

Influence of some personal factors on late marriage among part-time students of ken-poly, Bori, Rivers state, Nigeria

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate influence of some personal factors on late marriage among male and female part-time students of Ken-Poly, Bori, Rivers State, Nigeria. Four research questions and four corresponding hypotheses guided the conduct of the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 1635 students comprising of males and females admitted in 2013/2014 academic session in the three schools (faculties) under study. A sample of 400 respondents was used for the study. A researcher instrument titled Correlates of Late Marriage Questionnaire (COLMAQ) was used for data collection. Face and content validities of the instrument (COLMAQ) were established. The reliability of the instrument (COLMAQ) was determined through the Cronbach alpha for a measure of its reliability. Reliability coefficients obtained were educational attainment = 69, religion = 72, parental influence = 66, personality influence = 67. After validation of the instrument (COLMAQ), copies were administered to the respondents directly by the researcher with the help of two research assistants. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions independent sample t-test was used to test all the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Results obtained were that: educational attainment influences late marriage among females than male students; religious factors do not influence late marriage differently among male and female students. Based on the findings, four recommendations were made among which are that: Churches, church leaders and parents should give helpful orientation to their followers so that they can have proper perspective of marriage; non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and some well meaning individuals should organize workshops, seminars and orientation programmes in schools and other public centers to prepare young minds for marriage; parents and care-givers should expose their wards to early education, especially for their female children, in order to check the harsh influence of education on late marriage.

Keywords: personal, factors, late marriage, part-time, students

Introduction

Late marriage among men and women is not a far-fetched story among the Blacks and the Whites. Delayed marriage is a common story in our contemporary society today due to one reason or the other. Delay in marriage may be caused by the man or the woman in question or the family or society where such a person comes from, this has indeed caused a lot of erosion in the smooth family lives of those lately married men and women because of some of the setbacks they may be facing at home because of their late marriages. Late marriage often is not only a source of worry to the persons involved, their friends and relatives, but also to the entire society at large. Late marriage among older youths could be one of challenging problem facing the human race, however, militating against the population growth. Late marriage as earlier stated by Oderinde (2013) ^[8], is a phenomenon where a person is ripe or mature in every aspect of life, is still not engaged in marriage, often as a result of no suitable suitor is and many other factors. More so, marital lateness has been explained to mean a situation of delayed singlehood in which one who is old enough to get married still lives in single hood. He continued that it is a condition where it is clear that he or she is not a celibate. Onoyenure (2008) ^[10] further opines that late marriage involves a situation where people live and comfort

themselves as married people when they are not actually married or yet to marry.

To Oderinde (2013) ^[8] late marriage could probably be as a result of education, career or ministerial pursuit but many of the people that are caught in the web of late marriage did not plan for it or are not ready for it. In the view of Oladele in Sunday (2012) ^[15], a young man of thirty-four years complained that he was not married yet because of his poor background and lack of good job to take care of his family. He believes that stable and lucrative job is the major determinant of marriage. There are several people as Oladele reported that are in endless search of lucrative job before they could get married. Since such people could not get their desired jobs, they may rank age with Methuselah before courting a girl or man for marriage. Akinade (1997) equally asserts that the highest for a lady to marry is thirty 30 years. He further stressed that, if any woman marries after thirty years, she is marrying late. While the lower limit (ideal marriageable age) for marriage according to Onoyenure (2008) ^[10] for a lady or man to marry or is due for marriage is from 18 years of age or earlier than that as it was seen many years past though some societies still practice it.

Martin (2002) ^[7] observes that men and women these days delay getting married in order to pursue education to a

higher level possible. Martin adds that highly educated people marry late. Akindele (1997)^[1] corroborates this view that education makes people not to marry on time. In the light of that, Payne and Hahn (2002)^[13] equally opined that many ladies marry late get pregnancy because they want to build their career. Similarly, Husken cited in Oki (2005)^[9] notes that young people are increasingly getting married at an older age than their parents because their studies are of important priority to them and their parents. Oki (2005)^[9] notes further that there is a shift in the traditional expectation of a girl getting married at first menstrual flow to the discourse that people are first expected to finish their education and get a job before marriage.

Ikamari (2005)^[4] investigated the effect of education on the timing of marriage among Kenyan women. The survey covered a national representative sample of 7881 women aged 15-49 years. The sample size of the study was 7881 women. Data used was drawn from the 1998 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS). The Cox proportional hazard model and linear regression analysis were used to analyze the data. Findings indicated that education has a significant statistical and strong positive effect on age at first marriage. The highly educated people are more likely to experience late marriage. The effect is higher for the younger women, indicating increase in postponed marriage. Using descriptive Analysis statistics showed that the median age at first marriage among the ever-married women was 18 years and substantial differences in the median age at first marriage by the level of education were clearly apparent. The median age at first marriage among women with no education was 16 years, 18 years for those with primary education and 20 years for those with minimum of secondary education.

Owusu-Ansah (2011)^[12] maintains that some worship centers or church denominations do not permit their members to marry outside the church. Attempts by members of these faiths to marry members of other denominations always meet frustration from their church leaders. Oderinde (2013)^[8] argues further that many churches teach their members that God's will or intention must be sought for before getting married. Knowing God's leading becomes the prerequisite in knowing who to marry. No doubt, every expectant unmarried youth prays to God for his guidance or leading, but majority do not quite understand how God leads and thereby, some have restricted God's leading to dreams and visions. This is one of the causes of lots of confusion and delay for so many people.

Parental influence on their children marriages may equally contribute to the delay or late marriages among men and women. Sadaf (2014)^[14] argues that most parents who are of good social and economic backgrounds deny their daughters and sons from marrying someone who is of similar background with them but of different ethnic or ancestral origin to them. In this case, the love they have for each other will be jeopardized; and waiting for the parents to approve the right person for him or her irrespective of number of years or decades it may take can lead to getting married late.

Elyse, Axinn, and Ghimire (2012) studied the effect of parents' attitudes on sons' marriage timing in the United States of America. Two hundred and five males were used for the study, selected through a 72-minute individual interview. Data were collected from the sample using the Chitwan Valley Family Study (CVFS) which includes

structured questionnaire interview. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics. Mothers and fathers have similar mean values on this measure, at 2.31 and 2.25, respectively, with a standard deviation of 0.79 for each. Sons' mean value is slightly greater, at 2.54, with a standard deviation of 0.62. Mothers' and fathers' attitudes are not strongly correlated, however, at $r=0.13$. Parents' attitudes are not strongly nor significantly correlated with sons' attitudes, at $r=-0.07$ for mothers and sons, and $r=0.03$ for fathers and sons. However, those analyses (results) do not reveal any direct effects of parents' attitudes about the ideal age for men to marry.

Jennings, Salts, and Smith (2008)^[5] carried out a research works regarding the effects of perceived parental influence, and family structure on the attitudes toward marriage of young adults in Auburn. The sample of 1000 college freshmen was randomly selected to meet the inclusion criteria of the study. The Hil Favorableness of Attitudes towards Marriage Scale (FAMS) and measures of the presence and degree of parental influence were used. A three-way ANOVA indicated that young adults from homes with great parental influence had lower FAMS scores than those from homes without influence; males had lower scores than females. A Pearson Correlation indicated that the greater the parental influence, the lower the FAMS scores.

Onoyenure (2011)^[11] investigated whether personality influences late marriage in the University of Port Harcourt, using post-graduate Students. The sample size consisted of nine hundred unmarried male and female graduate students which were selected through Purposive and non-proportional stratified random sampling techniques. Data were collected from the sample using a 12-item Personality Issue and Marital Delay Questionnaire (PIMDQ) which was developed by the researcher. The data was analyzed using mean and t-test statistics and a coefficient of -1.419 at 0.05 level of significance. The result showed that personality issue is significantly determines late marriage; and that personality traits of a prospective spouse are important to so many young singles.

Aaron (2001)^[2] studied the effect of personality on relationship. The study made use of Eyesenck's theory of temperament with five factor model of personality to predict an individual's level of general disclosure and the subcomponents of disclosure. The findings showed that the two models were relatively equal predictors of general disclosure. The sample of the study was 399 undergraduate students who were admitted to study introductory communication courses at Middle Atlantic University. The General Disclosiveness Scale (GDS), simple and multiple regression were employed to test the hypotheses and answer the research questions of the study.

Yong and Wang (2012)^[16] carried a study to see whether personality liberalization was associated with the (Re) emergence of late marriage in New Shanghai. The Researchers used data from China's Inter-census survey of 2005 collected by the National Bureau of Statistics OF China to examine changes in Marriage in Shanghai. The researchers used the survey questionnaires of 2000 and 2010 with 35 items at the personality level and 20 items at the household level. The sample consists of the Mini-Census for Shanghai. Computer algorithm was utilized to match married couples with a household according to their household leader or head, in order to for generate data needed for spousal information. The researchers, first of all delineated the major features of change in age at first

marriage in association with important political and social happenings that are capable of influencing personality choices. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to analyze the data. Finding revealed that unlike in the 1971-1980, when females regardless of educational attainment eventually go into universal marriage, in the 1996-2005 decade, among women with the highest academic qualification, about 7% of them would not married till the age of 45 if the risk of marriage is led to miss opportunities, sometimes many highly schooled women make conscious decision not to marry.

Lundberg (2012) [6] studied the relationship between personality and marriage partners' choices and the probability of marriage by age 35 in California - USA. The sample size of 7,111 was derived from the 2008 95% Scientific Use File of German Socio – economic Panel Study (SOEPS), and age 35 – 59 was considered. The data was analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The impacts of individual's personality attributes on the marriage probabilities of male and female are completely different, despite that two common elements are in all specifications—openness to experience decreases marriage for both men and women, while conscientiousness increases the probability of marriage. For women marriage is also positively associated with extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism, and the effects are generally robust coupled with other demographic and preference variables. For men marriage relates positively to antagonism (the converse of agreeableness), reversing the pattern for women.

From the empirical literature reviewed, the present researcher observed that most of the past studies on late marriage were carried out in foreign countries. In order to fill the existing gap, the researcher felt the need to conduct this research on influence of some personal factors on late marriage among male and female part-time students of Ken-Poly, Bori, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives of the study

The aim of this study was to investigate influence of some personal factors on late marriage among male and female part-time students of Ken-Poly, Bori, Rivers State. Specifically, the sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. Determine if educational attainment influences late marriage among male and female part-time students.
2. Examine if religious beliefs influence late marriage among male and female part-time students.
3. Find out if parental influence influences late marriage among male and female part-time students.
4. Ascertain if personality influences late marriage among male and female part-time students.

Research Questions

The following research question guided the study in the realization of its set objectives.

1. To what extent does educational attainment influence late marriage among male and female part time students?
2. To what extent does religion influence late marriage among males and females part-time students?
3. To what extent does parental factor influence late marriage among male and female part-time students?
4. To what extent does personality influence late marriage among male and female part-time students?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses which were tested at 0.05 levels of significance guided this study

1. There is no significant difference in the influence of educational attainment on late marriage between male and female part time students.
2. There is no significant difference in the influence of religion on late marriage between male and female part-time students.
3. There is no significant difference in the influence parental influence on late marriage between male and female part-time students.
4. There is no significant difference between male and female students on personality as an influence on late marriage.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey design as defined by Nwankwo (2013) is a study in which the researcher collects data from a large sample drawn from a given population and describes certain features of the sample as they are at the time of the study and which are of interest to the researcher, however without manipulating any variable of the study. The population of the study was 1635 students comprising of males and females admitted in 2013/2014 academic session in the three schools (faculties) under study.

A sample of 400 respondents was used to for the study. A researcher instrument titled Correlates of Late Marriage Questionnaire (COLMAQ) was used for data collection. Face and content validities of the instrument (COLMAQ) were established. The reliability of the instrument (COLMAQ) was determined through the Cronbach alpha for a measure of its reliability. Reliability coefficients obtained were educational attainment = .69, religion =.72, parental influence = .66, personality influence = .67. After validation of the instrument (COLMAQ), copies were administered to the respondents directly by the researcher with the help of two research assistants. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions independent sample t-test was used to test all the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Presentation and Discussion

Research Question One: To what extent does educational attainment influence late marriage among male and female part-time students?

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the influence of educational attainment on late marriage between male and female part-time students.

Table 1: t-test for Educational Attainment Influence on Late Marriage by Gender

Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t	Sig.	Decision
Male	254	21.36	2.50	398	2.720	0.007	Reject
Female	196	22.17	3.44				P<0.05

The result as presented in table 1 shows that educational attainment influences late marriage among students based on gender. From the analysis done males had a mean of 21.36 (SD = 2.50), while females had a mean of 22.17

(SD = 3.44). This result suggests that educational attainment influences late marriage among females than male students. Independent samples t-test further revealed that there is a significant difference in the influence of educational attainment on late marriage of male and female part-time students.

Research Question Two: To what extent does religion influence late marriage among male and female students?

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in influence of religion on late marriage between male and female students.

Table 2: t-test Analysis of Religious Influence on Late Marriage by Gender

Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t	Sig.	Decision
Male	204	24.26	3.98	395.707	0.55	0.842	Retain HO ₃
Female	196	24.48	4.12				P>0.05

The result of data analysis as displayed in table 2 shows a small difference on the influence of religion on late marriage based on gender. Result yielded a mean value of 24.26 for male (SD = 3.98), while females had a mean of 24.48 (SD = 4.12). This result suggests that religious factors do not influence late marriage differently among male and female students. Further analysis using independent sample revealed $t(395.707) = 0.55, p>0.05$. This indicates that religion does not significantly result in late marriage among male and female students.

Research Question Three: To what extent does parental factor influence late marriage among male and female students?

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference between male and female students in parental influence on late marriage.

Table 3: t-test of Parental Influence on Late Marriage by Gender

Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t	Sig.	Decision
Male	204	14.79	2.89	389.769	2.221	0.027	Reject HO ₄
Female	196	15.47	3.22				P<0.05

Result on the influence of parents as a factor in late marriage shows a difference based on gender. Analysis revealed that males had a mean of 14.79(SD = 2.89), while females had a mean of 15.47(SD = 3.22). This shows that parental factors influence late marriage among females than for males. Further analysis shows that this difference was statistically significant, $t(389.769) = 2.221, p<0.05$. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Research Question Four: To what extent does personality factor influences late marriage among male and female students?

Hypothesis Five: There is no significant difference between male and female students on personality as an influence on late marriage.

Table 4: t-test Analysis of Personality Influence on Late Marriage by Gender

Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t	Sig.	Decision
Male	204	22.92	3.88	392.908	1.538	0.125	Retain HO ₅
Female	196	22.30	4.18				P>0.05

As can be observed from table 4, there is a marginal difference in personality as a factor influencing late marriage among male and female students. Results showed that male had a mean of 22.92(SD = 3.88), while female had a mean of 22.30(SD = 4.18). This result suggests that personality influences late marriage more in males than females. Further analysis reveal that the obtained difference is not statistically significant $t(392.908) = 1.536, p>0.05$. The null hypothesis is therefore retained, implying that personality does not significantly influence late marriage differently among male and female students of Ken Poly.

Discussion of Results

The findings of the study are discussed below:

Educational Attainment and Late Marriage

The results in table 1 revealed that for both genders, educational attainment is a factor influencing late marriage. As can be seen from the table both male students (21.36) and female students (22.18) had mean values higher than the criterion mean of 20, which suggest that among part-time, the pursuit for education is a factor influencing late marriage. Further statistical analysis revealed that between male and female students, there is a significant different in the influence of educational attainment of late marriage. This finding is expected and therefore not surprising to this researcher for a number of reasons.

Firstly, educational pursuit and attainment is seen as a gateway to a better life in the future. Therefore, any individual who is not educationally qualified is seen as a liability by the spouse and even by the society. In addition, educational qualification gives prestige in the society (especially in urban areas like Bori), where it is seen as a measure of sophistication and class. Finally, the observed significant difference between males and females, with females scoring higher could be attributed to the increase awareness and advocacy on women education and empowerment being conducted globally and nationally, and the campaign against early marriage and girl child education. The finding from this study is similar to those of Kamari (2005) [4] and Bruderl and Diekman (1997) who found out that educational pursuit and attainment are significant predictors of late marriage. Literature review did not reveal any study having a contrary result to the present study.

Religious Influence and Late Marriage

Result obtain as indicated in table 4.3 revealed that for both male and female part-time students, religious factors are considered influential in late marriage. This is because male had a mean value of 24.25 while females had a mean of 24.47 which were both higher than the criterion mean of 20. Further analysis with independent samples t-test revealed that males and females do not differ significantly on how religious factors influence late marriage.

The result of the present study is expected and not surprising because in the locale, this study was conducted, there is a high level of religious commitment and devotion. In addition, there is the belief that religious affiliation influences an individual behaviour, either positively or negatively, therefore there is high premium of the religious affiliation of prospective spouses, which could in turn lead to late marriage. This study is in agreement with that of Sarkar and Rahman (2012) who found that among Indian married women, religious similarity is a fundamental reason for acceptance of spouse and early marriage, and that most women are willing to defer getting married until a spouse of similar religion is found.

Parental Influence and Late Marriage

The result from the study showed that for male part-time students, parental influences were not considered a factor in late marriage ($\bar{X} = 14.79$) because the mean value was lesser than the criterion mean of 15. The reverse was the case for female respondent who accepted parental factor as an influence (15.47) in late marriage. Statistical analysis using independent samples t-test revealed that the difference between males and females were significant statistically. This result was not surprising to this researcher because males within the area of study readily assert their independence from parents, unlike females who often sought parental opinion of many issues as well as desire to please their parents.

This result is similar to those obtained by Jennings, Axinn and Ghimere (2012) who found no direct effects of parents' attitude and the timing of marriage of their son in the United State of America. Similar results were obtained by Jennings, Salts and Smith (2008) ^[5] among adults in Australia that parental influence was stronger on the timing of marriage for females than in males. No past study was found despite an extensive literature that obtained a contrary finding.

Personality and Late Marriage

The result of the study revealed that both male and female part-time students considered personality traits of a prospective spouse before getting married. Statements like waiting for someone with similar interest and aspiration was endorsed and totally males had a mean of 22.92, while females had a mean of 22.30, which were both higher than the criterion mean of 20. Further analysis revealed that there was no significant difference between males and females.

This result is not surprising to this researcher because with stress and emotional heat that comes with marriage, people are willing to wait for someone they believe can understand them as well as appreciate them. This could be a reason for high acceptance of personality as a factor influencing late marriage. Similar results were obtained by Aaron (2001) ^[2] and Yong and Wang (2012) ^[16] who found out that personality variable was a strong predictor for spousal choice and marriage timing among adults never married who were above 35 years in Atlantic University and China respectively.

Recommendations

Based on the results, the recommendations below were made:

That parents and care-givers should expose their wards to early education, especially for their female children, in order to check the harsh influence of education on late marriage.

That churches, church leaders and parents should give helpful orientation to their followers so that they can have proper perspective of marriage.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), some well meaning individuals should organize workshops, seminars and orientation programmes in schools and other public centers to prepare young minds for marriage.

That government on their part should create more job opportunities for citizens in order to upgrade standard of family status.

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