

Perception of Influence of Value on Marriage

Anyanwu Joy, I & Abiogu G.C
Department of Educational Foundations
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Abstract

This study investigated the values held in marriage by married employees in universities. It adopted a descriptive survey design. Data were collected with questionnaire. Analysis of data was by the use of mean and t-test statistics. The results show that while procreation and companionship among others were very highly valued in marriage; power and wealth were highly valued. The order and extent of value varied due to gender and length of years of marriage though not significantly. It was therefore recommended that premarital counseling should be given to intending couples.

Key words: Value, Marriage, Socialization, Culture, Counseling.

Introduction

Value connotes the worth, importance and something that is qualitatively cherished and is usually understood within different socio-cultural contexts. Ochiagha (1995) stated that the value system of any individual is linked to such individual's socialization experiences. Stopes-Race and Cochrane in Onyenze-chukwu (2003) stated that the said experiences may vary due to the person's culture, location or status in social structure, membership and reference groups and gender.

A person can have a conceived value as a result of the person's

orientation which can be different from his actual conduct or operative value (Okoh 1998). Values according to Eke (2007) can be the propelling factors for, or ends of people's activities. It provides standards and criteria that people can use to predict actions and outcomes, justify opinions, conducts, plans and guide behaviors, decide between alternatives and compare self with others-that is, judging others based on personal values. It is transmitted from one generation to another usually through the family and significant others in the society and provides admiration as well as

satisfaction or a sense of accomplishment.

Contributing, Onu (2009) stated that values can either be tangible in terms of homes, cars and money among others or intangible in terms of love for family, friends and personal freedom. Value can be attitudes and forms of human behavior which translate into feelings, thoughts and influence the daily ways of life of an individual.

Man in all societies is exposed to a wide variety of sources of value orientation which Dahlke's typology as sustained in Okafor (2006) provides insight as follows:

- The religious value orientation with its ultimate ends as; God, Christ, salvation and immortality.
- The Nativist value orientation has its ultimate ends as; the natural culture, power, honour, greatness and sovereignty.
- The market value orientation's ultimate ends include wealth, money, prestige and fame.
- The common man value orientation has its ultimate ends as; collective orientation, mutualism and dignity of the worker.
- The humanist value orientation's ultimate ends are; knowledge, procreation, man as the measure of all things and the intelligent ordering of life based upon knowledge.

Notably, these values interests the civilized man, determines and controls his choice, behavior and ultimately, his success in life's pursuits including marriage.

Marriage is the union of a man and woman as husband and wife. It is usually witnessed by both the man's and the woman's relations including friends and well wishers. The term marriage according to Odebunmi (2007) refers to the union between opposite sexes and does not include same sex marriage as being practiced in some developed countries. Marriage can equally be said to be an act of marrying or the rite by which the married status is affected through the wedding ceremony and attendant festivities or formalities.

Marriage can be monogamous which is between a man and one woman or polygamous whereby a man marries many wives. Irrespective of the type of marriage, people's values vary. Some tend to conform to the religious value orientation whereby the spouse's religion is a primer, while others tend towards the nativist value orientation with power and honour associated with marriage and marital status. The market value orientation of wealth, profit, prestige and fame are primers for some people while others may tend towards the common man's value orientation which is based on collective orientation and mutualism especially

companionship and sharing problems and responsibilities like paying school fees, house rent and hospital bills among others which is achieved through marriage and the consequent extended family relationships. There are still others who tend towards the humanist value orientation which aims at procreation (bearing and rearing children among others).

In their own contribution, Diaz-Gimenez and Giolito (2010) in a study on gender differences and timing of first marriages stated that people choose and marry because they value companionship and sexual fulfillment which they called the intangible values of marriage. They went further to say that bearing children and sharing their income with their spouses are also marital values held by people. On gender differences in marital values, Schmookler and Bursik (2007) examined gender and gender role differences in the valuing of monogamy using a sample of adults currently in heterosexual relationships. They measured monogamy attitudes on four dimensions namely emotional and sexual monogamy, perceptions of monogamy as relationship-enhancing, and as a sacrifice. Women valued both emotional and sexual monogamy more strongly than men. While both men and women viewed monogamy as relationship enhancing, men viewed monogamy

as a sacrifice. Individuals whose gender roles were defined by communal traits valued monogamy more highly. They noted that each of the monogamy dimensions was significantly correlated with reported relationship satisfaction. In effect, monogamy is also a value in marriage.

Okorodudu (2010) find out the qualities unmarried males and females would value in a prospective spouse. The males indicated Christianity, the fear of God, patience, knowledgeable and having managerial ability. The females on the other hand, listed being hardworking, responsible, and the fear of God as the valued qualities.

From the foregoing, values vary along gender lines but the extent to which the couple adjusts to the difference in value may be mediated by length of marriage. Length of marriage is the number of years one has been married or been in a marital relationship. They can be grouped under newly married or young couples (1-5 years in marriage) and old couples (6 years and above in marriage). Report from a study by Nwobi (1995), showed that the longer couples stay in marriage, the better they understand themselves and conflicts reduce especially in communication, finance and social issues. This study therefore investigated the values held by married university workers in

Nsukka with gender and length of marriage as intervening variables.

Purpose of the study

The major purpose of the study was to investigate the values held by married university of Nigeria workers. Specifically, the study determined:

1. The values held in marriage by men and women
2. The extent to which males and females differ in their values.
3. Whether young couple's values differ from old couple's values? (Length of marriage)

Research Questions.

The following research questions guided the study:

- 1) What are the values held in marriage by men and women?
- 2) To what extent do male values differ from female values?
- 3) To what extent do young couple's values differ from old couple's values? (Length of marriage)

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between the mean scores of males and females in the values they hold in marriage.

Methodology

Population for the study. The study was a descriptive survey and the population was made up of all married university workers in two faculties Social Sciences and

Education in the University of Nigeria. The choice of University of Nigeria was based on the fact that, married University workers from many states and cultures are there. It is estimated that about 2,000 married university workers work in this study area (Personnel services department staff records 2011).

Sample for the study: A sample of 400 married people was purposively selected from two faculties- Education and Social Sciences in University of Nigeria, Nsukka. They consist of 200 males (100 from each of the faculties) and 200 females (136 from Faculty of Education and 64 from Social Sciences).

Instrument for data collection: An instrument titled marriage value questionnaire (MVQ) was constructed from literature, to measure the values people have in marriage. It was validated by 2 experts in Guidance and Counseling and one in Measurement and Evaluation. They were requested to check the appropriateness of the items of the instrument to answer the research questions. Their corrections were incorporated in the final draft. This instrument was administered to married people in University of Nigeria Secondary School to determine the reliability and it yielded a reliability coefficient of .76 which was considered high enough for the instrument to be used.

Data collection and analysis: The instrument was distributed to

married people in the chosen faculties with the help of two research assistants and retrieved after completion. Simple mean score (real limit of numbers) was used to answer the research questions; a mean score of 0.5 – 1.49= very low value, 1.5.-2.49 = low value, 2.5 – 3.49

= high value, 3.5 – 4.00 = very high value.

Results

The results of the analysis of the data collected are presented in tables 1 to 4.

Table 1. Mean responses on values people hold in marriage.

s/n	Values people hold in marriage	X	SD	Remark
1	Spouses' religiosity	3.74	.89	VHV
2	The honor ascribed to marriage in my culture	3.53	1.15	VHV
3	The power ascribed to marriage in my culture	3.31	1.11	HV
4	The wealth acquired through marriage	3.19	1.09	HV
5	The property acquired through marriage	3.41	.84	HV
6	The collective action in every aspect of marriage obligations	3.22	1.18	HV
7	The issue of procreation in marriage (having children)	4.00	.74	VHV
8	The companionship afforded by marriage	3.86	.81	VHV
9	The respect accorded to married people in the society	3.92	.72	VHV
10	The extended family relationship acquired through marriage	3.35	.94	HV

VHV = Very high value, HV= high value,

Table 1 reveals that religion, honor, procreation, companionship and respect accorded to married people are very highly valued by the respondents. Issues such as power ascribed to marriage, wealth, the extended family relationship and property acquired through marriage were highly valued.

Table 2. Mean responses on values people hold in marriage based on gender.

Items	Males			Females		
	X ¹	SD	Remark	X ²	SD	Remark
Spouses' religiosity	3.71	1.01	VHV	3.76	.77	VHV
The honor ascribed to marriage in my culture	3.65	1.04	VHV	3.42	1.22	HV
The power ascribed to marriage in my culture	3.48	1.26	HV	3.15	.89	HV
The wealth acquired through marriage	3.15	1.10	HV	3.22	1.09	HV
The property acquired through marriage	3.51	.61	VHV	3.32	1.00	HV

marriage

The collective action in every aspect of marriage obligations	3.27	1.05	HV	3.19	1.29	HV
The issue of procreation in marriage (having children)	4.00	.73	VHV	3.99	.75	VHV
The companionship afforded by marriage	3.99	.57	VHV	3.74	.97	VHV
The respect accorded to married people in the society	3.92	.67	VHV	3.92	.76	VHV
The extended family relationship acquired through marriage	3.57	.87	VHV	3.15	.97	HV

VHV= very highly valued, HV, = highly valued, X1- mean scores of males, X2- mean scores of females, Number of females 208, Males 192.

Table 2 shows that the males value procreation, companionship, respect, religion, honor and extended family very highly; while the females value procreation, respect, religion and companionship very highly.

Table 3. Mean responses on difference in young and old couple's values (length of marriage)

Items	Old couples			Young couples		
	X ¹	SD	Remark	X ²	SD	Remark
Spouses' religiosity	3.89	.80	VHV	3.65	.85	VHV
The honor ascribed to marriage in my culture	3.77	.75	VHV	3.46	1.29	HV
The power ascribed to marriage in my culture	3.23	1.16	HV	3.52	.84	VHV
The wealth acquired through marriage	3.06	1.17	HV	3.34	1.00	HV
The property acquired through marriage	3.56	.64	VHV	3.27	.89	HV
The collective action in every aspect of marriage obligations	3.43	1.02	HV	3.08	1.23	HV
The issue of procreation in marriage (having children)	4.00	.74	VHV	4.00	.34	VHV
The companionship afforded by marriage	4.00	.57	VHV	3.73	.85	VHV
The respect accorded to married people in the society	4.00	.45	VHV	3.92	.58	VHV
The extended family relationship acquired through marriage	3.35	.99	HV	3.19	.69	HV

VHV= Very highly valued, HV= highly valued, X¹ - mean responses of old couples, X² mean responses of young couples.

Table 3 shows that in as much as both young and old couples value all the items, the old couples very highly valued religion, honor, procreation, companionship and respect; the young couples value religion, procreation, companionship and respect very highly.

Table 4; t-test analysis of gender difference in values held by married people.

Items	X ₁	X ₂	t-cal	Remark
Spouses' religiosity	3.76	3.71	.56	NS
The honor ascribed to marriage in my culture	3.42	3.65	-1.96	NS
The power ascribed to marriage in my culture	3.15	3.48	-3.06	NS
The wealth acquired through marriage	3.22	3.15	.64	NS
The property acquired through marriage	3.32	3.51	-2.28	NS
The collective action in every aspect of marriage obligations	3.19	3.23	-.66	NS
The issue of procreation in marriage (bearing children)	3.99	4.00	-.55	NS
The companionship afforded by marriage	3.74	3.99	-3.22	NS
The respect accorded to married people in the society	3.92	3.92	.09	NS
The extended family relationship acquired through marriage	3.15	3.57	.45	NS
Grad mean	3.55	t-cal	-.99	NS

X₁= mean scores for males, X₂ = mean scores for females, NS= not significant, t-cal= t-calculated, critical value of t=1.96.

From the table, both males and females highly value spouses' religion, procreation, companionship and respect accorded married people. While the females highly value property, extended family relationship and power, the males just value them. There is however, no significant difference in male and female values in marriage.

Discussion

The study set out to find out values people have in marriage. From the

respondents, things that are very highly valued by people include religion of the spouse, procreation, companionship and respect accorded to married people. Power, wealth acquired through marriage, collective action and extended family relationships were equally highly valued. This report tend to show that peoples' values are in consonance with Dalhke's typology of human values of religion, market value orientation of wealth and power;

common man's value orientation towards collective action and mutualism and the humanist value of procreation. These values according to philosophers determine and controls man's choice and behavior. Besides, Nwabuisi's (2000) statement that the value of most Nigerians includes love and promotion of the family and family name which is basically achieved through companionship and procreation equally lends credence to this finding. In an interview conducted by Okorodudu (2010) to find out the qualities unmarried males and females would value in a prospective spouse, the males listed Christianity and the fear of God as the first among being patient knowledgeable and having managerial ability. The females on the other hand, listed being hardworking, responsible and the fear of God as the valued qualities. None of these respondents mentioned procreation which is contrary to the findings of this present study. On the other hand, the fact they value hard work, responsibility and the fear of God, which is still religion, conforms to Omeje's (2007) position that hard work or economic value, which is the source of wealth, is valued in Igbo land and lazy people are abhorred.

On whether the values of males differ from those of the females, it was found that while the males value procreation, companionship, respect,

religion, honor and extended family relationship very highly, the females value procreation, respect, companionship and religion very highly. The fact that both the males and females highly value procreation lends credence to the underlying reason for marriage in Nigeria and Igbo land in particular, where people who marry and have no children are ridiculed, harassed and intimidated by family members with the woman bearing the brunt of the supposedly bad condition. The issue of procreation is very sensitive and dominant in the lives of married people and their relations and respect is accorded to the females who have children.

On gender differences in value, the values of the males and females vary only in the order of importance and number of items valued but the difference is not statistically significant. In spite of this non significance, the result tends to corroborate Feather's (1994) assertion that the value system of an individual varies due to the person's gender and culture.

The findings of this study also lends credence to Schmookler and Bursik (2007) who in their study on the value of monogamy in emerging adulthood reported that women valued both emotional and sexual monogamy more strongly than men. While both men and women viewed monogamy as relationship enhancing, men viewed monogamy

as a sacrifice. They however noted that each of the monogamy dimensions was significantly correlated with reported relationship satisfaction. Although monogamy was not included as a value in this study, the fact that there is gender difference in its value makes it relevant to this study.

The findings of this study equally lends credence to Okorodudu's (2010) interview report which showed that while the males listed Christianity and the fear of God as the first among being patient knowledgeable and having managerial ability, the females, listed being hardworking, responsible and the fear of God as the valued qualities.

The findings from the responses of the old and young couples on values show that they hold the same values in varying order of importance which may be as a result of the pragmatists' idea that experience is the best teacher and validator of values. For instance, while procreation is the first value of both old and young couples, companionship came next for the older couples while respect, followed for the young couples. It is not surprising in view of the value society places on marriage, married people and procreation. So, while the older couples value each other's company very highly, the newly married are still basking in the

respect acquired as a result of their new status.

Conclusion

Married people- males and females, people who are old or young in marriage value procreation, companionship, prestige and respect associated with marital status very highly. The order of value however, varied along gender and length of marriage lines though not significantly.

The implication of these findings is that there is need for intending couples to court for some time to get to know each other's values and adjust to them. There is also need for pre-marital counseling to help intending couples explore the prospects and problems of marriage (especially the issue of procreation since there are better options available for married couples without children than separation or divorce) before entering into marriage relationship. Those already married equally need marriage talks and seminars to enable them re-examine areas of value conflict or disagreement.

Recommendations: It is therefore recommended that:

1. Premarital counseling should be given to intending couples to enable them adjust to the reality of differing values.
2. Marriage counseling should equally be extended to married

couples especially through group discussion programs like “ezi na ulo” and “couple’s table” to help them readjust their values.

References

- Abiogu, G.C (1995) Igbo Value systems and their occupational implication implications for secondary school students in Orlu Local Govt. Area of Imo State. *Unpublished M.Ed. Thesis*, Nsukka; Dept. of Educational Foundations. University of Nigeria.
- Anyanwu, J.I and Nwabuisi, E.M (2005) Length of marriage as a factor in marital dysfunction among clerical workers. *Review of Education*.16 (2) 87-95
- Rambo, Brenda (1980) *Marital values and factors associated with marital stability*; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Psychological Association.
- Diaz-Gimenez, J, Giolito, E.P (2010). Gender differences and the timing of first marriages .IESE Business School and CAERP. Retrieved 15/4/11
- Eke, G. (2007): *Personalization of authentic values*; Onitsha; Mid-field publishers Ltd
- Nwobi, P.C (1995) “Personal background and environmental factors influencing marital adjustment among Anambra State couples. Implication for Marital/squarely counseling. *Unpublished Ph.D Thesis UNN*.
- Ochiaga, C.C (1995) *Value orientation programs for youths; an alternative approach*: Spiritan Publishers.
- Odebunmi, O.A (2007). *Parenting: A cross cultural and psychological perspective*. Abuja Afubunmi Nigeria Limited
- Okafor, F.C (2006). *Philosophy of Education and third World perspective* (5th Ed.). Port Harcourt: Odomezie Kris Company
- Okoro, J.D (1998). *Philosophy of Education; the Basics*. Owerri; Corporate Impressions.
- Okorodudu, R.I (2010). *Fundamentals of marriage ad family counseling*. Abraka, Delta State University Press.
- Omeje, J.C (2007) *Educational and occupational information in counseling; A fundamental approach*. Nsukka, Chuka Educational publishers
- Onu, C.C (2009). *Abuse of Family Values and Nigeria Nation*. Nsukka, Genna publications Ltd
- Onyenze-Chukwu, C.C (2003). *Secondary school adolescents values as correlates of their adjustment problems” Unpublished PhD Thesis UNN*.
- Schmookler, T and Bursik, K (2007). *The value of monogamy in emerging adulthood: a gendered perspective. Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 2007; 24; 819.