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EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND SOCIAL EFFECTS ON TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE AND CHURCH WEDDING ON YOUTHS OF ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF DOKO IN LAVUN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF NIGER STATE

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ABSTRACT

Marriage is the oldest human organization or institution, instituted by God himself. In our society today, some do not take marriage as sacred and divine institution meant for permanency. Instead, it is seen as a social contract between a man and a woman geared towards enjoyment and personal satisfaction. The church, which is a unit of the society, is deeply affected and influenced by this concept of marriage thereby resulting in the rampant break-down of Christian marriage. The study finds out the educational background and social effects on traditional marriage and church wedding among Christian youths of Anglican Diocese of Doko in Lavun Local Government Area of Niger State. A survey approach was used to conduct this research. A total number of 200 respondents were selected as sample but 182 questionnaires were returned for this study, they were randomly sampled across all the Archdeaconries headquarters churches in Doko diocese. A structured questionnaire containing two sections based on the research questions were used. The questionnaires were subjected to simple frequency and percentage. The results revealed that, the level of couple's educational background affect the believe, communication and social interaction in marriage. Also, intertribal marriage affects fluent communication among spouse and with in-laws. It was recommended that youths should be encouraged to be serious with their studies, so to be academically sound and be able to contribute meaningfully well in marriage. Christian youth should relate well in their environments; this will help in times of preparation for marriage. The church should educate the youths on the important of education to communication in the marriage. Christian youths should have a genuine means of livelihood, be hard working, and engage in honest trade. Christian youths should be discouraged about cohabitation before marriage.

Keywords: Effect, traditional, marriage, church, wedding, youths.

Background of the Study

Marriage is a universally accepted practice. Its understanding varies in every context based on the social and religious practices of the society. Ayisi (1997) defines marriage as the process whereby a man and a woman come together to form a union for the purpose of procreation. Marriage historically is God's idea and an institution ordained by God. Also, Danfulani Kore

(2012) quotes Howard Hendricks saying, "Marriage is not the product of a human pervert, it is the product of a divine plan. God has specifications for the marriage relationship. To attempt to build a marriage without following that plan is to invite failure." Until marriage is understood, especially by believers from the biblical perspective, many marriages will not fulfill God's purpose and intention and will eventually experience break-down. According to Longji Ayuba Dachal (2013), marriage is a mystical and intimate union instituted and ordained by God with the purpose of companionship and oneness. See God's intention for instituting marriage:

> Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." Genesis 2:18

According to Longji Ayuba Dachal (2013), God created woman to meet man's need of companionship and loneliness. Gordon J. Wenham (1987) said, the creation of woman from man's rib "supplies man with what was missing for his perfect happiness." So, in marriage, as a man enters into a covenant with a woman, he is considered to have gotten a suitable companion and helper. The man also considers the woman to be taken out of his ribs.

Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man (Genesis 2:22)

As such, he sees the woman as his flesh and bone, and his soul as hers are stuck and bound together into one signifying the permanence of the covenant of marriage into which they have agreed to enter. Adam acknowledged the presences of woman into his life and said:

> Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Genesis 2:23–24)

Marriage is a sacred and permanent union that only death can dissolve. This is because as the man and woman freely, willingly and lovingly decide to spend the rest of their lives on earth together, the covenant of marriage glues and unites their hearts and lives together.

> Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate. Matthew 19:4–6

"What God has joined together" implies that marriage is not merely a human agreement but a relationship in which God changes the status of a man and a woman from being single (they are no longer two) to being married (one flesh). From the moment they are married, they are unified in a mysterious way that belongs to no other human relationship, having all the God-given rights and responsibilities of marriage that they did not have before. Being "one flesh" includes the sexual union of a husband and wife (Gen. 2:24), but it is more than that because it means that they have left their parents' household ("a man shall leave his father and his mother," Gen. 2:24) and have established a new family, such that their primary human loyalty

is now to each other, before anyone else. Jesus avoids the Pharisaic argument about reasons for divorce and goes back to the beginning of creation to demonstrate God's intention for the institution of marriage. It is to be a permanent bond between a man and a woman that joins them into one new union that is consecrated by physical intercourse (Gen. 2:24).

Moreover, the kinship between husband and wife creates obligations that override even duty to one's parents (therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, Gen. 2:24). In ancient Israel, sons did not move away when they married, but lived near their parents and inherited their father's land. They "left" their parents in the sense of putting their wife's welfare before that of their parents. The term "hold fast" is used elsewhere for practicing covenant faithfulness (e.g., Deut. 10:20; Paul brings these texts together in 1 Cor. 6:16–17); thus, other Bible texts can call marriage a "covenant" (e.g., Prov. 2:17; Mal. 2:14).

Marriage in its Jewish and African contexts unites not only the couples together but also their families into a kinship relationship. The man becomes a brother to the woman's siblings and a son to the parents of the woman. Likewise, the woman becomes a sister to the siblings and a daughter to the parents of the man respectively. This kinship relationship is never terminated by time, circumstance or disaster. It is a lifelong relationship, even if one of the couple dies and the other remarries. This is because as a man and a woman get married, their families become united in an existing relationship. This strong relationship suggests the permanence of the bond of the marriage union and family ties.

The sustaining factor of the Christian marriage covenant is faithfulness by both parties. The absence of faithfulness in the Christian marriage covenant makes divorce inevitable. The concept of the marriage covenant is likened to God's relationship with Israel which is based on faithfulness. Divorce totally violates God's intention of instituting marriage. Christians should hold unto and practice the biblical concept of the marriage covenant and dictate to the world how marriage should be done instead of being influenced by the world.

It is in the light of the above that this study deemed it necessary to investigate into educational background and social effects on traditional marriage and church wedding on youths of Anglican Diocese of *Doko* with the hope to identify the way forward, especially as it relates to the Anglican Diocese of *Doko* in Lavun Local Government area of Niger State.

Statement of the Problem

Marriage was instituted and ordained by God to be a permanent union characterized by companionship, harmony and intimacy between a man and a woman, as affirmed by the creation of woman from the rib of the man (Gen 2:18). However, this divine intention for marriage is facing a lot of challenges today. In our society today, some marriage is no longer taken as sacred and divine institution meant for permanency. Instead, it is seen as a social contract between a man and a woman geared towards enjoyment and personal satisfaction. Once such convenience and goal of marriage is not realized, the two parties separate and seek for enjoyment with somebody else. The secular view of marriage above is being accepted by some Christians. The church, which is a unit of the society, is deeply affected and influenced by this concept of marriage thereby resulting in the rampant break-down of Christian marriage.

There is an increasingly low level of morality and ethical standard in the society today especially among the youth ministry in the church, many interest groups have laid blame on modernism and developments especially the advent of modern technology including the internet. One of the outstanding remarkable virtues of a good society should be sexual purity which has received little or no attention from the society today. Also, sexual immorality has eaten deep into the fabric of the society. It has become the mainstay of the peoples' behaviour. Some youths today don't even seek for parents advise before engaging a woman or man to live with as husband and wife. Many youths today don't follow the necessary procedure either according to the culture or to the standard of the Bible but enter into marriage carelessly. In Gospel of John chapter 2 verse 2, 'Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding'. If Jesus Christ attended the traditional marriage, we His followers must take traditional marriage so serious.

In respect to the challenges Christian marriages are facing today and little or no attention to the traditional marriage and church weeding, this research work, will be considering the educational background and social effects on traditional marriage and church wedding on youths of Anglican Diocese of *Doko* in Lavun Local Government area of Niger State.

Objectives of the Study

This research aims at bringing out the educational background and social effects on traditional marriage and church wedding on youths of Anglican Diocese of *Doko* with the following objectives:

- To evaluate the effect of educational background on traditional marriage and church wedding.
- To determine the social effect on traditional marriage and church wedding.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- What are the effects of the educational background on traditional marriage and church wedding?
- What are the social effects on traditional marriage and church wedding?

Statement of the hypothesis

There is no significance difference in the educational background and social effect on traditional marriage and church wedding

The Nupe People

Nupe, people living near the confluence of the Niger and Kaduna rivers in west-central Nigeria. The *Nupes* are mostly farmers, who grow the staple crops millet, sorghum, yams, and rice. Commercial crops include rice, peanuts (groundnuts), cotton, and *shea* nuts. The *Nupe* farmers practice shifting cultivation, using the hoe as their basic tool. Men do most of the farming, while women prepare and market the crops. Craftspeople including blacksmiths, brass smiths, weavers, and tailors operate through highly developed guild organizations. The *Nupe* are noted throughout Nigeria for glass beads, fine leather and mat work, brass trays, and fine cloth.

Today, *Nupe* people are found in Niger, *kwara*, *kogi* states and the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria. More specifically, they occupy the following places: *Agaie, Bida, Edati, Lavun* etc.

The Concept of Traditional Marriage in Nupe Land

Just like every other culture in Nigeria, traditional marriages also take place among the *Nupe* people in a distinctive manner from what is obtainable in the eastern and southern parts of the country. The earliest practices of marriage in a typical *Nupe* society goes down to the fact that a boy never picks a girl of his choice likewise the girl also never picks a boy she wants to marry by herself. It is essentially done by the parents as at that time and as such, a boy is not expected to reject but to accept his parent's choice. A girl's hand in marriage is being tactically asked for by the boy's parents even before the girl is matured. The boy's parents do not go directly to their future in-laws to ask for a girl's hand in marriage rather they preferably send a reasonable member of the society known as *'**Lina**'* to the girl's parent to present their proposal. If the proposal is accepted, the *lina* then goes back and tell the parents of the boy that the mission was successful and a day will be fixed for the introduction ceremony known as *Emikpe* (Engagement). In the early 80s, the items needed during the introduction ceremony were hundred pieces of *kolanut* with a small amount of money not more than ten naira (₦10). Members of both families and other people within the community are invited to witness the introduction ceremony. After the introduction ceremony, the courtship is allowed to continue until both families agree to get the couple married. In the past, marriage in a traditional *Nupe* society was a very labourious and cumbersome exercise as a lot of time was spent in the marriage process. When a girl is to be given out in marriage, the time and date of the marriage is kept out of her knowledge as she may decide to run away. The bride spends 8 days in her parent's house as series of events takes place before she is conveyed to the groom's house in a spectacular mode known as *kpansanagi*. Around 1980-1982, *kpansanagi* was the widest spread musical accompaniment for marriages and naming ceremonies in the urban *Nupe* areas, as it has advantage of being cheap and mobile. The procession from the house of the bride to her husband's compound is normally preceded by *kpansanagi* players and women's dancing is normally performed to it. Today, however, brides are being conveyed by cars and this has completely killed the performance. At a wedding, the players make the rounds of the male guests, drumming proverbs and *Taki* praise-epithets for them, in return for small presents of money. Unfortunately, though, instead of appreciating these beautiful and cheap cultural practices of *Nupe* traditional marriage, it is regrettable that globalization is threatening its survival if totally not swept under the carpet. This is so because *Nupe* youths are now at liberty to choose any girl of their choice to marry. The parents are only contacted for them to assess the character, religious and family background of the girl before giving approval for marriage unlike what was practiced in the past where parents single handedly pick wives for their children. Similarly, with the influence of modernization, the items that are collected by the bride's family during introduction ceremony have outrageously increased compared to the earliest practices. Bride price is now not less than ten thousand naira (₦ 10,000), the groom also has to fill up set of boxes with wrappers and under wears, 1 basket of kolanut and an additional two thousand naira as token. The introduction ceremony is now more elaborate than what was obtainable in the past as the couples do organize a dinner party with friends and well-wishers. So also unlike in the past where the time and date of the marriage is kept out of the girl's knowledge to prevent her from running away, the time and date is now known to the couples and invitation cards are also being printed prior to the wedding date. Generally,

traditional marriage system in *Nupe* society is less expensive when compared to what is being practiced in other parts of the country like the east and south.

Marriage in Doko Diocese

Contracted between a man and a woman, marriage is regarded as a sacred institution. In the *Nupe* traditional setting, the couple is referred to as *ebayawo* and *yawo*, meaning husband and wife. In the early *Nupe* tradition, young boys and girls did not choose who to marry, their families decided on their behalf. However, this has changed significantly over time. Young boys and girls now meet to agree before involving their parents. When a boy's family seeks a girl's hand in marriage, an elderly family friend, known as "*linna*" is sent to the girl's family. The *linna* is said to be the intermediary between the two families, but with paramount interest in the boy's family. At the inception, the *linna* goes to see the girl's family, on a mission called "*egiwa*," which means seeking a girl for marriage. He takes *kolanut* and some money with him as evidence. The girl's family collects the gift items and a reply will come, sooner or later. The money and *kolanut* is then distributed to the relatives of the girl, announcing that their daughter is now blessed with a suitor. After due investigation, the family will give their approval or disagree with the proposal. If the family approve, they will give date for '*emikpe'* meaning Engagement. The '*linna'* which is the intermediary between the two families and some groom family members, friends and well-wishers will go for engagement. At engagement the family of the woman will declare their intention of giving their daughter to the intending groom. The young man and his friends will now go on a visit called "*emisa*," meaning greetings to the girl's family. And the negotiation of "*ewoyawo*," bride price begins. The list of items to be collect for proper wedding will be issue to the *linna*. The *linna* ensures prompt payment and other charges required to be met. Meanwhile, the girl's parents acquire some gift items such as plates, cooking utensils, dresses, wrapper and new clothes as wedding gifts for their daughter. The *linna* meets with the boy's family to decide the month and date to be fixed for the wedding. Friends, well-wishers and families are invited to the wedding. The girl is given marriage counsel by her parents and elders in the family. She is advised to be of good behaviour and obey her husband and his family. She then goes round her family to bid them farewell, after which her parents finally hand her over to the *linna*, who in turn hands her over to her husband's family. After them, they proceed for the church wedding.

The Anglican church wedding is conducted according to the church marriage in the Church of Nigerian Anglican Communion. See Book of common prayer page 211-221.

Educational Background Effect on Traditional Marriage and Church Wedding

S/NO	QUESTIONS	SA	A	D	SD	UD
1.	Level of couple's educational background affect the believe in traditional marriage	40 22%	76 42%	39 21%	17 9%	10 6%
2.	Educational background affect communication in marriage	34 19%	57 31%	58 32%	30 16%	3 2%
3	Educational background affect the level of ideas contributed in solving conflict in marriage	48 26%	73 40%	39 21%	17 9%	5 3%
4	Educational background affects the understanding of cultural difference in marriage	30 16%	76 42%	45 25%	16 9%	15 8%

5	Tolerance of the in-law depends on the educational background of the couples	28 15%	60 33%	54 30%	28 15%	12 7%
6	Educational background affects the level of exposure by the couples	50 27%	65 36%	36 20%	18 10%	13 7%
7	Couples that are highly educated don't take correction after church wedding	36 20%	39 21%	59 32%	38 21%	10 6%
8	Setting of goals after church wedding depends on the educational background of the couples	44 24%	48 26%	54 30%	30 16%	6 3%

Item 1 shows that 40 of the respondents which represent 22% strongly agreed to the fact that, level of couple's educational background affect the believe in traditional marriage, 76 of the respondents which represent 42% agreed, 39 of the respondents which represent 21% disagreed, 17 of the respondents which represent 9% strongly disagreed and 10 respondents which represents 6% remained undecided. Item 2 also shows that 34 of the respondents which represent 19% strongly agreed to the fact that, educational background affect communication in marriage, 57 of the respondents which represent 31% agreed, 58 of the respondents which represent 32% disagreed, 30 of the respondents which represent 16% strongly disagreed and 3 respondents which represents 2% remained undecided.

Item 3 shows that 48 of the respondents which represent 26% strongly agreed to the fact that, educational background affect the level of ideas contributed in solving conflict in marriage, 73 of the respondents which represent 40% agreed, 39 of the respondents which represent 21% disagreed, 17 of the respondents which represent 9% strongly disagreed and 5 respondents which represents 3% remained undecided. Item 4 shows that 30 of the respondents which represent 16% strongly agreed to the fact that, educational background affects the understanding of cultural difference in marriage, 76 of the respondents which represent 42% agreed, 45 of the respondents which represent 25% disagreed, 16 of the respondents which represent 9% strongly disagreed and 15 respondents which represents 8% remained undecided.

Item 5 shows that 28 of the respondents which represent 15% strongly agreed to the fact that, tolerance of the in-law depends on the educational background of the couples, 60 of the respondents which represent 33% agreed, 54 of the respondents which represent 30% disagreed, 28 of the respondents which represent 15% strongly disagreed and 12 respondents which represents 7% remained undecided. Item 6 shows that 50 of the respondents which represent 27% strongly agreed to the fact that, educational background affects the level of exposure by the couples, 65 of the respondents which represent 36% agreed, 36 of the respondents which represent 20% disagreed, 18 of the respondents which represent 10% strongly disagreed and 13 respondents which represents 7% remained undecided.

Item 7 shows that 36 of the respondents which represent 20% strongly agreed to the fact that, Couples that are highly educated don't take correction after church wedding, 39 of the respondents which represent 21% agreed, 59 of the respondents which represent 32% disagreed, 38 of the respondents which represent 21% strongly disagreed and 10 respondents which represents 6% remained undecided. Item 8 shows that 44 of the respondents which represent 24% strongly agreed to the fact that, setting of goals after church wedding depends

on the educational background of the couples, 48 of the respondents which represent 26% agreed, 54 of the respondents which represent 30% disagreed, 30 of the respondents which represent 16% strongly disagreed and 6 respondents which represents 3% remained undecided.

SOCIAL EFFECT ON TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE AND CHURCH WEDDING

S/NO	QUESTIONS	SA	A	D	SD	UD
1.	Community involve in traditional marriage make marriage stable	31 17%	62 34%	61 34%	20 11%	8 4%
2.	Relationship of the couples and the community guarantee lasting marriage	40 22%	73 40%	42 23%	18 10%	9 5%
3	Support received by the community during traditional marriage sustain the marriage	21 12%	59 32%	68 37%	32 18%	2 1%
4	Couples actively involved in church activities brings lasting marriage	41 23%	83 46%	35 19%	14 8%	9 5%
5	Couples commitment in the church affect their commitment in marriage	27 15%	53 29%	57 31%	38 21%	7 4%
6	Intertribal marriage affects fluent communication among spouse	31 17%	59 32%	56 31%	26 14%	10 5%
7	Intertribal marriage affect communication with in-laws	55 30%	67 37%	34 19%	20 11%	6 3%
8	Cordial relationship between the couples and in-laws guarantee successful marriage	57 31%	87 48%	19 10%	16 9%	3 2%

Item 1 shows that 31 of the respondents which represent 17% strongly agreed to the fact that, community involve in traditional marriage make marriage stable, 62 of the respondents which represent 34% agreed, 61 of the respondents which represent 34% disagreed, 20 of the respondents which represent 11% strongly disagreed and 8 respondents which represents 4% remained undecided. According to Mbiti (1969: 133): For African peoples, marriage is the focus of existence. It is the point where all the members of a given community meet: the departed, the living and those yet unborn. All the dimensions of time meet here, and the whole drama of history is repeated, renewed and revitalized. Marriage is a drama in which everyone becomes an actor or actress and not just a spectator. which means that community involvement in traditional marriage does not necessarily make marriage stable. Stability in marriage is the sole responsibility of the couples. From Item 2, it shows that 40 of the respondents which represent 22% strongly agreed to the fact that, relationship of the couples and the community guarantee lasting, 73 of the respondents which represent 40% agreed, 42 of the respondents which represent 23% disagreed, 18 of the respondents which represent 10% strongly disagreed and 9 respondents which represents 5% remained undecided. This shows that, it is good to have a cordial relationship in a community were some one lives. In times of misunderstanding between the couples, the community members will intervene.

From Item 3 it shows that 21 of the respondents which represent 12% strongly agreed to the fact that, Support received by the community during traditional marriage sustain the marriage, 59 of the respondents which represent 32% agreed, 68 of the respondents which

represent 37% disagreed, 32 of the respondents which represent 18% strongly disagreed and 2 respondents which represents 1% remained undecided. From Item 4 it shows that 41 of the respondents which represent 23% strongly agreed to the fact that, Couples actively involved in church activities brings lasting marriage, 83 of the respondents which represent 46% agreed, 35 of the respondents which represent 19% disagreed, 14 of the respondents which represent 8% strongly disagreed and 9 respondents which represents 5% remained undecided. From Item 5 it shows that 27 of the respondents which represent 15% strongly agreed to the fact that, Couples commitment in the church affect their commitment in marriage, 53 of the respondents which represent 29% agreed, 57 of the respondents which represent 31% disagreed, 38 of the respondents which represent 21% strongly disagreed and 7 respondents which represents 4% remained undecided.

From Item 6 it shows that 31 of the respondents which represent 17% strongly agreed to the fact that, Intertribal marriage affects fluent communication among spouse, 59 of the respondents which represent 32% agreed, 56 of the respondents which represent 31% disagreed, 26 of the respondents which represent 14% strongly disagreed and 10 respondents which represents 5% remained undecided. From Item 7 it shows that 55 of the respondents which represent 30% strongly agreed to the fact that, Intertribal marriage affect communication with in-laws, 67 of the respondents which represent 37% agreed, 34 of the respondents which represent 19% disagreed, 20 of the respondents which represent 11% strongly disagreed and 6 respondents which represents 3% remained undecided. From Item 8 it shows that 57 of the respondents which represent 31% strongly agreed to the fact that, Cordial relationship between the couples and in-laws guarantee successful marriage, 87 of the respondents which represent 48% agreed, 19 of the respondents which represent 10% disagreed, 16 of the respondents which represent 9% strongly disagreed and 3 respondents which represents 2% remained undecided.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the research, the following recommendations are made:

- Youths should be encouraged to be serious with their studies, so to be academically sound and be able to contribute meaningfully well in marriage
- Christian youth should relate well in their environments; this will help in time of preparation for marriage
- The church should educate the youths on the important of education in communication in marriage
- Christian youths should have a genuine means of livelihood, be hard working, and engage in honest trade.
- Christian youths should be discouraged about cohabitation before marriage. This may be why most couples who live together before marriage find married life difficult to sustain for very long.

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