserted that it's caused by lack of economic independent.

Table 4: Showing frequency and percentages of social impact of childlessness on couples

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	labeling and abuse	110	24.4	24.4	24.4
	Stigmatization	89	19.8	19.8	44.2
	display of superiority by the couples with children against couple without children	134	29.8	29.8	74.0
	disrespectful attitude from partners and relative	117	26.0	26.0	100.0
	Total	450	100.0	100.0	

The table above reveals that 24.4% of the respondents believe that labeling and abuse is the most social impact of childlessness on childless couple. 19.8% agreed that its stigmatization, 29.8% believes that it is display of superiority by the couples with children against the couples with no children and 26% agreed that it is disrespectful attitude from partners and relative. From the data above, display of superiority by the couples with children against couple without children is the most social impact of childlessness on childless couples.

Table 5: Showing frequency and percentages of cultural impact of childlessness on childless couple?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	denial of certain cultural rights and title	73	16.2	16.2	16.2
	the childless woman is blamed for infertility	152	33.8	33.8	50.0
	separation from others or divorce	97	21.6	21.6	71.6
	it leads to polygamous family	128	28.4	28.4	100.0
	Total	450	100.0	100.0	

The table above shows that 16.2% of the respondents asserted that denial of certain cultural rights and title is a cultural consequence of childlessness to childless couple, 33.8% asserted that the childless woman or childless couples is blamed, 21.6% asserted separation/divorce, and 28.4% asserted polygamy.

Table 6: Showing frequency and percentages of psychological impact of childlessness on childless couple

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Depression	182	40.4	40.4	40.4
	sadness and anger	175	38.9	38.9	79.3
	Anxiety and grieving	93	20.7	20.7	100.0
	Total	450	100.0	100.0	

The table above reveals that 40.4% of the respondents believe that depression is the effect of childlessness on married couples, 38.9% agreed that its sadness and anger, 20.7% believes that it is anxiety and grieving.

Table 6: Showing response to research question Is there a positive impact of childlessness on childless married couple?

		Yes	No	Total
Valid	Male	118	54	172
	Female	196	82	278
	Total	314	136	450

3.1 Hypothesis Statement

H₀: There is no positive impact of childlessness on childless married couple.

H₁: There is positive impact of childlessness on childless married couple.

Table 7: Is there a positive impact of childlessness on childless married couple? Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.438	1	0.508

Since our P value (0.508) is greater than Alpha value (0.05), therefore we do not have sufficient reasons to reject null hypothesis (H₀).

IV. Discussion and Result

Multiple bar chart above showed that infertility and lack of economic independent are the highest causes of childlessness under single perspective, infertility is the highest under married couples perspective and sickness or disease is the highest under divorce persons perspective.

From the table 3 above that showed frequency and percentages of factors responsible for childlessness revealed that 30.9% of the respondents choose infertility, 20.7% of respondents choose sickness/disease, 15.8% of respondents choose death of existing children, 16.4% of respondents choose spiritual causes and 16.2% of respondents choose lack of economic independent. From table 4 Showed frequency and percentages of social impact of childlessness on couples, it is showed that 24.4% of the respondents agreed that labeling and abuse as the most social impact of childlessness on childless couple, 19.8% of the respondents agreed that its stigmatization, 29.8% of the respondents agreed that it is display of superiority by the couples with children against the couples with no children and 26% of the respondents agreed that it is disrespectful attitude from partners and relative. From table 5 above for frequency and percentages of cultural impact of childlessness on childless couple, showed that 16.2% of the respondents choose denial of certain cultural rights and title as the most cultural impact of childlessness to childless couple, 33.8% choose that the the childless woman is blamed for infertility, 21.6% choose separation from others or divorce and 28.4% choose leading to polygamous family as a the most cultural impact. From Table 6 Showed frequency and percentages of psychological impact of childlessness on childless couple it is revealed that 40.4% of the respondents believed that depression is the effect of childlessness on married couples, 38.9% of the respondents believed it is sadness and anger, 20.7% of the respondents believed it bis anxiety and grieving.

Also, hypothesis that was used to test if there is a positive impact of childlessness on childless married couple was not rejected.

V. Conclusion

From the analysis, it is concluded that infertility is the major factor responsible for childlessness on childless married couple, display of superiority by the couples with children against the couples with no children is the most social consequence(impact) of childlessness on childless married couple, the childless woman is blamed for infertility is the most cultural consequence(impact) of childlessness on childless married couple while depression is the most psychological consequence(impact) of childlessness on childless married couple. Also, there is negative impact that is discrimination against childless married couples in the society

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