



Attitude Of Men Towards Marrying Spinsters From Single Parent Homes In Rivers State: Counselling Implication

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the attitude of men towards marrying spinsters from single parent homes in Rivers State using a descriptive survey. The population of the study involves all men working in Rivers State Secretariat. A simple random sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 200 men from ten ministries out of the twenty six ministries. Three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. Attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parent homes scale (ATMSSPHS) was used as the outcome measure. The face and content validity of this instrument was ensured by experts in guidance and counselling while its reliability was ensured through the internal consistency method with Cronbach alpha statistic and it yielded an alpha of 0.75. The data obtained from this instrument was analysed with mean and standard deviation for the research questions and one way ANOVA for the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant. Results indicated that educational qualification and family type influences men's attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parent homes while age does not significantly influence their attitude, based on the findings it was recommended amongst others that men should consider every spinster on her own merit because she is not the architect of her social status in the society.

Keywords: single-parent, attitude, spinsters, marriage, family

INTRODUCTION

The incident of single-parent hood is a global phenomenon with increasing trend in countries all over the world. It is not just a one man's problem or a family problem but a social problem with great magnitude. In consonance with this view Saxton (1999) said that the single parent family is the fastest growing family type and has been for some time. Single parent homes are found in every part of the world no country is left out on this issue.

Saxton in Olatunji (2012) defines a single parent as one living together in a home with one or more children where only one parent is present. This is opposed to a family with two parents living in a home. Wright (2011) says a single parent home is any family with one or more children where one of the parents must serve a double parental role of mother and father for an extended or permanent period. In harmony with this definition, Wenham (2004) sees single parent's homes as homes where persons live and look after their child or children without the other parent'

Parenting is a tough call, but single parenting is even tougher and more challenging as one parent tries to fulfil the roles of both a mother and a father Olatunji (2012). Single parenting is highly demanding physically, emotionally and financially. The single parent home is faced with a lot of problems such as financial problems, accommodation, educational problems, role conflicts and over loads, that is

being both mother and father at the same time, home maker and family provider etc. all these adds up to a heavy load of responsibilities. Finding oneself as a single parent is surely not one of the easiest of things to accomplish, having to provide and care for a child or several children alone can bring depression as well as practical problems. In support of this view Owuru in Loveday (1995) said that many parents in this situation finds themselves over worked, tired and invariably easily upset and irritable.

Research has shown that most single parent families are headed by mothers about 10 per cent are father-children families, Saxton (1999). Normally children obey and fear their fathers more than their mothers, if the woman takes custody of the children the stubborn ones might disobey her and react to their mother's romantic relationship. The single fathers on the other hand feel less concerned about the children; instead they quickly bring in another woman into the home as a step mother of the children and leave them at her mercy. Glasser and Taylor in Loveday (1995) confirmed that fathers usually feel incapable and unsuccessful in their ability to function as a single parent.

Loveday (1995) identified the following as responsible for the drastic rise in single parent families.

1. Adam in Loveday (1995) said that single parent families are formed when an unmarried person, man or woman adopts a child. Supporting this view, Saxton (1999) said that until recently courts usually permitted adoption only by single women but they are now increasingly permitting single men to adopt children as well.
2. Adams also identified military leave as a cause of single parent homes. Most military men leave their families behind at the mercy of their wives and go on posting. They also form new families in their new stations.
3. Wakama in Loveday (1995) identified the following causes of single parent home, death, divorce, separation, unregulated and out of wedlock birth, deception, imprisonment for felony, mental problems etc.
4. Nworgu in Loveday (1995) still commenting on the causes identified illegitimate births, forced marriages, customs and traditions as causes. Wakama in Loveday (1995) commenting on forced marriages said that some single mothers were forced in marriages they never planned for due to financial, psychological and accommodation problems, which they considered unbearable. Such marriages are usually not quite stable, and when they step out, single parent families are formed.

Most men see spinsters from single parent homes as deviant, irresponsible and emotionally unstable. Spinsters from single parents home suffer some unpleasant attitudes from the public such as ambivalent public attitude; they suffer social isolation and loneliness especially during the early months and years. Akingbade in Olatunji (2012) noted that some of these children enter adult hood worried, under achieving, self-deprecating and sometimes angry. There is no doubt that the upbringing of a child under the guidance of the mother and father differs considerably from that maintained under one parent. Single parenthood gets worse when lack of adequate parental care and attention threatens the desired nature of their moral and social upbringing. They stay out and imbibe all manners of behaviours more often negative tendencies to meet their individual demands, if they must get them satisfied. For this reason, people assume that single parent families breed pathological conditions which have harmful effects on children. People attribute juvenile delinquency involving theft, truancy, destitution, prostitution etc. to the single parent homes. Authorities like Savage and Lemasters in Belkin (1981) challenge the notion that single parent families breed delinquency they now agree that the alleged negative aspects of the single parent families have been exaggerated and that one good parent can probably do a better job at child rearing than two parents with serious marital conflicts. The single parent families have been given different labels such as broken homes, unstable and disorganised. These families often face a society which looks upon the single parent as somewhat different from others and tend to isolate these families from the main stream of their former socio-economic way of life Belkin (1981). Despite the negative notions people have about single parenthood, children from such homes at times suffer isolation from the society and a deep disillusion about marriage and other institutions such as school. Some of the products from single parent homes conclude that all relationships are unreliable, doomed or unravel someday in betrayal and infidelity (Akingbade in Olatunji 2012). Most often men perceive spinsters from such homes as highly irresponsible. Educational background, Age and Family type were used in this study as the variables of study to ascertain if men's attitude towards marrying spinster from single parents' homes is negative or positive. It is against this background that this study is conceived.

Statement of the Problem

The incidence of single-parenthood has reached an alarming rate due to the failing standard of morality in the society. These days divorce, separation, desertion, marriage out of wedlock etc are very common in our society. Research has shown that most problematic children in our society are from single parent homes such as truancy, prostitution, delinquency involving theft, drug abuse etc are associated with them. Society sees spinsters from single parent homes as being irresponsible, unmanageable, and morally loose. What can the society say about spinsters from intact homes who have this same characteristic? They have been given labels such as broken homes, unstable, disorganised homes etc. as society ascribes all these names to the single parent homes, most men have a Luke warm attitude towards picking spinsters from such homes as marriage partners. Is the society fair to spinsters from single parent homes by this treatment? Are they the architects of their social standing in the society? Are there no decent spinsters from single parent homes? Why can't they be considered on their own merit? Given the above the researchers decided to undertake an empirical study to ascertain if men have such attitude towards spinsters from single parent homes in Rivers State of Nigeria. This is the foundational problem of this study.

Empirical Studies

Nyanchwani (2018) conducted a study on why many eligible bachelors are delaying marriage eternally as spinsters suffer: revealed that most of the eligible women with good credentials are already single mothers, whether in their mid-20's or in their 30's while the attitude about marrying single mothers have changed overtime, most men are still resistant about not marrying single mothers and spinsters from single parent homes.

Judith and Sandra (2005) conducted a longitudinal study on life after divorce and were amazed to discover that the same emotion expressed at six weeks when one of the parents left permanently from the house was still expressed at 18 months, five years and 10 years. The breakup and its aftermath were life-shaping events. Some of the men and women in the study considered the divorce as a dead issue; the opposite was true of the children.

Educational qualification has a decisive influence on peoples' mode of behaving, thinking and life in general. Onyejiaku in Kennedy (2017) says that education opens an individual's eyes and makes him aware of several occupations and may provide him the opportunity of making realistic choices. A study conducted by Gold and Andres in Loveday (1995) found that white men with less than eight years of education have a divorce rate of 17 out of 1000 marriages per year. By far the lowest chances of divorce are among men with sixteen or more years of education. As educational level increases, divorce rates drop for both races black and white.

Wogu in Loveday (1995) conducted a study about the problems of one parent families in relation to family types noted that, most children from single parent homes enter adulthood worried, underachieving, self-depreciating and sometimes angry because of the problems they are often confronted with such as financial problems, accommodation problems etc. in a similar study conducted by Akingbade in Wenham (2004) found that children of single parent homes especially the divorced have higher rate of delinquency and anti-social behaviour than those from intact families. They went further to state that the rate of admission of children of divorced parent to psychiatric hospital may be twice as high as those from intact families and that of divorce is the leading cause of childhood depression.

Age at marriage influences one's marital standing in the society. Carter and Glick in Otese (2004) found that teenage marriages are much more likely to end in divorce than marriages of after age twenty. They found that the proportion of men who divorced after their first marriage was more than twice as high for those who married before age 20 than for those who married in their later 20s and more than twice for women who married in their early twenties. Reasons advanced for this are; a person is usually less emotionally mature in teenage years than in the twenties and thus less able to make a sound marital choice. Moreover, teenage marriages are very highly correlated with premarital pregnancy and premarital pregnancy is in turn correlated with a higher divorce rate (Landis in Loveday, 1995).

Aim and Objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate the attitude of men towards marrying spinsters from single parent homes in Rivers State. Specifically, the study is determined to achieve the following objectives:

- (1) If educational qualification influences men's attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parent homes.
- (2) To determine if age influences men's attitude towards marrying spinster from single parent homes.
- (3) To determine if family type influences men's attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parent homes.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study;

- (1) To what extent does educational qualification influence men's attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parent homes?
- (2) To what extent does age influence men's attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parent homes?
- (3) To what extent does family type influence men's attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parent homes?

Hypotheses

The following corresponding null hypotheses were formulated to give bearing to the study;

- (1) Educational qualification does not significantly influence men's attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parent homes.
- (2) There is no significant difference between age and men's attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parent homes.
- (3) There is no significant difference between family type and men's attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parent homes.

METHODS

The descriptive survey was adopted for the study. This study requires the researchers to collect data from a large sample drawn from a given population and describes certain features of the sample as they are at the time of study and which are of interest to the researcher without manipulating any independent variables of the study (Nwankwo, 2013). The researchers are convinced that this study is most suitable with use of descriptive survey.

The population of the study consists of all the male civil servants in the state secretariat where core civil servants are found. The workforce of Rivers civil service stands at 46,000 (source: <https://theportcitynews.com/2018/03/26/rivers-state-government-rolls-out-riv-job-platform/>).but the actual figure for men cannot be ascertained, as those in authority consider it classified information. A sample size of 200 civil servants from the core civil service (Rivers State secretariat workers) workforce was drawn through a stratified random sampling method. Twenty men were sampled from ten (10) out of the twenty-six (26) ministries in Rivers State secretariat bringing the total to 200 men. The men were chosen from the following ministries;

Ministry of Environment, Information, Finance, Justice, Education, Commerce and Industry, Water resources, Agriculture, culture and tourism, Chieftaincy and community affairs.

The state secretariat civil servants were considered because, they represent every stratum of the state such as riverine and upland dichotomy, 23 local government areas and the three senatorial zones were well represented in the Rivers State civil service.

The researchers designed an instrument tagged Attitude of men towards marrying spinsters from single parents' home scale (ATMSSPHS). The instrument had two sections, section A elicits information on biographical data used as the variables of the study (Educational background, Age and Family type) while section B had 24 self-report items revealing interest or dislike towards marrying spinsters from single parent homes to ascertain men's attitude. The items on the scale were responded to on a 4-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA) =4, Agree (A) =3, Disagree (D) =2 and strongly disagree (SD) =1. The highest score obtainable on this scale is 96 while the lowest is 24. A score range of 72-96 represents negative attitude, 71-49 represents mild negative attitude while 48-24 represents positive attitude.

The face and content validity of the instrument was ensured by the researchers by giving it to measurement and evaluation experts and experts in the field of guidance and counselling in the University of Port Harcourt to validate. The experts were advised to discard irrelevant items and also replace with possible relevant items; their suggestions were reflected on the final draft for use. The reliability of the instrument was determined through the internal consistency method using the Cronbach alpha statistics. Twenty men from the sampled ministries were given the instrument to respond to once and the scores were subjected to Cronbach alpha statistics and it yielded 0.75.

The instrument was administered to the sample through the heads of the various departments. With their assistant high retrieval rate was achieved no dearth was recorded. The scores obtained from the instrument were subjected to mean, standard deviation and one-way Analysis of variance (Anova) to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses.

RESULTS

For a meaningful presentation the research questions and the corresponding null hypotheses were reported together.

Research question 1: *To what extent does educational qualification influence men's attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parent homes?*

Hypotheses 1: Educational qualification does not significantly influence men's attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parent's home.

Table 1: Summary of data and one way ANOVA on educational qualification and men's attitude towards marrying spinsters

Educational Qualification	N	X	sd	EX	EX ²
WASC/RSA/PITMAN	35	54.57	9.86	1910	107,538
NCE/OND/DIPLOMA	45	52.09	5.86	2344	123,466
HND/BA/BED/BSC/LLB	89	50.67	5.19	4510	230,914
MA/MED/MSC	24	49.33	6.78	1184	59,464
PHD	7	50	9.18	350	18,006
TOTAL	200	51.49	6.79	10298	539,388
Source of variance	Ss	Df	Ms	F	F-crit
	534.92	4	133.73	5.7	2.41
	4581.06	195	23.5		
	5115.98	199	157.23	5.7	

Table 1 above shows 54.57 as mean for men with WASC and its equivalent, 52.09 mean for men with NCE and its equivalent, 50.67 for men with Bachelor's degree and its equivalent, 49.33 for Master's and its equivalent while men with PhD had 50 as mean. The analysis shows that the higher the educational qualification the lower the mean score. The answer to research question one therefore is that: Educational qualification influences men's attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parent homes to an extent.

This mean difference was further subjected to one way ANOVA and the result significant at 0.05 shows, $df=4/195$, critical $F=2.41$, calculated F value $=5.7$. The calculated F value of 5.7 is greater than F -crit value of 2.41 thus the null hypotheses that Educational qualification does not significantly influence men's attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parents' home is rejected. This means educational qualification significantly influences men's attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parent homes.

Research question 2: *To what extent does age influence men's attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parent homes?*

Hypotheses 2; There is no difference between age and men's attitude towards marrying spinster from single parent homes.

Table 2: Summary of data and one way (ANOVA) on the influence of age on men's attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parent homes

AGE GROUP	N	X	Sd	EX	EX ²
Below 20	0	0	0	0	0
21 – 25	43	53.16	4.78	2,286	122,492
26 – 30	63	50.97	5.63	3,211	165,625
31 – 35	64	51.31	8.05	3,284	172,598
36 – 40	19	51.16	7.6	972	50,734
Over 40	11	47.18	6.27	519	24,881
TOTAL	200	51.36	6.13	10,272	537,697
Source of variance	Ss	Df	Ms	F	F-crit
Between group	342.36	5	68.47	1.8	2.26
Within group	7,447.72	194	38.39		
SST	7,790.08	199	106.86	1.8	

Table 2 reveals zero mean for below age 20 as none of the sampled men fell in that category, 21-25 had a mean of 53.16, 26- 30 had a mean of 50.97, 31-35 had a mean of 51.31, 36-40 had a mean of 51.16 while age 40 and above recorded a mean of 47.1. The analysis revealed that age 40 and above had the least mean, while the other categories of age had mean scores of 50 to 53. When this mean difference was further subjected to one-way ANOVA it revealed that the calculated F value of 1.8 was less than the critical F value of 2.26 with 5 and 194 degrees of freedom thus, the null hypothesis that states that age of men does not significantly influence their attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parents' homes was accepted. This suggests that age does not significantly influence men's attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parents' homes.

Research question 3: *To what extent does family type influence men's attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parent homes?*

Hypotheses 3: There is no significant difference between family type and attitude of men towards marrying spinsters from single parent homes.

Table 3: Analysis of variance on the influence of Family type on the attitude of men towards marrying spinsters from single parent homes

Family Type	N	X	Sd	EX	EX ²
Democracy	145	50.56	6.97	7,332	377,742
Autocracy	26	56	6.9	1,456	82,750
Laisser-faire	29	50.8	6.19	1,476	77,208
TOTAL	200	51.32	6.03	10,264	535,360
Source of variance	Ss	Df	ms	F	F-crit
Between group	657.2	2	328.6	8.1	3.04
Within group	7,954.32	197	40.37		
SST	8611.52	199	368.97	8.1	

Table 3 reveals the mean score of men from democratic homes as 50.56, men from Autocratic homes had a mean of 56 while those from laissez-faire homes had a mean score of 50.8. These scores show that the men from autocratic homes had a higher mean score than others. This suggests that family type influences men's attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parent homes. When this mean difference was subjected to one-way ANOVA statistics it was revealed that, the calculated F value = 8.1, df =2/197, critical F value at 0.05 level of significance =3.04 with degrees of freedom of 2 and 197. This shows that the computed or calculated F value is higher than the critical F value thus the null hypothesis was rejected. This suggests that family type significantly influences men's attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parent homes.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The first finding revealed that educational qualification has a significant influence on men's attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parents' homes. The researchers found out that those with higher degrees of bachelors, masters and PhD had a more positive attitude than those with lower qualifications. This finding is not surprising but expected because educational qualification has a decisive influence on peoples' mode of thinking, behaving and life in general. This finding is in positive connotation with the assertion of Onyejiaku in Kennedy (2017) which says that education opens an individual's eyes and makes him aware of several occupations and may provide him the opportunity of making realistic choices. This finding also agrees with the study conducted by Gold and Andres in Loveday (1995) which revealed that white men with less than eight years of education have a divorce rate of 17 out of 1000 marriages per year. By far the lowest chances of divorce are among men with sixteen or more years of education. As educational level increases, divorce rates drop for both races black and white. High level of Education makes people to think broadly while lower level of education makes people think narrowly. Education is a veritable instrument to wipe ignorance.

The second finding reveals that age does no influence men's attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parents' homes. This finding is surprising as one would naturally think that age and maturity goes together in terms of attitude and behaviour. The assertion that age at marriage influences one's marital standing in the society has been proved otherwise, a cross section of all the men in the different age categories responded in like manner on the same continuum. Carter and Glick in Otese (2004) found that teenage marriages are much more likely to end in divorce than marriages of after age twenty. They found that the proportion of men who divorced after their first marriage was more than twice as high for those who married before age 20 than for those who married in their later 20s and more than twice for women who married in their early twenties. Reasons advanced for this are; a person is usually less emotionally mature in teenage years than in the twenties and thus less able to make a sound marital choice. A sound marital choice/judgement is expected at a mature age but this study has proved beyond reasonable doubt with statistical proofs that age does not influence men's attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parent homes as age could be regarded as a mere number.

The third finding that family type significantly influences men's attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parent homes is not surprising but expected because most families set boundaries/standards for their children before marriage. Don't marry this or that. The three family types identified in this study responded differentially with the autocratic type having the highest mean among the three groups

Wogu in Loveday (1995) conducted a study on the problems of one parent families in relation to family types noted that, most children from single parent homes enter adulthood worried, underachieving, self-depreciating and sometimes angry because of the problems they are often confronted with such as financial problems, accommodation problems etc. in a similar study conducted by Wallerstein and Kelly in Akingbade (1991) found that children of single parent homes especially the divorced have higher rate of delinquency and anti-social behaviour than those from intact families. They went further to state that the rate of admission of children of divorced parent to psychiatric hospital may be twice as high as those from intact families and that of divorce is the leading cause of childhood depression. With these issues associated with the single parent families, it is not surprising that men from different family background will be influenced by their families when choosing a marriage partner.

Counselling Implication

The counsellor is a friend of all; counsellors should upgrade their skills to help single parent families adjust to the situation they find themselves.

- (1) Thus single parent families should make an attempt to seek help as soon as problems becomes overwhelming by talking about the problems confronting them with a professional helper. When signs like irritability, stress, anxiety, aggression begin to overwhelm you seek the counsel of a professional counsellor.
- (2) Counselling will offer you the coping skills you need to resolve the nagging issues around you in a more healthy and positive manner.

- (3) Counsellors can also assist by developing a healthy parenting plan to help ease off the burden of single parenting

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the findings the researchers drew the following conclusions;

- (1) Educational qualification significantly influences men's attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parents' homes.
- (2) Age of men does not significantly influence their attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parents' homes.
- (3) Family type significantly influences men's attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parents' homes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations were made;

- (1) Men irrespective of educational qualification should consider spinsters for marriage based on their idiosyncrasy. Spinster from single parent homes should comport themselves and live a responsible life style irrespective of the numerous problems confronting them to disprove the society. Single parents should give adequate love and affection to spinsters from such home for proper adjustment
- (2) Age is merely a number, Men with a negative attitude towards marrying spinsters from single parent homes irrespective of age should reverse their thinking because a spinster from an intact family does not guarantee a well-adjusted spinster neither does a one parent family signify the opposite. Each spinster should be considered on her own merit, and attitude, they should be given care, affection and love they lack from their homes.
- (3) Families should note that single parenthood is not tied to one family type, it can be found in all family types. They should know that spinsters from single parent homes are not the architects of their social standing, single parent families are very common in our societies today having a biased attitude towards them is counterproductive.

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