

## **Societal Implications of Delayed Marriages in Contemporary Times: Evidence from Nigeria**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Although marriages are ordained by God and form the basis for family formation, the age at which people get married is increasingly been delayed. This observed delays in marriages, according to studies, is traceable to the desire for financial, economic, emotional and spiritual maturity of would-be couples. Although literature shows that the delay has both positive and negative implications for men, women, children, the society and the government in many jurisdictions, there is no unanimity on the implications of delayed marriage in Nigeria. This study sought to determine the social implications of delayed marriage in Nigeria. The study adopted a survey design which involved the administration of copies of close-ended questionnaire to one hundred postgraduate students of Babcock University purposively selected from a population of 2,500 PG students during the 2019/2020 academic year. From the primary data obtained, the findings of the study affirmed that delayed marriage has both positive and negative implications for people, society and the government. While the study noted that it was expedient, persuasive and socially beneficial to discourage girl-child or early marriages, it revealed that delayed marriage among matured adults has avoidable financial implications for public health expenditure, single parenting and increases in cases of multiple sex partners and sexually transmitted diseases. Although it noted that delayed marriage has positive implications for career women and their quest for economic empowerment, the study revealed that the rate of divorce, promiscuity, cohabitation and childbirth outside wedlock has increased with negative impact on societal values and attraction of family formation. The study therefore recommended that would-be couple should not wait until they are financially and economically matured before marrying. They can pull resources together to support their families.

**KEY WORDS:** Delayed marriages, Cohabitation, Single parenting, Childbirth outside wedlock, multiple sex partners

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Creator's framework for family formation is through marriage. To form the ideal model of God's family, which comprises father, mother and children, a marriage of two consenting adults of opposite sex needs to first take place (Marriage Act, 2004, Laws of the Federation). In essence, marriage can be defined as the coming together of a man and a woman to form a family to the exclusion of all others. It is a special type of association or relationship between two people of opposite sex. As a legal relationship, marriage confers rights and obligations on the man and woman involved and the relationship is expected to last a life time. It is often a relationship founded on the basis of love and affection.

Marriage was first conducted in the Garden of Eden by God Himself soon after the creation of the world. The Holy Writ attested to the fact that God created male and female in his likeness as part of the whole process of creation which lasted for six days. According to Gen 1 v.27 (King James Version), "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." As a caring Creator who abhors loneliness, God did not allow Adam to suffer loneliness in the Garden of Eden before taking one of his ribs to create Eve, an opposite sex, as a help meet for him. According to Gen 2 v. 18, "And the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him". Pursuant to this resolve, according to Gen 2v.21-24, "And the Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh thereof. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, "this is now bone of my bones, a flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh".

Although God had the power to create a man to be Adam's companion and help meet, He deliberately created a female so that they could procreate. Therefore, the divine concept of marriage is the coming together of a man and woman in a lifelong companionship for the purpose of procreation and managing the beautiful Garden of Eden. Any definition of marriage to the contrary would appear to be a heresy.

The concept of marriage can be explained by the theory of utility which in this case is the ability of the union to satisfy the needs of the couple. When deciding to marry and given the available preferences, the bride or the groom must make a rational choice (Becker & Murphy, 1988) because he or she expects to be better off in general terms than when either of them was single. Marriage is motivated by the desire for gain or benefit (Becker, Landes, & Robert, 1997). The benefits may be in the form of companionship, complementary endowment, love, ability to cook and quality of food, children, financial, emotional stability and security. Each party complements the other while their resources are aggregated for the benefit of the nuclear family.

From experience, the duration of the search and adequacy of preparation are uncertain as a lot of factors influence the readiness of either party to decide to marry. While the groom may be desirous of achieving financial and economic maturity to be able to shoulder the responsibility of parenthood, the bride may also be acquiring more education and making a career to achieve economic empowerment. Thus, the critical issue in today's marriages is when to get married. Besides the fact that the timing of marriages varies and has cultural undertones, it also has implications for the couple, the society and nation.

In God's agenda for humanity, the family formed through the marriage of a man and woman is key. It was the basis of how God wants the world to grow and flourish. He did not therefore waste time in creating a female help meet for Adam. Adam and Eve were both created on the sixth day. This was after God had created the Garden of Eden and all the plants, herbs, fishes, beast, fowls of the air, mineral resources (e.g., gold, bdellium, onyx-Gen 2 v. 12), which they would require to enjoy their lives in the Garden. A critical condition for marriage is therefore adequate economic and financial preparation. God did not give Eve to Adam before the creation of everything they required to make a happy family and home. From the Biblical example of Adam and Eve, it seems plausible that a man must make adequate provisions for things he requires to take care of his family before getting married. He must have a means of livelihood as God gave Adam the task of tending the garden before he got married. Accordingly, the time to prepare is a critical factor in the decision to get married.

As a result of this desire for financial and economic maturity, both male and female of 20 years and above are observed not to be in a hurry to marry. The findings of Hymowitz, Carroll, Wilcox, and Kaye (2013) showed that, the median age of marriage in USA is now nearly 29 years of age for men and 27 years of age for women. Similarly, the drive towards early marriages is gradually slowing down in Nigeria as in other jurisdictions. Although this is ascribed to the desire for maturity before marriage, research results in many jurisdictions show that the rate of sex and childbearing did not change (Carroll, 2016a). In other words, from the observed patterns of family formation, family stability and child well-being, there appears to be significant trade-offs arising from the delay of marriages. The results in USA, for instance, are actually opposite of the intentions of affected young men and women (Carroll, 2017). While some research efforts show that delayed marriages are positively correlated to marriage stability, some others indicate that the rate of cohabitation, rape and non-marital childbearing is on the rise. Accordingly, the impact of delayed marriage on the society appears to be universally uncertain. The problem which this study sought to address is the determination of the social implications of delayed marriages on the Nigerian society.

The remainder of this article is segmented into six sections. The second section contains the study's objectives, research questions and hypotheses while the literature review (which encompasses conceptual, theoretical and empirical reviews) is contained in section three. The fourth section contains the methodology while the fifth section entails the analysis of data and results. The final section contains conclusion and recommendations

## **1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The general objective of this study is to determine the social implications of delayed marriages in contemporary times in Nigeria. The Specific objectives are as follows:

- i. To determine the relationship between quest for economic empowerment (i.e., access to employment opportunities) and delayed marriages among Nigerian youths.
- ii. To establish the relationship between health challenges (increased women mortality rate, infertility, Sexually Transmitted Diseases/HIV, delivery of deformed children and delayed marriages).
- iii. To examine the nature of the association between delayed marriages and childbirth outside wedlock (single parent syndrome).
- iv. To determine the relationship between delayed marriage and women in leadership positions.
- v. To establish the causal relationship between Social values (e.g., infidelity, multiple sex partners, cohabitation, divorce rate) and delayed marriages

### **1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- i. Is there a relationship between economic empowerment of women and delayed marriages?
- ii. Is there a relationship between health challenges (increased women mortality rate, infertility, Sexually Transmitted Diseases/HIV, delivery of deformed children by adult women) and delayed marriages?
- iii. What is the nature of the association between delayed marriages and childbirth outside wedlock (single parent syndrome)?
- iv. Is there a relationship between delayed marriage and women in leadership positions?
- v. Is there a causal relationship between Social values (e.g., infidelity, multiple sex partners, cohabitation and divorce rate) and delayed marriages?

### **1.3 HYPOTHESES**

- i.  $H_{01}$  : There is no relationship between economic empowerment of women (i.e., access to education and employment opportunities) and delayed marriage
- ii.  $H_{02}$ : There is no relationship between health challenges (increased women mortality rate, infertility, Sexually Transmitted Diseases/HIV, delivery of deformed children) and delayed marriages?
- iii.  $H_{03}$ : There is no association between delayed marriages and childbirth outside wedlock (single parent syndrome)
- iv.  $H_{04}$ : There is no relationship between delayed marriages and women in leadership positions?
- v.  $H_{05}$ : There is no causal relationship between Social values (e.g., infidelity, multiple sex partners, cohabitation, divorce rate) and delayed marriages

### **1.4 MODEL SPECIFICATION**

In this study, there are two variables: independent and dependent variables. The dependent variable is delayed marriage (DM) which is defined as marriages contracted by both male and female beyond age 25 years for male and 23 years for female. The independent variables are Economic empowerment (Econe), Health challenges (Heach), Single parenting (Singpa), Leadership position (Leapo), Social values (Soval) and the unexplained variable ( $\mu$ ). The study sought to determine the impact of each of the independent variable on the dependent variable measured by their coefficients. Each of the variables is defined as indicated in the following functional relationships.

Mathematically,

Let Y= Dependent Variable; and X= Independent Variable

Then,  $Y=f(X)$

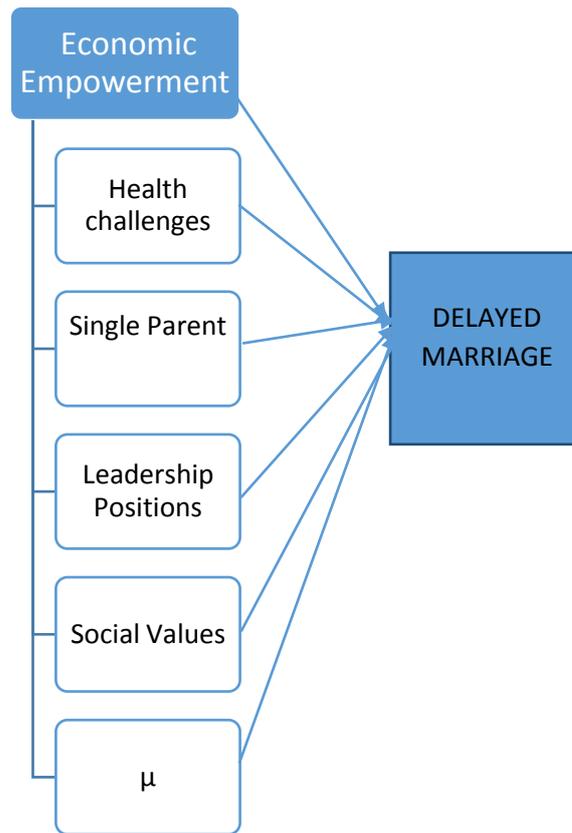
$Y= DM;$

$X= Econe + Heach + Singpa + Leapo + Soval$

$DM_i = f(Econe_i + Heach_i + Singpa_i + Leapo_i + Soval_i + \mu)$

Where DM= Delayed marriages; Econe= Economic Empowerment; Heach=Health challenges; Singpa=Single parent syndrome; Leapo =Leadership Positions; Soval=Social Values; and  $\mu$ = unexplained variable.

### 1.5 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



Source: Researchers, 2020

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Marriage was ordained by God as a blessing to humanity. The divine marriage of Adam and Eve had some peculiarities. Created as man and woman, Adam married Eve very early by the order of God. There was no courtship between Adam and Eve. They just married by divine instruction (Amanze & Amanze, 2014). The timing of the marriage was divinely fixed. The marriage was monogamous. Eve, as the real bone and flesh of Adam, was a natural extension of Adam and therefore, as husband and wife, they were to remain one flesh (Gen 2v. 24). The marriage was consummated after God had created everything including their source of sustenance. The Garden of Eden, where God placed Adam, had everything to make life worth living for the new couple.

The early marriage of Adam and Eve was made possible by the availability of resources and means of livelihood. It can be inferred from this example that marriages are expected to be contracted when a man has satisfied some of the basic things of life. It is instructive to mention that Adam's specific task of tending the Garden of Eden was given to him before the creation of Eve and their subsequent marriage. The role assigned to Eve after her creation was clearly that of "help meet"; she was not co-head of the family and therefore was not expected to contribute to the upkeep of the home. Against this background, a school of thought (Becker, Landes, & Robert, 1997) opined that the most efficient marital form of marriage is monogamy as parties work for the alignment of goals and good of the union. As the family union blossoms and flourishes, the society and the nation are positively impacted as the products of the families take their turn to contribute to the development of the well-being of all.

The first charge God gave Adam and Eve was, that they should go and "be fruitful, multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it (Gen 1:28KJV)." God did not give any consideration to birth control because everything that the first family needed to survive were fully provided. As a God of sufficiency, His Garden of Eden had everything: food, water, medicine and mineral resources. Although they were economically and financially sufficient by divine provision, they were both immature emotionally and spiritually and therefore were not mentally ready to obey God's instruction. In their innocence and nakedness, Adam and Eve, were not ashamed (Gen 2 v. 25).

The critical issue in today's marriages is when to get married. The timing is very significant. While there are great benefits associated with early marriages, the trend today is towards delayed marriages. Rather than marry early in line with the Biblical experience of Adam and Eve, many men and women now marry at older ages. Indeed, the trend today is towards delayed marriages because of the desire to be economically,

financially and emotionally matured. To ensure that they ultimately optimize the benefits of marriage, bachelors and spinsters engage not only in the search for the ideal partner but also, in the preparation for actual marriage when that appropriate partner is found. Here lies the importance of search theory. The application of search theory to marriage, stems from its explication of the relationship between the closeness of the match sought and the length of time a person must search. When applied to marriage markets, the theory argues for a strong relationship between marriage timing and the problems associated with assortative mating (Oppenheimer, 1988).

Thus, the issue of the timing of marriages and the social implications are far from being settled. This is not a national, but global, issue. In countries with the required data, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, Population Facts, no. 2011/1 [Dec. 2011] report shows that between 1970 and 2010, the mean age for both women and men at marriage increased in 100 of the 114 countries. This report prompted Carroll (2016) to aver that, “given the trajectory of this trend over the last several years, we (USA) are quickly approaching a time in our culture where half of marriages will occur for individuals after the age of 30, quite different from what we have seen in previous generations”.

## **2.1 Causes of delayed marriages**

The following have been identified in the literature as causes of delayed marriages:

### **2.1.1 Education and economic opportunities**

Late marriage tends to give room for financial stability before marriage. A potential spouse has the opportunity to make provision for financial security in the future. Some researchers (Hervish & Feldman-Jacobs, 2011) noted that most of the young women who are married were forced against their wish thus infringing their human rights, denying them the opportunity of getting educated and economic freedom. This is an opportunity that exists in delayed marriage where an individual has enough time for education and thereafter work to earn a living before finally settling down for marriage. Prior to marriage he focuses on his career and achievement of certain goals to secure his future. Thus, economic and pursuit of career often lead to delayed marriages while late marriages give room for maturity and preparation regarding to one’s career which is also supported by parents. Young people want to perfectly prepare for marriage that will last and be successful (Carroll, 2016). In taking time to prepare for lasting marriage and successful home, marriages are unwittingly delayed. Parents are equally in support of this as they want their children to be economically buoyant so that they can cater for their families and also for their (parents) needs at old age.

### **2.1.2 Maternal and child health**

Delayed marriage creates opportunity for physical development of women which aid in maternal and child health later in life. It has been noted (Hervish & Feldman-Jacobs, 2011) that delayed marriage is good for the mother and child thereby improving their health. The study noted that complications often result to the death of girls between 15 to 19 years of age in developing countries while children born by young girls seem to be premature or have low weight at birth. Early marriage in less developed countries was identified by United Nation Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) as one of the factors that threatened “nearly every Millennium Development Goal: it is an obstacle to eradicating poverty, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality, improving maternal and child health, and reducing HIV and AIDS.”

### **2.1.3 Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)**

There is a belief that early marriage tends to solve the problem of promiscuity. A study (Kinsey Institute, 2010) holds that 23% of unmarried persons go without sex in a year. The implication of this is the high rate of rape that is prevalent today in societies. Some researchers noted (Hervish & Feldman-Jacobs, 2011) that this may not be the case as young girls often get married to older men who may already have several wives or sexual partners. This practice increases the rate of sexually transmitted diseases or AIDS. The young innocent girl will be the hardest hit.

### **2.1.4 Single parenting**

Although many people delay their marriages, sexual coupling and child bearing are not being delayed (Carroll, 2016). In other words, while marriages appear to be delayed, the rate of cohabitation, sex and childbearing has increased. Indeed, some areas are seen to even forgo marriage. In some Western European countries, particularly in Scandinavia, cohabitation has emerged as a long-term substitute for marriage (Hoem & Rennermalm, 1985). Recently, France enacted new laws governing informal unions, the so-called *Pacte de Solidarité*. Africans do not encourage this neither does the Christian faith. Early marriage should help to check this. Delayed marriage is seen to have adverse effects on marriage as this increases the number of children outside wedlock thus causing suffering and psychological effect on the children in question. Delayed marriage is associated with some negative social outcomes as it increases childbearing outside wedlock (Martins, 2002).

### 2.1.5 Marital stability and delayed marriage

Delayed marriage results in marital stability as more time is spent in marriage partner selection thus increasing the possibility of making the very right choice of partner (Martin, 2002). When one delays in getting married, it is believed that the ample time spent for waiting leads to maturity of that individual and this increases his capacity to handle challenges thereby making his marriage more stable. A man is expected to have attained some important qualities that will make his marriage to be successful.

### 2.1.6 Women in leadership position

In the pursuit of education and career achievements, marriages are delayed. What women lose in delayed marriages are gained in career progression. Women who do not take time off to have children earn more than their counterparts who go on maternity leave to have children (Hewlett & Luce, 2005). Some professional women even lose their careers completely because they had to relocate with their spouses as well as take care of their children. The table below provides statistics on a survey carried out in USA in 2001.

**Table 1:** Reasons why women leave their careers

S/N	FIVE TOP REASONS WHY WOMEN LEAVE THEIR CAREERS	%
1.	Family time	44%
2.	Earn a degree/other training	23%
3.	Moved away	17%
4.	Change career	16%

Source: Sylvia Ann Hewlett and Carolyn Buck Luce (2005)

**Table 2:** Reasons why men leave their careers

S/N	FIVE TOP REASONS WHY MEN LEAVE THEIR CAREERS	%
1.	Family time	12%
2.	Earn a degree/other training	25%
3.	Work not enjoyable/satisfying	24%
4.	Not interested in field	10%
5.	Change career	29%

Source: Sylvia Ann Hewlett and Carolyn Buck Luce (2005)

## 2.2 THEORIES OF SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP

The actual search for a spouse begins when one is attracted to a member of the opposite sex. The attraction comes as a result of some factors. Some of the theories identified by Amanze and Amanze (2014) that cause attraction between the male and female are as follows:

### 2.2.1 Propinquity Theory

Attraction of the opposite sex occurs as a result of close proximity and contact in performing some routine activities. This could be those living in the same vicinity, attending the same fellowship, working together on a project. This theory is of the opinion that people must meet before being attracted to each other. This theory is relevant to this study in that in the bid of looking for a mate based on propinquity, this may lead to a delay in marriage as not all people you are in close contact may satisfy your set criteria for a spouse. At times, it may take a very long time for an individual to meet with the person that will later become his or her spouse. Circumstances leading to their meeting could take a very long time.

### 2.2.2 Parental Image Theory

This theory brings mate selection on childhood parental attachment. A man will look out for a woman who possesses the qualities of his mother and a woman will look out for a man with the qualities her father. This however happens provided the parents are good example and role model to them otherwise the child looks elsewhere for a role model. Parental image theory may not go down well in a home with a bad parental influence whose parents are bad role model. This may even make them unwilling to get married due to the traumatic experience in their homes. On the other hand, some may rather want to get married so as to leave the environment for a better place. In the process of search, there might be delay.

### 2.2.3 Complementary Needs Theory

People look out for people who will complement their personalities in mate selection. A man looks out for a woman who will complement some weakness or deficiency he has. A tall man will look out for a short lady to marry. However, some other people may look out for people with similar characteristics. It requires a

great deal of time to study one so as to ensure his or her true characteristics. Aside physical characteristics, individuals may pretend to be what they are not which will only manifest with time.

#### **2.2.4 Homogamy Theory**

This theory looks at mate selection based on similarities that exist among a particular setting. These could be economic status, educational qualifications, racial and religious characteristics. Abraham, the father of the faithful, delegated his servant and cautioned him to select a mate for his son from his kindred (Genesis 24 v.1-4). Having similar characteristics in a particular settings may not make one an ideal mate. The bid to look for one compatible with you, may not really be easy to come by thus leading to delay in marriage.

#### **2.2.5 Value Theory**

This incorporates all other theories. Everybody has a value system that guides him in the selection of a mate. It is good to have values as anyone without a value may miss much in life. Value system is an important factor but caution must be taken so as not to be at the extreme. Mate selection may become delayed when you find it difficult to locate someone that fits into your values.

### **2.3 EMPIRICAL REVIEW OF DELAYED MARRIAGES AND IMPLICATIONS**

A recent study (Karamat, 2016) found no gender differences in the perception of positive implication of maturity in marital relationship, quality partner and marital stability. Also, no gender differences in the negative implication of delayed marriages on infertility, cohabitation/ premarital sex, psychosocial effect and stress effect. However, gender differences was found on delayed marriages on childbearing to providing delinquent children. An earlier study (Martins, 2002) found positive effect of delayed marriages and childbearing on relationship between parents and children as new parents need maturity to cope with the children and stress. This is similar to the findings of Nazareen and Nobaya (2010), that late marriage among women creates dual responsibilities of catering for children and relatives which is very stressful. A subsequent study (Bianchi, 2010) equally found delayed marriage and childbearing as increasing stress as people strive to balance their work and other obligations. An earlier research (Becker, Landes, & Robert, 1997) found delayed marriage associated with marital instability and increased chances of infertility as women may find it difficult getting pregnant.

## **III. METHODOLOGY**

As a research work, the study was designed to establish the social implications of delayed marriages amongst youths in contemporary times in Nigeria. Accordingly, a survey research design was adopted and it involved the administration of copies of close-ended questionnaire to one hundred selected Postgraduate students of Babcock University during the 2019/2020 academic year. With the questionnaire, primary data were obtained from respondents. A purposive sampling method was adopted as the students represent the population of Nigerian youths who are the main focus of this study. The data obtained was tested for internal consistency and external reliability using the Cronbach alpha 0.70 as benchmark. The data was also analysed using SPSS to test for correlation and degree of association. The study also relied on secondary data obtained from journal articles, textbooks and newspapers.

## **IV. DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

This study was carried out using primary data which were obtained through survey. A 2-part questionnaire was prepared and administered. Part A had 4 questions which were designed to obtain the demographics of the sample drawn from Post Graduate Students of Babcock University while Part B contained five sections of 4 questions each. Altogether, there were 24 questions. These questions were constructed to obtain the views of the respondents on the implication of delayed marriages for the various variables identified. In order to remove the complexities associated with questionnaire as a survey mechanism, a modified Likert Scale response rating of 1-6 with Strongly Agree as 6 and Strongly Disagree as 1, were provided. This section analyses, discusses and also presents the findings of this study.

**Table 4.1: Questionnaire Response and Return Rate**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Returned and Duly Completed</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Returned and not Duly Completed</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Not Retrieved</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field study, 2017**

A total of one hundred copies of the survey instrument were administered. As indicated by Table 4.1, there was a response rate of 90%; that is, 90 copies of the questionnaire administered were dully completed and

returned. This was possible with the persuasion, tact and patience of the researchers to get respondents to complete and return the questionnaire. Thus, the analysis of the study is based on the 90 returned copies of the administered questionnaire which shows that majority of the sampled population participated in the survey and this is sufficient to achieve the objectives of the study.

**Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics**

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ECONE	90	4.00	6.00	4.9500	.40932
HEACH	90	4.00	6.00	5.0833	.45004
SINGPA	90	4.00	6.00	4.6795	.45711
LEAPO	90	4.00	6.00	4.8883	.53525
SOVAL	90	4.25	6.00	4.5625	.53151
Valid (listwise)	N 90				

Source: Field study, 2017

Table 4.2 shows on a scale of six, a minimum score of 4 and the maximum score of 6 for the predictor ECONE (economic empowerment). A mean average score of 4.95 and standard deviation of 0.409 connote that most of the respondents were convinced that economic empowerment was a cause of delayed marriages. In examining societal implications, the HEACH (health challenges) had a minimum score of 4 and a maximum mark of 6 with a mean average score of 5.08 and standard deviation of 0.450. These indicate that health challenges is a major societal implication caused by delayed marriage. Assessing the minimum score of 4 and a maximum score of 6 for SINGPA (single parenting) with a mean average mark of 4.68 and standard deviation of 0.457, these indicate that respondents believe that single parenting is a major societal problem caused by delayed marriage. Also, the table shows that a minimum mark of 4 and a maximum of 6 were scored for LEADPO (leadership position). The average mean of 4.89 and standard deviation of 0.535 indicate that respondents believed that the quest for leadership positions also causes delayed marriage. Societal value (SOVAL) has effects on delayed marriage since it has a mean average score of 4.56 and a standard deviation of 0.531. These show that most of the respondents agreed that societal values also have implications for delayed marriage.

**4.1 Empirical Analysis**

**4.1.1 Test of Hypothesis One**

**Research Objective 1:** To determine the relationship between quest for economic empowerment and delayed marriages.

**Research Question 1:** Is there a relationship between economic empowerment women and delayed marriages?

**Research Hypothesis 1:** There is no relationship between economic empowerment and delayed marriage.

From Table 5.3, the relationship of the linear equation for model 1 was derived as follows:

$$DM = f(\alpha_0 + \alpha_1 ECONE + \mu)$$

$$DM = 2.547 + 0.334 ECONE$$

**Model 1: Interpretation of results and Discussion of Findings**

The coefficient of the independent variable, economic empowerment, is positive while  $p < .05$ . The regression estimates' result for model 1 shows that there is a positive and significant relationship between economic empowerment and delayed marriages ( $\alpha = 0.334 > 0$ ;  $p < .005$ ). In other words, a one unit change in economic empowerment will lead to 0.334 change in delayed marriages. Thus, the result is consistent with the *a priori* expectation of the study. Since the result indicates that economic empowerment has a positive and significant relationship with the value of delayed marriage, the null hypothesis is not accepted; the alternate hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship with economic empowerment and delayed marriages is to be accepted. The adjusted R square of 0.093 indicates that 9.3% changes in delayed marriage can be attributed to economic empowerment. This model explains the delay in marriage by as much as 9.3% as indicated by the value of the adjusted R square.

**Table 4.3: Results of the 5 linear regressions**

Independent variables	Constant	Coefficient	Standard error	t-test	p-value	R square	Adjusted R square
ECONE	2.547	0.334	0.115	2.893	0.005	0.105	0.093
HEACH	3.514	0.248	0.093	2.656	0.001	0.090	0.078
SINGPA	3.557	0.159	0.092	1.723	0.008	0.040	0.027

LEAPO	2.969	0.316	0.109	2.893	0.005	0.105	0.093
SOVAL	3.299	0.230	0.098	2.350	0.022	0.072	0.059

**a. Dependent Variable: Delayed Marriage (DM)**

**4.1.2 Test of Hypothesis Two**

**Research Objective 2:** To establish the relationship between health challenges and delayed marriages.

**Research Question 2:** Is there a relationship between health challenges and delayed marriages?

**Research Hypothesis 2:** There is no relationship between health challenges and delayed marriages?

From Table 5.3, the relationship of the linear equation for model 2 was derived as follows:

$$DM = f(\alpha_0 + \alpha_1 HEACH + \mu)$$

$$DM = 3.514 + 0.248HEACH$$

**Model 2 Interpretation of results and Discussion of Findings**

The coefficient of the independent variable, health challenges, is positive while  $p < 0.5$ . The regression estimates' result for model 2 shows that a health challenge has a positive and significant effect on delayed marriage ( $\alpha = 0.248 > 0$ ;  $p < .001$ ). This shows that there is a positive and significant relationship between health challenges and delayed marriages. This implies that a unit change in health changes will lead to 0.248 positive change in delayed marriages. This means health challenges that may arise from getting married late can influence delayed marriage. Thus, the result is consistent with the *a priori* expectation of the study. Since the result indicated that health challenges have a positive relationship with the value of delayed marriage, the null hypothesis is not accepted while the alternate hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship with health challenges and delayed marriages, is accepted. Also, the adjusted R square of 0.078 indicates that 7.8% changes in delayed marriage can be attributed to health challenges.

**4.1.3 Test of Hypothesis Three**

**Research Objective 3:** To examine the nature of the association between single parent syndrome and delayed marriages.

**Research Question 3:** What is the nature of the association between single parent syndrome and delayed marriages?

**Research Hypothesis 4:** There is no association between delayed marriages and single parent syndrome.

From Table 4.3, the relationship of the linear equation for model 3 was derived as follows:

$$DM = f(\alpha_0 + \alpha_1 SINGPA + \mu)$$

$$DM = 3.557 + 0.159SINGPA$$

**Model 3 Interpretation of Results and Discussion of Findings**

The coefficient of the independent variable, single parenting, is positive while  $p < 0.5$ . The regression estimates' result for model 3 shows that single parenting has a positive and significant effect on delayed marriage ( $\alpha = 0.159 > 0$ ;  $p < .008$ ). This implies that a unit change in single parenting will lead to 0.159 positive change in delayed marriages. This means that raising a child in a single parent setting can influence delayed marriage. This shows that there is a positive relationship between single parenting and delayed marriages. Thus, the result is consistent with the expectation of the study. Since the result indicated that single parenting has positive and significant relationship with delayed marriage, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship with single parenting and delayed marriages is accepted. The adjusted R square of 0.027 indicates that 2.7% changes in delayed marriage can be attributed to single parenting.

**4.1.4 Test of Hypothesis Four**

**Research Objective 4:** To determine the relationship between delayed marriage and women in leadership positions.

**Research Question 4:** Is there a relationship between delayed marriage and women in leadership positions?

**Research Hypothesis 4:** There is no relationship between delayed marriages and women in leadership positions?

From Table 5.3, the relationship of the linear equation for model 4 was derived as follows:

$$DM = f(\alpha_0 + \alpha_1 LEAPO + \mu)$$

$$DM = 2.969 + 0.316LEAPO$$

**Model 4: Interpretation of results and Discussion of Findings**

The coefficient of the independent variable, societal values, is positive while  $p < .05$ . The regression estimates' result for model 4 shows that a leadership position has a positive and significant effect on delayed marriage ( $\alpha = 0.316 > 0$ ;  $p < .005$ ). This implies that a unit change in leadership position can lead to 0.316 positive change in delayed marriages. This means quest for leadership position can influence delayed marriage. This shows that there is a positive relationship between leadership position and delayed marriages. Thus, the result is consistent with the expectation of the study. Since the result indicated that leadership position has positive and significant relationship with the value of delayed marriage, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship with leadership position and delayed marriages is

accepted. The adjusted R square of 0.093 indicates that 9.3% changes in delayed marriage can be attributed to leadership position.

#### **4.1.5 Test of Hypothesis 5**

**Research Objective 5:** To determine the relationship between delayed marriage and societal values.

**Research Question 5:** Is there a relationship between delayed marriage and societal values?

**Research Hypothesis 5:** There is no relationship between delayed marriages and societal values?

From Table 4.3, the relationship of the linear equation for model 5 was derived as follows:

$$DM = f(\alpha_0 + \alpha_1 SOVAL + \mu)$$

$$DM = 3.299 + 0.230SOVAL$$

#### **Model 5: Interpretation of results and Discussion of Findings**

The coefficient of the independent variable, societal values, is positive while its  $p < .05$ . The regression estimates' result for model 5 shows that societal values has positive and significant effect on delayed marriage ( $\alpha = 0.230 > 0$ ;  $p < .022$ ). This shows that there is a positive relationship between societal values and delayed marriages. This implies that a unit change in social values can lead to 0.23 positive change in delayed marriages. This means that acceptable societal values can influence delayed marriage. Thus, the result is consistent with the expectation of the study. Since the result indicated that societal values have a positive relationship with the value delayed marriage, the null hypothesis is not accepted while the alternate hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship with societal values and delayed marriages is accepted. The adjusted R square of 0.059 indicates that 5.9% changes in delayed marriage can be attributed to societal values.

## **V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The objective of this study is establish the relationship between delayed marriages and economic empowerment, leadership positions, health challenges, single parenting and social values. The findings of study support previous studies that delayed marriage has both negative and positive effects. On the negative effects, men and women who delay in getting marriage may suffer from infertility and childlessness. They also stand the risk of having deformed children while mortality rate of women during child birth may increase. The study also indicated that promiscuity, infidelity and co-habitation, as part of social values, may increase due to delayed marriages. These negativities impose avoidable costs on society and public treasury. On the positive side, men and women who delay their marriages are most likely to have better educational attainment and employment opportunities as well as rapid career progression. This agrees with the findings of previous which established that ladies who do not take time off their careers to have children or attend to family needs rise better in their professions. In effect, those who are unmarried or those who delay their marriages have better boardroom prospects.

In view of these findings, this study recommended that men and women should be encouraged to marry early not only for the health benefits but also, to be strong an active enough to take care of their kids when still in employment. Given the absence of social welfare schemes, it will be a challenge if they start to use their pension benefits to take care of children born at old age. Second, marriage provides couples with opportunity for sex and even sexual satisfaction. This will address the findings of a study which holds that 23% of unmarried persons go without sex in a year. The implication of this is the high rate of rape that is prevalent today in many societies. Marriage will also be a panacea to cohabitation which the African society detests considerably. The churches and other faith-based institutions should take on the challenge of promoting marriages and family values in order to discourage single parenting which is beginning to grow in recent times in Nigeria. Children from such homes will never appreciate the value in family formation as defined by God. If the family structure is threatened, a nation's value system will be at great risk. Children brought up in such environment are most likely to grow up to be irresponsible adults. Finally, men and women must be made to realize the risk of not having children which they may face for delaying their marriages. There is no reason for spouses to think that they must be very rich and comfortable before marrying. When they get together, their joint resources will improve and be more than sufficient to meet their needs. After all, God feeds the birds in the sky. That same God will meet them at the point of their needs.

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