



SOCIAL DYNAMICS OF MARITAL DISSOLUTION AMONG ETHNO-ENDOGAMOUS MARRIAGES IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN SOCIETY: THE YORUBA EXAMPLE

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Abstract:

This study examines the inter-generational trend and various determinants of marital dissolution by separation or divorce among ever married women in the contemporary Yoruba society, using Osun State, Nigeria as the study location. A triangulated research design was utilised to achieve the objectives of the study. Specifically, cross-sectional survey (CSS), key-informant interview (KII) and in-depth interview (IDI) methods of data collection were adopted in the design to generate both quantitative and qualitative data. The findings of the study reveal inter-generational increase in marital dissolution. In addition, the study reveals significant interplay of three factors (personal, spousal and parental) as significant background determinants of marital dissolution in the study location. Based on the findings of the study, it has been recommended that early marriage, couple living in separate apartments and polygyny should be discouraged in order to promote stable nuptial relationships in the study location.

Keywords: *Marital Dissolution, Ethno-Endogamy, Polygyny, Yoruba, Osun State, Nigeria*

BACKGROUND:

Central to the study of nuptiality in sub-Saharan African countries where contraceptive prevalence is usually low is the issue of marital dissolution. The rationale behind this is not far-fetched. One, the absolute number of marital dissolution by separation, divorce and widowhood determines the proportion of ever married women within childbearing age that are exposed to the risk of pregnancy. Two, the length of reproductive period spent after or between unions is a strong intermediate variable affecting fertility in the region. Three, in the continent, culturally, most marriages are contracted to last until death and in some instances even the death of either of the spouses does not totally free the surviving partner from the marriage bond owing to the practice of surrogate marriage and widow inheritance practices. This cultural belief and complex intricacies surrounding the marriage institution may account for high marital stability noted in both ethnographic and anthropological reports on most societies in the continent. However, with the advent of modernisation and globalisation characterised by western education, urbanisation and modern ways of life, most of the traditional structures are getting weak and there is an emergence and even increase in the phenomenon of marital dissolution by separation and divorce. Thus, the continent's tabloids are replete with stories of separation, divorce and desertions by young brides whose parents apparently compelled them to marry men who are much older than them or have other wives (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1997; Osiki, 2000; Takyi and Gyimah, 2007; Olusola, 2008; Adegoke, 2010; Izugbara and Ezeh, 2010; Arugu, 2014).

The issue of marital dissolution by separation and divorce within the sub-Saharan Africa context is complex and remains a big challenging area of study for sociologists and demographers. Scholars have observed in the literature that the fragility of the marital bond is a notable feature of the contemporary world which spares no continent and is present at every level of society. It makes society fragile and even jeopardises the education task and the trust that sustains a home. All too often it leads to numerous



separation as well as divorce (Rhyme, 2010; Animasahun and Fatile, 2011; Ahiaoma, 2013; Maciver and Dimkpa, 2012; Duke-Natrebo, 2014). Marital instability according to Filani (1984) is a breakdown in communication among couples resulting in constant arguments, verbal and physical aggression, psychological problems, ill health, emotional and physical separation and sometimes divorce. Filani further noted that marital instability can result from the death of spouse, desertion of the spouses, mutual separation of spouses and legal separation of spouses. Of all these features of marital instability, divorce seems to be the most popular and most copiously documented since it is the end result of a malfunctioning marital relationship. Its traumatic effects on the society are numerous (Riches, 1991; Olaleye, 2010; Opara, 2014; Omoniyi-Oyafunke, Falola and Salau, 2014). Available statistics have shown that in America for example, the percentage of persons aged 18 and above who were divorced increased from 8.3 per cent in 1990 to 10.4 per cent in 2010 (US Census Bureau, 2012a). Furthermore, nearly two million divorce cases were reported in 2010 in China and the annual rate has been 7.65 per cent (Adegoke, 2010). In Sweden, the divorce rate is as high as 5.5 per cent and between 80 and 151 per 1000 marriages in Italy (Vignoli & Ferro, 2009). In England and Wales, the percentage of ever married people who are divorced increased from 1.3 per cent in 1971 to 9.3 per cent in 2010; the proportion of those divorced increased with age, at age 53, 17.6 per cent were divorced (Office for National Statistics, 2011). Current estimates in the United States had shown that, 32 per cent of the divorced marriages are terminated before their fifth anniversary, 62 per cent does so before their 10th anniversary (Martin & Bumpass, 1989; National Centre for Health Statistics, 1993, 1994, 2005; Nick, 2010; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012b; Bramlett and Mosher, 2002). This situation is not significantly different in other parts of the world, Nigeria inclusive.

For example, in Nigeria divorce statistics from a federal high court in Benin-city as far back as early 1990s showed that 99 divorces were granted within 4 years of marriage. The distribution of the total figure revealed that in 1990, there were 23 divorces; 32 in 1991; 19 in 1992 and 25 in 1993. The lower courts, for example, the Magistrate and Customary courts probably recorded more divorce cases. The above statistics show that the rate of divorce cases is assuming a significant proportion. Also, in Kwara State, the Ministry of Information and Culture recorded that 1,697 marriages were registered for both the Churches and Marriage Registry from 1984-1988. During the same period (1984-88) there were 104 divorces - court case filed in Child Welfare Centre and Oja-Oba Area Courts, Ilorin (Adeyemi and Umoh, 1990). These data given are an insight into the unsavoury fate of marriages in Nigeria. However, reports from various studies indicate that the number of reported cases is small compared with the number of actual cases obtainable in our society. Although reported cases of divorce do not give a good estimation of the magnitude of the problem in our society, they help to keep track of the number of cases which come to the attention of professionals and social agencies. However, many researchers believe that reported cases of divorce represent only a fraction of its true occurrence. Only marriages that are separated by courts are reported to the legal authorities and social agencies. Beneath the visible tip of divorce is a larger portion of unknown cases. This situation under-reporting of marital dissolution in the country become more evident in the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey data that focus on ever married women in 15-49 age group in 1990, 1999, 2003, 2008 and 2013 in the country. As presented in these reports across the five periods of data collection years (1990, 1999, 2003, 2008 and 2013), marital dissolution through separation or divorce is low in Nigeria, accounting for between 1.9 to 2.9 per cent of ever married women in the childbearing age (15-49 years). In addition to the fact that the national



figures and proportions might be under-reported, they also masked regional variations in the proportions of marital dissolution across the six geo-political zones of the country.

The objective of this study is to examine empirically those factors that influence marital dissolution by separation and divorce among ethno-endogamous marriages in the contemporary Yoruba society, Nigeria, and the possible contribution of other factors such as nature and process of mate selection, quality of the personality and character of the spouses and the products of the marital union on marital instability in the contemporary Yoruba society, Nigeria. Specifically, the paper explicates those factors affecting marital dissolution by separation and divorce in the contemporary Yoruba society of Nigeria. It is important to note that there is a paucity of study in this area in recent time despite the fact that Nigeria is a transitional society with rapid and continuous changing social realities making past studies to be quickly outdated. Consequently, there is a need to continue to do research on these realities in order to update our stock of knowledge/information about them.

Previous Studies

Globally, the phenomenon of marital instability has attracted the attention of well-meaning intellectuals who have extensively written on how the phenomenon can be fully explained (Takyi, 2001; Kennedy and Ruggles, 2014; Wiik, Seierstad and Noack, 2014; Fisher and Low, 2015; Clark and Brauner-Otto, 2015; Daytec-Yañgot, 2015; Pelletier, 2015; Dommaraju, 2016; Jennings, 2016; Laplante, 2016; Ketcham and Bennett, 2016; Le Bourdais, Jeon, Clark and Lapierre-Adamcyk, 2016; Bennett, 2017; Abalos, 2017; and Thiombiano, 2017). It is important to mention that many people are concerned about the issue of marital instability because they see it as something that has an impact on the welfare and development of children which will in-turn affect the society at large. This belief has therefore prompted many scholars to contribute their quota to unravel the problem of marital instability. In order to know the various studies that have been done on the topic and the possible gap in knowledge, the review of the empirical works in this section has been sub-divided into six major parts. These are: incidence and prevalence of marital instability and marital instability within Ethno-Endogamous marriages among the Yoruba people. These sub-sections will be briefly examined in the next segment of the article respectively.

Incidence and Prevalence of Marital Instability

Marital instability is a problem that is large and increasing every day. Available statistics of marital breakdown show that many married persons who make such vows do not keep them to the end (Martin & Bumpass, 1989; National Centre for Health Statistics, 1993, 1994, 2005; Nick, 2010). The happenings among Nigerian married persons in the present day make one fear and doubt if any joy is really attached to marriage. This is because married persons frequently nag, quarrel or fight, which may eventually lead to separation and divorce in extreme cases. Divorce is the end result of a malfunctioning marital relationship. Since the nineteenth century, the proportion of marriages ended by the death of a spouse has declined, while the proportion that ended by divorce has increased, more or less steadily. Divorce rates climbed in the 1960s and 1970s and reached a peak in the early 1980s, and have dropped slightly since then. Still the U.S., divorce rate remains high when compared with the rate in earlier eras and in other societies (Whites 1990; U.S. Census Bureau (2012a). This situation is not significantly different in other parts of the world, Nigeria inclusive. In a national survey in the United Kingdom by the Office for National Statistics in 2011, the number of divorces in England and Wales rose by 4.9 per cent in 2010 to 119,589 compared with 113,949 in 2009. This



is the first annual increase in divorces since 2003 when there were 153,065 divorces (up from 147,735 in 2002). The number of divorces fell steadily between 2003 and 2009 in parallel with the decline in the number of marriages. The decrease in marriages is a likely consequence of the increasing number of couples choosing to cohabit rather than enter into marriage (Beaujouan and Bhrolcháin, 2011). One theory suggests that recession could contribute to a rise in partnership break-ups because of increased financial strain, changes in employment and related lifestyle changes. Social research in Britain has shown that unemployment and downturns in the housing market may be associated with family instability. In addition, some individuals may believe they will get a more favourable divorce settlement if their income is currently low (Beaujouan and Bhrolcháin, 2011; Sentse et al., 2011).

Marital Instability among the Yoruba People

As noted above, the literature indicates that marriage processes and marital dissolution around the world have been subjects of scholarly attention (Okediji and Okediji, 1996; Babatunde, 1992; Guyer, 1990; Olusanya, 1970; Eades, 1980; Caldwell, 1976; Fadipe, 1970). Though a number of these studies did not specifically look at it from an inter-generational perspective, but records indicate that the nature and behaviour of Ethno-Endogamous marriage have been interrogated to a certain extent by some scholars in some socio-cultural contexts (Zhang & Van Hook, 2009; Loco & Thiriat, 1995; South & Spitze, 1986).

Endogamous marriage generally refers to marriage between persons within the same ethnic, race or religion (Zhang & Van Hook, 2009). Thus, Ethno-Endogamous marriage involves marriages between members of the same ethnic group. In a study in rural Togo, Loco and Thiriat (1995) observe that ethnic endogamy has a positive effect on marriage stability. According to the authors, the findings suggest that ethnic endogamous marriages tend to be more securely embedded in existing social relations and normative prescriptions which make such marriages less likely to dissolve. Rose Kreider (2000) on her part studied the dynamics of marital dissolution in the American society, but she did not look at it from an ethnic dimension, instead she focused on race and looked at the dynamics of marriage between races. The author observed that, while some characteristics typical of interracial couples predict that they should be more stable, others predict less stability. In a study that involved the analysis of the National Survey of family growth in the United States of America in 1995, it was found that interracial first marriage are 1.4 years shorter on the average than Ethno-Endogamous first marriage (Kreider, 2000). The study further revealed that interracial couples who married young are more likely to divorce than those who married later. Overall, the study demonstrates clearly that interracial couples are 50 per cent more likely to divorce than endogamous couples, and thus suggests the way in which exogamy reflects how social distance affects social interaction within the context of marriage. In general, there is unanimity among family and marriage scholars that exogamous marriages are less stable than endogamous ones (Milewski & Kuku, 2014; Tzeng, 2000; South & Spitze, 1986; Zhang & Van Hook, 2009). However, some of the studies appear to have concentrated more on the relative marital stability of endogamous and exogamous marriages. In other words, they did not reveal the internal dynamics of these marriage patterns, but rested content by stating that exogamous marriages are less likely to be stable than endogamous marriages (Kreider, 2000).



Furthermore, in a study among the Yoruba people of Southwest Nigeria, Babatunde (1992) reveals that difficult economic circumstances may cause a wife to leave a husband who cannot provide for her. The study corroborates an earlier finding in a study by Okediji and Okediji (1996) in Ibadan, which shows that the most common reason given by some women for divorce is the lack of adequate economic support by husbands. In that study, 75 of the women stated that their divorces were caused by a lack of sufficient economic support from their husbands, 32 per cent stated that they divorced because of the trouble with co-wives, 20 per cent noted that their divorce was as a result of trouble with in-laws, while 20 per cent stated that their divorce was caused by the lack of children in the marriage (Okediji & Okediji, 1996).

Other factors that are likely to influence marital dissolution among the Yoruba people include the absence of children in a marriage, as well as the absence of a male child (Babatunde, 1992; Olusanya, 1970; Guyer, 1990). The Yoruba people, like many societies in Africa, have high value for children, and because of the patriarchal nature of the family, there is a high premium on male children (Bankole, 2000:174). Thus, the concept of *arole* (which means a pillar) explains that in the Yoruba land, people need male children because it is assumed that if a man die without a male child, there will be no one to bear his name. Some believe that a person without a male child is like a person without children. In the case of childlessness, Bankole (2000) notes that husbands may simply turn away a barren wife, especially nowadays when breaking and forming of marital ties are less regulated. It seems what Bankole (2000) is saying is that, in the past, barrenness would not necessarily make a man to leave his wife, but due to cultural changes that have affected the way marriages are constituted, a man can afford to leave a woman who is unable to bear children; although in the past such women would have been kept and regarded as the mother of the home. This is not limited to men alone as the literature indicates that among the Yoruba, wives sometimes leave their husbands to attempt to bear a child by another man, if there is a delay in childbearing in the marriage (Guyer, 1990).

Guyer (1990) observes that it is now becoming a common practice for men to require girls to prove their fertility by becoming pregnant before the marriage can be constituted. This practice has been observed to be capable of starting a chain of reaction of marital dysfunction. For instance, the girl who proves herself in this manner, according to Guyer (1990), enters into a depreciated role as wife and hence continues a demanding rather than a respectful relationship with her husband. In turn, she tends to judge her husband on his ability to prove himself to her by providing economic support. Such a marriage could be on without any form of emotional investment and commitment which might eventually lead either of the partners to attempt to seek genuine emotional support from outside the marriage (Kreider, 2000). It is within the context of the above noted existing knowledge that this study critically examined the determinants of marital dissolution due to separation and divorce among Ethno-Endogamous marriages in the contemporary Yoruba society, Nigeria.

DATA AND METHODS

Research Design

The research design adopted in the study is a triangulated research design. In this design, cross-sectional survey, key-informant interview (KII) and in-depth interview (IDI) research methods were adopted to generate both quantitative and qualitative data. Thus the quantitative and qualitative data generated were geared toward identifying the



determinants of marital dissolution due to separation and divorce in the contemporary Yoruba society of Nigeria.

Yoruba Society: Study Location

The Yoruba, largely located in the Tropical Rain Forest and Guinea Savanna Zones of coastal West Africa, are concentrated in Southwestern Nigeria otherwise known as Yoruba land. Presently, there are six (6) Yoruba speaking states in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. These are Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ekiti, Lagos, and Ondo. Yoruba people can also be seen in Kwara and Kogi state with other ethnic groups. The major subgroups of the Yoruba people include the Egba, Egbado, Ekiti, Igbomina, Ijebu, Ijesa, Kabba, Ondo, Owo, and Oyo. All these people speak a common language known as Yoruba. Demographically, about 30-35 million people speak Yoruba language making Yoruba to be one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria, constituting about 20% of the population. The subgroups of the Yoruba people mentioned above speak distinct dialects of Yoruba language. In addition, the Yoruba people have several towns that are distinct from one another in terms of their migration origin, ancestral lineage and clan, and kinship institution. Each of these towns creates its own meaning in the wider Yoruba cosmos through festivals that are linked to myths, rituals, and religions. Out of the six (6) Yoruba speaking states in Nigeria, Osun state was randomly chosen for the study using simple random sampling method. The State was created on August 27, 1991. Osun state is composed of thirty (30) Local Government Areas (LGAs) during the time of survey.

Study population and sample size

As stated above, a triangulated research design which involves cross-sectional survey, key informant interview and in-depth interview research methods was adopted in the study. Consequently, the following population segments were selected for each of the research methods utilised. For the cross-sectional survey, the study population consists of ever married women within childbearing age (i.e. ages 15-49 years) that were into Ethno-Endogamous marriages residing in the state as at the time of the study. This segment of the population is appropriate for the survey because the Yoruba society is a patriarchal society where men dominate in nearly all socio-economic and political affairs and residential patterns after marriage are largely patrilocal as men pay the bride price. In addition, culturally and within the polygyny system, a man has unlimited sexual freedom, both in and out of marriage, while a woman is expected to stick to one partner. This is a situation in which a man can be the husband of several wives, but the woman is a wife to only one man. Consequently, women are more likely to bear the brunt and consequences of marital dissolution compared with men in the study area. Therefore they are the study population for the cross-sectional survey. For the key-informant interview, the selected population consists of ever married women that had experienced either separation or divorce in their marital union. These sets of women were selected as they will be able to share firsthand information about their experiences in their respective matrimonial homes before the dissolution of their marriages. The study population for the in-depth interview consists of ever married women, men, unmarried male and female youth, religious leaders and community/opinion leaders in the study location. These groups are selected in order to have a deeper perspective about the community members' opinion on the trends and patterns of marital dissolution due to separation and divorce in the contemporary Yoruba society.

The total sample size for the survey was determined statistically using Sincich's (1992) formula for stratified random sampling determination. The statistical formula takes into



consideration the rural and urban strata/distributions of the population in order to arrive at a representative sample size for the women in childbearing age group in the entire State. Considering the estimated population and rural-urban distribution of the state as at 2014 using 2006 census results, a total of 1,598 respondents were determined to be representatives of the Yoruba women in the childbearing age group in the state. However, a total of 1,650 questionnaires were administered among ever married Yoruba women considering the possibility of non-response and incomplete returns among the instruments that may not be useful for final analysis. At the end of the study a total of 1,600 questionnaires were found useful, while 50 of them were incomplete with some internal inconsistency responses. Thus, they were removed after the screening and editing of the returned instruments. Therefore, 97% of returned instruments were useable for further analysis, while the remaining 3% were not useable. Out of the 1,600 useable returned instruments, 1,462 of them fall into the category of ever married Yoruba women in Ethno-Endogamous marriages in the state. This preliminary finding indicates that Ethno-Endogamous marriages account for 91.4 per cent of the marriages, while the remaining 8.6 per cent of the respondents were into cross-cultural marriages. Thus, the analysis of in this study was limited to the 1,462 ever married respondents in Ethno-Endogamous marriages in the state. Furthermore, a total of 18 respondents and 30 respondents were selected for key-informant interview and in-depth interview respectively.

Sampling method

A multistage random sampling technique was utilised to select a total of 1,462 respondents in the cross-sectional survey. The non-existence of a sampling frame (i.e. the list of all women within the childbearing age that were ever married into Ethno-Endogamous marriages in Osun state) necessitated the adoption of a multi-stage random sampling technique in the survey exercise. The following stages were adopted before each of the eligible respondents was selected for the study.

Stage one: This stage involves geographical grouping of the 30 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of the State into the existing 3 senatorial districts namely Osun Central, Osun East and Osun West. All the three senatorial districts in the state were included in the study for proper geographic spread and representation. Each of the senatorial zones in the State consists of 10 LGAs.

Stage two: This sampling stage involves the categorisation of the 10 LGAs into two strata based on the rural and urban nature of the LGA. After the categorisation, two (2) LGAs out of the 10 LGAs in the senatorial zone were randomly selected for the study with the aid of stratified random sampling system of sampling method. The procedures adopted here involved the stratification of the 10 LGAs into two main strata on the basis of rural/urban-characteristics of the LGAs. One LGA each was randomly selected from each stratum of the two strata. Thus the following LGAs were selected from the three senatorial districts. The two (2) LGAs randomly selected from Osun Central senatorial district are the Ila LGA with its headquarters in Ila-Orangun and the Ifedayo LGA with its headquarters in Oke-Ila. Ila LGA represents the urban LGAs in the senatorial district. The 2006 Population Census figures show that the total population of this LGA was 62,054 in 2006 and its current estimated population is about 77,634 in 2014. Ifedayo is purely a rural LGA with a total population of 37,508 people in 2006 and the current estimated total population of the LGA is about 46,925 in 2014. The LGA represents the rural communities in the senatorial district for the study. In Osun East senatorial district, the following two (2) LGAs were randomly selected for the study, Ilesa West LGA with its



headquarters in Ilesa and Oriade LGA with its headquarters in Ijebu-Jesa. Ilesa West is an urban LGA with a population of 105,416 in the 2006 population census and its current estimated population is about 131,883 in 2014. Oriade is a rural LGA with a total population of 148,379 people in 2006 and the current estimated total population of the LGA is about 185,636 in 2014. From Osun West senatorial district, Ejigbo LGA with its headquarters in Ejigbo and Ola-Oluwa LGA with its headquarters in Bode-Osi were randomly selected for the study. Ejigbo LGA is an urban LGA, while Bode-Osi LGA is purely rural. The population of Ejigbo LGA in the 2006 population census was 132,515 and it is currently estimated to be 165,786 in 2014. Population of Bode-Osi in 2006 was 76,227 and it is currently estimated to be 95,365 in 2014. Thus, Ila, Ilesa West and Ejigbo LGAs are the urban LGAs sampled from the three senatorial districts for the study, while Ifedayo, Oriade and Ola-Oluwa are the rural LGAs randomly sampled from the three senatorial districts for the study. In all, a total of 6 LGAs were sampled from the 30 LGAs in the state for the study on the stage two of the multi-stage sampling.

Stage three: The third stage involved the random selection of the EAs in each of the six randomly selected LGAs for the study. In doing this, a list of all the EAs in each of the six LGAs (based on the 2006 Nigeria population and housing census EAs delineation Exercise) was obtained from the NPC, Osun state headquarters, Osogbo. With the help of Osun state NPC officers, especially the Head of Department (HOD) Technical at the state headquarters, Osogbo and the NPC Controllers in the six LGAs, a simple random technique was used to select 5 EAs in Ila LGA, 4 EAs in Ifedayo LGA, 14 EAs in Ilesa West LGA, 16 EAs in Oriade, 17 EAs in Ejigbo LGA and 8 EAs in Ola-Oluwa LGA. The 8 EAs randomly selected in Ola-Oluwa LGA fall within the following four major communities in the LGA: Bode-Osi, Ogbaagba, Telemu, and Asa. In Ifedayo LGA, the EAs fall with Oke-Ila and Ora communities. In Ila LGA, the EAs fall with Ila-Orangun community, while at Ilesa West LGA, the EAs are in Ilesa. The communities where the selected EAs are in Ejigbo LGA are Ejigbo, Ife Odan, Masifa and Inisa-Ejigbo. Oriade LGA has so many small communities, thus the selected EAs in the LGA fall in the following communities: Iloko-Ijesa, Ipetu-Ijesa, Iwoye-Ijesa and Esa-Odo.

Stage four: The fourth stage of the sampling involved the adoption of the systematic random sampling technique in the selection of the households for the study in each of the sampled EAs. This was based on the information that 25 respondents will be interviewed in each of the selected EAs and previous knowledge from the NPC that the average number of households per EA is about 112. Thus every 3rd household was selected for the study, after the first number had been randomly selected. This sampling of every 3rd household continued until we achieved the sample size designated for each of the sampled EA.

Stage five: The fifth and final stage involved the selection of an eligible respondent in each of the sampled households. An eligible respondent is an ever married woman in Ethno-Endogamous marriages within the childbearing age bracket (15-49) in the study location.

A purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents for the key-informant interviews and in-depth interviews. Their selection was based on relevance, availability and convenience.



Methods of data analysis

The SPSS software package (version 20.0) was used to survey data after returned questionnaires had been thoroughly screened and edited to eliminate all possible errors. Percentages, Chi-squares and contingency coefficients, and logistic regression models were the statistical methods used in the interpretation of quantitative data. Qualitative data cleaning, processing and analysis were done manually using a thematic framework approach. This process involves verbatim transcription of returned tapes by the research assistants from Yoruba language to English language after the data collection. The transcripts were screened, edited and double-checked independently by the principal investigator severally for internal consistency, accuracy and elimination of possible spurious responses before further processing of the data and in order to get familiar with the data. The second phase of the analysis involves coding, sorting and theme identification. The coding log was developed based on the central objectives of the study, the research instrument and various responses elicited from the respondents. This process led to the development of final list of themes and sub-themes that are germane to the greater understanding of the topic of the research. After coding, sorting and theme identification, the generated qualitative data were analyzed using contents analysis method.

FINDINGS:

Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Data on socio-demographic profile of the respondents can be seen on Table 1 below. As presented on the table, about 41.2% of the sampled women were living in the rural areas, while 58.8% were urban dwellers. Data on age show that 926 (63.3%) of the sampled women were of age less than 30 years as at the time of the study. The remaining 536 (36.7%) were at least 30 years old. Data on educational level reveal that about 1 in every 13 (7.6%) of the women had not attended school at all. However, almost one-quarter (25.1%) had attended primary school, while 55.8% had secondary education. A little over a tenth (11.5%) of the women had received higher education. The information on occupational status shows that majority (73.2%) of the women were gainfully engaged in trade/craft work. However, a sizeable percentage (10.1%) of them work with governments as civil servants. About 5.4 per cent of the women work with local companies, 3.5 percent were professionals, 3.0 per cent were farmers, while about 4.9 per cent of them were unemployed as the time of the study.

Although, the study population consists of ever married women, elicited data on their marital stability status reveal that 1,283 (87.8%) of the marriages were stable without any form of dissolution. However, 114 (7.8%) of the women were separated, 51 (3.5%) of them were divorced, while about 14 (1.0%) had their marriages disrupted as a result of the death of their spouses (widowed). Empirical data on form of marriage of the women as presented on Table 1 show that majority of the marriages (60.9%) were monogamous in nature, while the remaining 39.1 per cent were polygynous in nature. The distribution of respondents by religious affiliation shows seemingly polarisation of religion in the study location as 47.7 per cent and 47.5 per cent of the respondents claimed to be Muslims and Christians respectively. However, 4.8 per cent of the respondents claimed to be practicing traditional religions.



Table 1: Percentage distribution of respondents by socio-demographic characteristics

| Variables/categories Percentage | Frequency | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| Place of Residence | | |
| Rural | 603 | 41.2 |
| Urban | 859 | 58.8 |
| Total | 1,462 | 100.0 |
| Age Group | | |
| 15 – 19 years | 161 | 11.0 |
| 20 – 24 years | 306 | 20.9 |
| 25 – 29 years | 459 | 31.4 |
| 30 – 34 years | 266 | 18.2 |
| 35 – 39 years | 154 | 10.5 |
| 40 – 44 years | 84 | 5.7 |
| 45 – 49 years | 32 | 2.2 |
| Total | 1,462 | 100.0 |
| Educational Level | | |
| None | 111 | 7.6 |
| Primary | 367 | 25.1 |
| Secondary | 816 | 55.8 |
| Higher | 168 | 11.5 |
| Total | 1,462 | 100.0 |
| Occupational Status | | |
| Trade/Craft Work | 1,070 | 73.2 |
| Farming | 44 | 3.0 |
| Wage Labour with Local Company | 79 | 5.4 |
| Civil Servant | 147 | 10.1 |
| Professional | 51 | 3.5 |
| Unemployed | 71 | 4.9 |
| Total | 1,462 | 100.0 |
| Marital Status | | |
| Married (Stable Union) | 1,283 | 87.8 |
| Separated | 114 | 7.8 |
| Divorced | 51 | 3.5 |
| Widow | 14 | 1.0 |
| Total | 1,462 | 100.0 |
| Form of Marriage | | |
| Monogamy | 891 | 60.9 |
| Polygyny | 571 | 39.1 |
| Total | 1,462 | 100.0 |
| Religious Affiliation | | |
| Christianity | 694 | 47.5 |
| Islam | 698 | 47.7 |
| Traditional | 70 | 4.8 |
| Total | 1,462 | 100.0 |

Husbands' socio-economic characteristics and post marriage residential pattern

Data on their husbands' characteristics and their post marriage residential patterns can be seen on Table 2. As presented on the table, the age distribution of the husbands show that 314 (21.5%) of respondents' husbands were of ages less than 30 years as at the time of the study, while the remaining 1,148 (78.5%) were at least 30 years old. The age differentials between the women and their spouses show that husbands are more likely to be older than their wives in the study location. The husbands' occupational status is also significantly different from their wives although majority of the husbands were also working in the informal sector of the economy. Specifically, 777 (53.1%) of the husbands were engaged in trading/craft work.



Table 2: Percentage distribution of respondents by their husbands' socio-economic characteristics

| Variables/categories | Frequency | |
|--|-----------|-------|
| Percentage | | |
| Husband Age Group | | |
| 15 – 19 years | 20 | 1.4 |
| 20 – 24 years | 76 | 5.2 |
| 25 – 29 years | 218 | 14.9 |
| 30 – 34 years | 310 | 21.2 |
| 35 – 39 years | 284 | 19.4 |
| 40 – 44 years | 219 | 15.0 |
| 45 – 49 years | 161 | 11.0 |
| 50 years and above | 174 | 11.9 |
| Total | 1,462 | 100.0 |
| Husband Occupational Status | | |
| Trade/Craft Work | 777 | 53.1 |
| Farming | 221 | 15.1 |
| Wage Labour with Local Company | 47 | 3.2 |
| Civil Servant | 248 | 17.0 |
| Professional | 147 | 10.1 |
| Unemployed | 22 | 1.5 |
| Total | 1,462 | 100.0 |
| Living Arrangement after Marriage | | |
| Living with Husband | 1,251 | 85.6 |
| Not Living with Husband | 205 | 14.0 |
| No Response | 6 | 0.4 |
| Total | 1,462 | 100.0 |

Furthermore, 248 (17.0%) of them were civil servants, 221 (15.1%) were farmers, 147 (10.1%) were professionals. About 22 (1.5%) of the husbands were unemployed compared with 71 (4.9%) among their wives. Information on post marriage residential arrangement reveals that 1,251 (85.6%) of the respondents were living with their husbands after the marriage, while 205 (14.0) stated that they were not living with their husbands after the marriage. It is important to note that 6 (0.4%) of the respondents did not respond to the question.

Parental socio-economic characteristics

Table 3 consists of some background characteristics on the parents of the respondents. As presented in the table, 598 (40.9%) of respondents' fathers had no formal education, 847 (57.9%) had primary education, while 17 (1.2%) had secondary education. All the respondents' fathers were working in the informal sector of the economy. Specifically, 572 (39.1%) of their fathers were farmers, 463 (31.7%) were engaged in craft work, while 437 (29.2%) were traders. Data on the place of residence of the parents of the respondents on Table 3 reveal that 990 (67.7%) of the respondents' parents reside in the rural areas, while 472 (32.3%) of them reside in urban areas. In addition, respondents parental form of marriage was largely monogamous as presented on Table 3. In particular, 771 (52.7%) of the respondents claimed that their parents had a monogamous union, while 691 (47.3%) of them said that their parents had the polygyny form of marriage.



Table 3: Percentage distribution of respondents by their parents' socio-economic characteristics

| Variables/categories | Percentage | Frequency | |
|---|------------|-----------|-------|
| Father's Level of Education | | | |
| None | | 598 | 40.9 |
| Primary | | 847 | 57.9 |
| Secondary | | 17 | 1.2 |
| Total | | 1,462 | 100.0 |
| Father's Occupation | | | |
| Trade | | 427 | 29.2 |
| Craft Work | | 463 | 31.7 |
| Farming | | 572 | 39.1 |
| Total | | 1,462 | 100.0 |
| Parents' Place of Residence | | | |
| Rural | | 990 | 67.7 |
| Urban | | 472 | 32.3 |
| Total | | 1,462 | 100.0 |
| Parental Form of Marriage | | | |
| Monogamy | | 771 | 52.7 |
| Polygyny | | 691 | 47.3 |
| Total | | 1,462 | 100.0 |
| Parents Ever Experienced Marital Dissolution due to Separation/Divorce | | | |
| Yes | | 133 | 9.1 |
| No | | 1,329 | 90.9 |
| Total | | 1,462 | 100.0 |
| Respondents Ever Experienced Marital Dissolution due to Separation/Divorce | | | |
| Yes | | 165 | 11.3 |
| No | | 1,297 | 88.7 |
| Total | | 1,462 | 100.0 |

Intergenerational pattern of marital dissolution due to separation or divorce

Data on the later part of Table 3 present information on the intergenerational pattern of marital dissolution by separation and divorce among the respondents and their parents. As presented in the table, 133 (9.1%) of their parents as against 165 (11.3%) of their daughters had experienced marital dissolution due to separation and divorce as at the time of the study. This information suggests a slight increase in marital dissolution among the daughters compared with their parents in the prevalence of marital dissolution due to separation and divorce. It is instructive to note that the proportion of marital dissolution among the Yoruba in the study location is higher than the national average of 2.9 per cent reported by the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey for ever married women in the child bearing age (15-49 years) across the five periods of data collection years (1990, 1999, 2003, 2008 and 2013) in the country.

Background characteristics and marital dissolution by separation or divorce

In order to have a clear understanding of the dynamics and various determinants of marital dissolution in the contemporary Yoruba society, this section examines the nexus between various background characteristics and marital dissolution by separation and divorce in the study location. In order to have a deeper understanding of the relationships, the analysis has been sub-divided into two sections using both bivariate and multivariate statistical analytical techniques. At the bivariate level, chi-square



statistical method was used to examine the initial relationships between background characteristics (i.e. respondents' characteristics, their husbands' characteristics and their parents' characteristics) and marital dissolution by separation and divorce. At the multivariate level, three logistics regression models were developed from the bivariate analysis. The rationale behind the two-level analysis was to determine if those characteristics that were significant at the bivariate level will also be statistically significant at multivariate level after controlling for other explanatory variables. The two levels of analysis are presented below respectively.

i.) Bivariate Analysis

a. Women's characteristics and marital dissolution by separation or divorce

The results of the bivariate chi-square analysis on women's characteristics and marital dissolution by separation or divorce can be seen on Table 4. The first analysis examines if there is a significant relationship between women's place of residence and marital dissolution by separation or divorce. The relationship is statistically significant with $\chi^2=20.633$; $df=1$, $p<0.001$ with a contingency coefficient of 0.119. Specifically, 14.4 per cent of women living in urban areas had experienced marital dissolution due to separation or divorce compared with 6.8 per cent of women living in rural areas. The chi-square analysis further examines if there is a significant relationship between women's age group and marital dissolution by separation or divorce. The relationship is statistically significant with $\chi^2=91.249$; $df=6$, $p<0.001$ with a contingency coefficient of 0.242. Specifically, 30.4 per cent of women within age group 15–19 years had experienced marital dissolution by separation or divorce compared with 20.2 per cent of women in age group 40–44years. The pattern of the relationship is inversely related in nature showing that the lower the age of the women, the higher the proportion of the women who have experienced marital dissolution due to separation or divorce. The next analysis on the table examines if there is a significant relationship between women's level of education and marital dissolution by separation or divorce in the study location. The relationship was found to be statistically significant with $\chi^2=19.847$; $df=3$, $p<0.001$ with a contingency coefficient of 0.116. Specifically, 22.5 per cent of women without any formal education had experienced marital dissolution due to separation or divorce compared with 7.1 per cent of women with higher education. The pattern of the relationship is also inversely related in nature showing that the lower the level of education, the higher the proportion of marital dissolution by separation or divorce in the study location.

Further analysis at bivariate level shows a significant relationship between women's occupational status and marital dissolution by separation and divorce among the respondents. The relationship is statistically significant with $\chi^2=27.400$; $df=5$, $p<0.001$ with a contingency coefficient of 0.136. Specifically, women working in the private sector (i.e. local company workers) and unemployed women are more likely to experience marital dissolution by separation and divorce compared with other occupational status more especially those women working in the civil service. The chi-square relationship between women's form of marriage and marital dissolution due to separation and divorce was also statistically significant with $\chi^2=138.902$; $df=1$, $p<0.001$ with a contingency coefficient of 0.295. In particular, 23.5 per cent of women in polygynous union had experienced marital dissolution due to separation or divorce compared with 3.5 per cent among women in monogamous union.



Table 4: Percentage distribution of respondents by socio-economic characteristics and marital dissolution status by divorce or separation

| Variables/categories | Marital Dissolution Status by Divorce or Separation | | Chi- |
|------------------------------------|---|-------|------------|
| | No Marital Dissolution square | N (%) | |
| Place of Residence 20.633*** | | | |
| Rural | 562 (93.2) | | 41 (6.8) |
| Urban | 735 (85.6) | | 124 (14.4) |
| Age Group 91.249*** | | | |
| 15 – 19 years | 112 (69.6) | | 49 (30.4) |
| 20 – 24 years | 270 (88.2) | | 36 (11.8) |
| 25 – 29 years | 440 (95.9) | | 19 (4.1) |
| 30 – 34 years | 238 (89.5) | | 28 (10.5) |
| 35 – 39 years | 142 (92.2) | | 12 (7.8) |
| 40 – 44 years | 67 (79.8) | | 17 (20.2) |
| 45 – 49 years | 28 (87.5) | | 4 (12.5) |
| Educational Level | | | 19.847*** |
| None | 86 (77.5) | | 25 (22.5) |
| Primary | 319 (86.9) | | 48 (13.1) |
| Secondary | 736 (90.2) | | 80 (9.8) |
| Higher | 156 (92.9) | | 12 (7.1) |
| Occupational Status 27.400*** | | | |
| Trade/Craft Work | 956 (89.3) | | 114 (13.1) |
| Farming | 38 (86.4) | | 6 (13.6) |
| Local Company Worker | 61 (77.2) | | 18 (22.8) |
| Civil Servant | 142 (96.6) | | 5 (3.4) |
| Professional | 44 (86.3) | | 7 (13.7) |
| Unemployed | 56 (78.9) | | 15 (21.1) |
| Form of Marriage | | | 138.902*** |
| Monogamy | 860 (96.5) | | 31 (3.5) |
| Polygyny | 437 (76.5) | | 134 (23.5) |
| Religious Affiliation 37.767*** | | | |
| Christianity | 652 (93.9) | | 42 (6.1) |
| Islam | 583 (83.5) | | 115 (16.5) |
| Traditional | 62 (88.6) | | 8 (11.4) |

*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001

There is also a significant statistical relationship between the religious affiliation of the women and marital dissolution by separation or divorce with $\chi^2=37.767$; $df=2$, $p<0.001$ with a contingency coefficient of 0.159. In particular, about 16.5 per cent of Muslim women and 11.4 per cent of Traditional women had experienced marital dissolution due to separation or divorce compared with 6.1% of Christian women. At the bivariate level of analysis, women’s place of residence, age group, educational level, occupational status, form of marriage and religious affiliation were statistically significant with marital dissolution due to separation and divorce even at the 99.9% confidence level.

b. Husbands’ characteristics and women marital dissolution by separation or divorce

The section examines the nexus between husbands’ characteristics and marital dissolution by separation or divorce in the study location and the results of the analysis



can be seen on Table 5. The first analysis examines if there is a significant relationship between respondents husbands' age group and marital dissolution by separation or divorce.

Table 5: Percentage distribution of respondents by their husbands' socio-economic characteristics and marital dissolution status by divorce or separation

| Variables/categories | Marital Dissolution Status by Divorce or Separation | | Chi-square |
|-----------------------------------|---|------------------------------|------------|
| | No Marital Dissolution square | Marital Dissolution N (%) | |
| Husband Age Group | | | |
| 46.724*** | | | |
| 15 – 19 years | 20 (100.0) | 0 (0.0) | |
| 20 – 24 years | 65 (85.5) | 11 (14.5) | |
| 25 – 29 years | 205 (94.0) | 13 (6.0) | |
| 30 – 34 years | 274 (88.4) | 36 (11.6) | |
| 35 – 39 years | 268 (94.4) | 16 (5.6) | |
| 40 – 44 years | 198 (90.4) | 21 (9.6) | |
| 45 – 49 years | 130 (80.7) | 31 (19.3) | |
| 50 years and above | 137 (78.7) | 37 (21.3) | |
| Husband Occupational Status | | | 7.956 |
| Trade/Craft Work | 697 (89.7) | 80 (13.1) | |
| Farming | 189 (85.5) | 32 (14.5) | |
| Local Company Worker 40 (85.1) | | 7 (14.9) | |
| Civil Servant | 227 (91.5) | 21 (8.5) | |
| Professional | 126 (85.7) | 21 (14.3) | |
| Unemployed | 18 (81.8) | 4 (18.2) | |
| Living Arrangement after Marriage | | | 922.420*** |
| Living with Husband | 1,237 (98.9) | 14 (1.1) | |
| Not Living with Husband 54 (26.3) | | 151 (73.7) | |

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

The outcome of the analysis shows that relationship is statistically significant with $\chi^2=46.724$; $df=7$, $p<0.001$ with a contingency coefficient of 0.176. In particular, 21.3 per cent of the husbands with age 50 years and above had experienced marital dissolution by separation or divorce compared with other age groups specifically 6.0 per cent of husbands in age group 25–29 years. The pattern of the relationship is positively related in nature showing that the higher the age of the husbands, the higher the marital dissolution due to separation or divorce. The next analysis on the table examines if there is a significant relationship between husbands' occupational status and marital dissolution by separation and divorce among the respondents. The relationship is not statistically significant with $\chi^2=7.956$; $df=5$, $p>0.05$ with a contingency coefficient of 0.074 although husbands who were unemployed are more likely to experience marital dissolution by separation and divorce compared with other occupational status. However, the chi-square relationship between husbands' living arrangement with their wives after marriage and marital dissolution due to separation and divorce was statistically significant with $\chi^2=922.420$; $df=1$, $p<0.001$ with a contingency coefficient of 0.623. In particular, 73.7 per cent of husbands who lived separately with their wives for whatever reason had experienced marital dissolution due to separation or divorce compared with 1.1 per cent among husbands who lived together with their wives after marriage. In all, out of the 3 husbands' characteristics examined in the study, only 2 were statistically significant at the bivariate level of analysis.



c. Parental characteristics and women marital dissolution by separation or divorce

The results of the bivariate chi-square analysis on parental characteristics and women marital dissolution by separation or divorce can be seen on Table 6. The first analysis examines if there is a significant relationship between the fathers' educational level and women's marital dissolution by separation or divorce.

Table 6: Percentage distribution of respondents by their parents' socio-economic characteristics and marital dissolution status by divorce or separation

| Variables/categories | Marital Dissolution Status by Divorce or Separation | | Chi-square |
|--|---|---------------------|------------|
| | No Marital Dissolution | Marital Dissolution | |
| | N (%) | N (%) | |
| Father's Educational Level | | | 49.426*** |
| None | 489 (81.8) | 109 (18.2) | |
| Primary | 791 (93.4) | 56 (6.6) | |
| Secondary | 17 (100.0) | 0 (0.0) | |
| Father's Occupational Status | | | 14.537** |
| Trade | 397 (93.0) | 30 (7.0) | |
| Craft Work | 393 (84.9) | 70 (15.1) | |
| Farming | 507 (88.6) | 65 (11.4) | |
| Parents' Place of Residence | | | 6.363* |
| Rural | 864 (87.3) | 126 (12.7) | |
| Urban | 433 (91.7) | 39 (8.3) | |
| Parental Form of Marriage | | | 13.283*** |
| Monogamy | 706 (91.6) | 65 (8.4) | |
| Polygyny | 591 (85.5) | 100 (14.5) | |
| Parents Ever Experienced Marital Dissolution | | | 43.663*** |
| Yes | 95 (71.4) | 38 (28.6) | |
| No | 1,202 (90.4) | 127 (9.6) | |

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

The relationship is statistically significant with $\chi^2=49.426$; $df=2$, $p<0.001$ with a contingency coefficient of 0.181. Specifically, 18.2 per cent of women whose fathers had no formal education had experienced marital dissolution due to separation or divorce compared with 6.6 per cent of women whose fathers had primary education. None of the women whose fathers had secondary education ever experienced marital dissolution due to separation or divorce. The chi-square analysis on the fathers' occupational status and the women's marital dissolution is also statistically significant with $\chi^2=14.537$; $df=2$, $p<0.01$ with a contingency coefficient of 0.099. In particular, 15.1 per cent of women whose fathers were working as Craft workers had experienced marital dissolution by separation or divorce compared with 7.0 per cent of women whose fathers were traders in the study location. There is a significant relationship between the parents' place of residence and women's marital dissolution by separation or divorce. The relationship is statistically significant with $\chi^2=6.363$; $df=1$, $p<0.05$ with a contingency coefficient of 0.066. Specifically, 12.7 per cent of women whose parents were living in rural areas had experienced marital dissolution due to separation or divorce compared with 8.3 per cent of women whose parents were living in the urban areas. The chi-square relationship between the parental form of marriage and women's



marital dissolution due to separation and divorce was also statistically significant with $\chi^2=13.283$; $df=1$, $p<0.001$ with a contingency coefficient of 0.095. Specifically, 14.5 per cent of women in who their parents were in polygynous union had experienced marital dissolution due to separation or divorce compared with 8.4 per cent among women who their parents were in monogamous union. There is also a significant statistical relationship between women who their parents had experienced marital dissolution compared with their counterparts who their parents had never experienced marital dissolution on the level of marital dissolution due to separation and divorce with $\chi^2=43.663$; $df=1$, $p<0.001$ with a contingency coefficient of 0.170. In particular, about 28.6 per cent of those women who their parents had experienced marital dissolution had experienced marital dissolution due to separation or divorce compared with 9.6% of women who their parents had never experienced marital dissolution.

ii.) Multivariate Analysis

d. Logistic regression models on women, their husbands and parents characteristics and marital dissolution by separation or divorce

Three logistic regression models were developed at the multivariate level in order to examine the effects of the background variables on the level of marital dissolution due to separation and divorce in the study location. The first model examined the effects of the women (i.e. the respondents) characteristics on the level of marital dissolution due to separation or divorce. The second model explored the effect of the husbands' characteristics on the level of marital dissolution due to separation and divorce, while the third model considered the relationships between parental characteristics and the level of marital dissolution due to separation or divorce in the study location. Model 1 examined the effects of the respondents' personal characteristics on the level of marital dissolution due to separation and divorce and the results of the multivariate logistic regression analysis can be seen on Table 7. The findings on the table show only 3 out of the 6 personal characteristics of the respondents were significant at the multivariate level of analysis. The significant variables are place of residence, age group and form of marriage. In particular, there is a significant relationship between women's place of residence and marital dissolution by separation or divorce at $p<0.001$. Specifically, the odds ratio from the model shows that women that reside in rural areas were about 0.438 times (CI: 0.286-0.670) as likely as women that reside in urban areas to have experienced marital dissolution by separation or divorce. The age group of the women is also statistically significant with marital dissolution by separation or divorce at the multivariate level. The odds ratio from the model 1 shows that women in age group 15-19 years were about 8.150 (CI: 2.351-28.251) times as likely as women in age group 45-49 years to have experienced marital dissolution by separation or divorce. The variations between women in other age groups were not statistically significant even at 0.05 level of significance. Women's form of marriage is also statistically significant with marital dissolution by separation or divorce in the study location. The odds ratio from the model shows that women in monogamous union were about 0.125 (CI: 0.079-0.199) times as likely as women in polygynous union to experience marital dissolution by separation or divorce.

Model 2 on Table 8 presents the multivariate logistics regression on husbands' characteristics and women's marital dissolution by separation or divorce among the respondents in the study location. The two variables (husbands' age group and living



arrangement) that were significant at bivariate level were also significant at multivariate level with $p < 0.001$ and $p < 0.01$. Worthy to note is that husbands' occupational status was not statistically significant at the multivariate level as presented in the table. Husbands' age group was statistically significant with the women's marital dissolution by separation or divorce. Particularly, the odds ratio shows that women whose husbands were in age group 50 years and above were about 17.283 (CI: 4.875-61.264) times as likely as women whose husbands were in age group 15-19 years to experience marital dissolution by separation or divorce at $p < 0.001$.

Table 7: Multivariate logistic regression model of the effects of selected respondents' personal characteristics on marital dissolution due to divorce or separation in Osun State, Nigeria.

| Variables/categories | Model 1 Odds ratio (C.I) |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Place of Residence | |
| Rural | 0.438 (0.286-0.670) *** |
| Urban (RC) | 1.000 |
| Age Group | |
| 15-19 years | 8.150 (2.351-28.251) ** |
| 20-24 years | 2.583 (0.769-8.675) |
| 25-29 years | 0.912 (0.264-3.144) |
| 30-34 years | 1.956 (0.584-6.550) |
| 35-39 years | 1.229 (0.338-4.464) |
| 40-44 years | 2.151 (0.623-7.417) |
| 45-49 years (RC) | 1.000 |
| Educational Level | |
| None (RC) | 1.000 |
| Primary | 1.000 (0.246-4.065) |
| Secondary | 0.791 (0.216-2.899) |
| Higher | 0.436 (0.111-1.714) |
| Occupational Status | |
| Trade/Craft Work (RC) | 1.000 |
| Farming | 0.796 (0.367-1.725) |
| Local Company Workers | 1.695 (0.453-6.343) |
| Civil Servant | 0.355 (0.080-1.588) |
| Professional | 1.233 (0.467-3.254) |
| Unemployed | 1.471 (0.267-8.088) |
| Form of Marriage | |
| Monogamy | 0.125 (0.079-0.199) *** |
| Polygyny (RC) | 1.000 |
| Religious Affiliation | |
| Christianity | 0.869 (0.356-2.121) |
| Islam | 1.362 (0.579-3.205) |
| Traditional (RC) | 1.000 |

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Women who were living in a separate apartment away from their husbands after the marriage were also more likely to experience marital dissolution by separation or divorce compared with women that were living in the same apartment with their husbands after the marriage. The odds ratio of this relationship shows that women who were living with their husbands after the marriage were about 0.001 (CI: 0.001-0.004) times as likely as women who were not living with their husbands after marriage to experience marital dissolution by separation or divorce at $p < 0.001$.



The model 3 on Table 8 consists of the multivariate logistics regression on parents' characteristics and women's marital dissolution by separation or divorce among the respondents in the study location. The five variables tested and significant at the bivariate level were also analysed at the multivariate level. At the end of the analysis, only three out of the five variables were statistically significant with $p < 0.001$, $p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.05$ at the multivariate level. The significant variables are: fathers' occupational status, parental form of marriage and parents' ever experienced marital dissolution.

Table 8: Multivariate logistic regression models of the effects of selected respondents husbands and parents' characteristics on marital dissolution due to divorce or separation in Osun State, Nigeria.

| Variables/categories | Model 2 Odds ratio (C.I) | Model 3 Odds ratio (C.I) |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Husband Age Group | | |
| 15-19 years (RC) | 1.000 | |
| 20-24 years | 0.934 (0.379-2.300) | |
| 25-29 years | 0.000 (0.000-0.000) | |
| 30-34 years | 0.912 (0.319-2.603) | |
| 35-39 years | 0.274 (0.101-0.741) ** | |
| 40-44 years | 0.847 (0.270-2.660) | |
| 45-49 years | 3.261 (0.499-21.330) | |
| 50 years and above | 17.283 (4.875-61.264) *** | |
| Husband Occupational Status | | |
| Trade/Craft Work (RC) | 1.000 | |
| Farming | 0.708 (0.023-21.856) | |
| Local Company Workers | 0.971 (0.030-31.641) | |
| Civil Servant | 0.472 (0.016-13.701) | |
| Professional | 0.578 (0.018-18.302) | |
| Unemployed | 1.030 (0.027-39.296) | |
| Living Arrangement after Marriage | | |
| Living with Husband | 0.001 (0.001-0.004) *** | |
| Not Living with Husband (RC) | 1.000 | |
| Father's Educational level | | |
| None (RC) | | 1.000 |
| Primary | | 0.003 (0.000-0.009) |
| Secondary | | 0.001 (0.000-0.005) |
| Father's Occupational Status | | |
| Trade | | 0.686 (0.427-1.103) |
| Craft Work | | 1.568 (1.069-2.301) * |
| Farming (RC) | | 1.000 |
| Parents' Place of Residence | | |
| Rural (RC) | | 1.000 |
| Urban | | 0.976 (0.641-1.486) |
| Parental Form of Marriage | | |
| Monogamy | | 0.583 (0.413-0.824) ** |
| Polygyny (RC) | | 1.000 |
| Parents Ever Experienced Marital Dissolution | | |
| Yes | | 3.296 (2.127-5.108) *** |
| No (RC) | | 1.000 |

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$



The model shows that the women whose fathers' works were crafts were more likely to experience marital dissolution by separation or divorce than other groups. Particularly, the odds ratio shows that women whose fathers' works were craft were about 1.568 (CI: 1.069-2.301) times as likely as women whose fathers' works were farming to experience marital dissolution by separation or divorce at $p < 0.05$. In addition, it is important to note that women whose parents' form of marriage was polygynous are more likely to experience marital dissolution by separation or divorce in the study location. The odds ratio from the model shows that women whose parents' form of marriage was monogamous were about 0.583 (CI: 0.413-0.824) times as likely as women whose parents' form of marriage was polygynous to experience marital dissolution by separation or divorce. Women whose parents had experienced marital dissolution due to separation or divorce were more likely to experience marital dissolution by separation or divorce compared with women whose parents had never experienced marital dissolution. The odds ratio of this relationship shows that women whose parents had experienced marital dissolution were about 3.296 (CI: 2.127-5.108) times as likely as women whose parents had never experienced marital dissolution to have personally experienced marital dissolution by separation or divorce at $p < 0.001$.

vi. Interplay between background factors and proximate determinants of marital dissolution by separation or divorce

The Contingency Coefficients of the three background variables tested above ranged between 0.066 and 0.623. This suggests that the three factors (personal, spousal and parental) account only for between 6.6% to 62.3% of the factors that are responsible for marital dissolution among couples in the study location. There are about 40.0% other explanatory factors which must be explored in order to have a comprehensive knowledge of those factors affecting marital stability in the study location. Consequently, efforts were made in this section to examine other factors using qualitative research methods. Findings of these methods revealed that the three background factors mediate through another tripartite nuptiality components/factors which are the proximate determinants of marital dissolution. These factors are male impotence, mode of mate selection, sexual deprivation, cruelty of one of the spouses, childlessness, increasing poverty, adultery and infidelity, growing incompatibility between spouses or between one of them and their in-laws. These factors can be classified into tripartite nuptiality components: i) nature and process of mate selection, ii) quality of the personality and character of the spouses and iii) products/context of the union. Each of these components was examined carefully in this section.

a.) Nature and process of mate selection:

Comparing the nature and process of mate selection between modern and traditional Yoruba settings, it has been noted in the literature that "marriage is an arrangement between two families in the traditional settings. The families of the man and the woman who are going to be married are as keenly interested in the marriage as the individuals directly concerned. This is because they want to ensure that the choice is socially approved, that is, none of the afflictions such as physical and mental disorders (like epilepsy, leprosy, lunacy and so forth) are present on either side, considering the fact that the growth of the lineage is the concern of all, and anything that might deplete it must be forestalled". In addition, it has been observed that there are three stages before marriage is contracted in the traditional Yoruba society. These are the involvement of



spouses' families or early intimation, bride price payment and finally, the marriage. The effect of these three stages is to legalise the marriage and to legitimise the offspring of the wedlock. However, in the modern time, especially among the young population, these stages are totally ignored, thus the phenomenon of single-parenthood is on the increase among women in the contemporary Yoruba society. Responses from qualitative respondents indicate a significant relationship between the mode of mate selection and marital stability in the present Yoruba society. An adult male community leader in Osogbo during an in-depth interview session explained the effects of the mode of mate selection on marital stability in the contemporary Yoruba society in the following way:

As you can see, we have a high rate of marital instability in our society in the contemporary time compared with what was obtainable in the traditional settings. The main reason for the upsurge in the rates of divorce and separation is the wrong process of mate selection. For example, marriage then was not based on love as we have it today. By then, couples can only talk of love after and in marriage and there was a high rate of marital harmony and stability. But today, people meet on the road, inside commercial vehicles, and social/commercial gathering and they will claim they love themselves. Before you know it, they have started visiting, and consequently living together with concomitant pregnancy without proper involvement of family members. Some of them nowadays will not even do the expected "introduction" where the family of the man and the family of the woman can know themselves. When the problems start, they have no safety net within the two families that can help to preserve their conjugal union. Now we can see so many young women in our community with one or two children living alone as a result of divorce and separation.

This view was corroborated by the response of a key informant respondent who is a divorcee in Ejigbo. She explained the scenario leading to her divorce in the following way:

I met my ex-husband in a commercial vehicle when I was travelling to Ibadan from Ejigbo in the year 1998. He told me that I was beautiful and will like to have me as his wife and mother of his children. I initially rejected his offer, but because of his perseverance I eventually agreed to be his girlfriend. Both of us were living in Ibadan, I was staying with my sister and he was living alone. We dated for two years before I was pregnant for him. My family and relatives did not approve the relationship because they observed him to be unserious person. But because of the pregnancy and love I have for him, I have no alternative option than to marry him. Five years after the marriage, he changed completely from the person I know. He will not take care of the home, no money to feed the children and he became extremely violent. My family tried to intervene, but he did not listen to anyone of them. Actually, he had no respect for any of my family members. Supposing he married me in a normal way, he wouldn't have been able to disrespect my parents and other members of my family the way he did. When the situation was serious I had to divorce him, since it is better to be alive rather than to be a dead woman because of maltreatment from a man that lacks respect.



The above expressions during the in-depth and key informant interviews revealed the nexus between the nature and process of mate selection, growing incompatibility between spouses or between one of them and their in-laws and marital instability in the contemporary Yoruba society.

b.) Quality of the personality and character of the spouses:

Individual personality and character of spouses in conjugal union play a significant role on the prevalence of marital stability in the contemporary Yoruba society. A male Christian leader in Ila-Orangun during the in-depth interview explained that the personality of each of the spouses will go a long way if any conjugal union will survive in the contemporary time. According to him:

Most of the social vices and deviant behaviours exhibited by many couples in the contemporary time were not rampant in the traditional setting and these are the reasons why separation and divorce are now becoming the major features of marriage in the present days. People are far away from God, the process of socialisation has been distorted and the expected fear of God and social values are now things of the past. During the marriage counselling, we hear so many things that are difficult to believe. Wife and husband denying themselves sex, infidelity and adultery are on the increase, couples are no more faithful to themselves in all ramifications and some homes are filled with different forms of intimate partner violence. In fact, many marriages/families are like empty shells without any element of love. Considering the nature of this modern generation, separation and divorce are now becoming rampant.

Another Islamic male leader in Oke-Ila, in line with the above explanation retorted that:

We are already in the end of time as indicated in the holy Quran by the prophet Mohamed. Wives will not respect their husbands, husbands will not love their wives and things will turn upside-down as you can see now. Satan is ruling the heart of people that is why a woman/man who is legitimately married will have concubines and extra-marital affairs when the partner is alive and spouses will be wicked to themselves. People don't have the fear of Allah in their minds again.

A female key informant who separated and abandoned her marital home and decided to live in separate apartment away from her husband in Bode-Osi explicates the reason for her action in the following way:

I love my home and my children, but my husband is wicked. He usually beats me with any material he is able to lay his hand upon. He has given me different marks on my body. The best thing to do was what I did, to leave him. Let him go and marry another woman that is ready to die. He usually consumes alcohol which makes him to lose his senses and when that happens, he can kill. I need my life to care for my children and I pray to God to see my grandchildren. It will not be expedient to stay with him until he kills me.



The above responses depict that fact that separation and divorce in the contemporary Yoruba society are as a result of sexual deprivation, cruelty of one of the spouses, adultery and infidelity.

c.) Products/context of the union:

In the Nigerian traditional settings, childbearing and rearing are the main motivation for marriage, and ideally the first child is expected during the first year of marriage. Soon after marriage, couples face pressures from members of the two families and communities to have children. Such pressures could be behavioural, or in the form of comments and innuendoes, directed especially on the bride, but also on the bridegroom (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1997:26). In fact, anxiety about having a child soon after marriage often leads people to consult with seers or mediums whose medicine, divination or sacrifices are thought to break the infertility curse, or placate the ancestors or the god of fertility. In addition, it has been argued that both men and women in the traditional Yoruba society derive social, moral, economic and psychological advantages and satisfaction from having many children (Oni, 1996). Responses from key-informant respondents show that childlessness and increasing poverty are central to the products and context factors promoting marital instability in the study location. A woman that has divorced her first husband and got married to another one explained the main reason behind her behaviour as follows:

I got married to my first husband for ten good years but the union was not fruitful because I was unable to conceive and give birth to a child for the duration of the union. We tried all what we know and humanly possible to no avail. He was a loving and caring husband, but in our culture marriage without fruit of the womb cannot be regarded as successful. Two of us were pressurised by our family members to divorce each other. I am just four years in my second and current union, and I have already had two children. Although, my current husband is not as caring and loving like my first husband but I am happy because of the rewards of children.

In another context, a woman during the key-informant interview in Telemu stated that she left her first union because of poverty and suffering associated with the union. According to her:

I gave birth to four children for my first husband before I divorced him. He was extremely poor and in fact he was wallowing in poverty. No adequate care financially and materially for me and the children. We hardly ate a meal in a day and I used to serve as daily labourer with a food vendor before I could take care of myself and children. In the process, I met my current husband that promised to take care of me and my children. I had to divorce my first husband because of poverty. My current husband is a farmer and I have given birth to two children for him. Currently, we can eat a three square meal and we are comfortable. It is not good to marry a poor man; I nearly died in his house.

The above identified factors: i) nature and process of mate selection, ii) quality of the personality and character of the spouses and iii) products/context of the union which are endogenous and exogenous in nature produced marital tensions which usually lead to the problem of marital incompatibility. Marital incompatibility consequently leads to a strong desire and aspiration for spousal homogeneity in terms of personality, character,



age, educational level, religious affiliation, social and economic status. This desire, aspiration and quiet searching will ultimately result into separation or divorce among ever married women in the contemporary Yoruba society.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study reveal an inter-generational increase in marital dissolution due to separation and divorce. Specifically, while 9.1 per cent of marital dissolution by separation or divorce occurred among the mothers, 11.3 per cent of their daughters had reported the same experience. Furthermore, it was discovered in the study location that women who their parents had experienced marital dissolution are more likely to experience marital dissolution compared with their counterparts who their parents had never experienced marital dissolution. This finding corroborates previous studies which state that children who come from divorced families are also more likely to get divorced (Amato and DeBoer, 2001; Tallman et al., 2001). An interpretation of these findings is that parents who experienced marital dissolution send a strong signal that doing so is an acceptable alternative, an alternative that their children are particularly likely to adopt if their own marriage shows a low level of happiness (Wolfinger, 2005:27-30). In other words, children of divorced parents are less willing to sacrifice marital happiness for marital stability.

The study reveals the significant interplay of three factors (personal, spousal and parental) as significant background determinants of marital dissolution in the contemporary Yoruba society. Personal factors that show significant relationships with marital dissolution are place of residence, age group, educational level, employment status, and form of marriage. Specifically, women living in urban areas experienced marital dissolution more compared with those ones living in rural areas. Marital dissolution is more common among women within age group 15–19 years compared with women in higher age groups. The pattern of the relationship is inversely related in nature showing that the lower the age of the women, the higher the proportion of the women who have experienced marital dissolution. Furthermore, women in polygynous union had high marital dissolution compared with women in monogamous union. Also, unemployed women are more likely to experience marital dissolution compared with employed women working in the civil service. These findings are similar to Goode's (1965) conclusion which recognised that divorce occurs often among people in particular situations and with particular backgrounds such as living in urban areas, getting married between sixteen to nineteen years of age and married after a short period of acquaintance or after a short engagement, and that their background are dissimilar.

In addition, this study discovered a significant relationship between women's level of education and marital dissolution in the study location. The pattern of the relationship is inversely related in nature showing that the lower the level of education of the women, the higher the proportion of marital dissolution. This finding is contrary to Adedokun's (1998) conclusion which states that the higher the level of education, the higher the incidence of divorce and separation. It is worthy to state that Adedokun's study focused mainly on urban dwellers in Lagos metropolis, Nigeria. According to her, the reason why there is a high incidence of divorce among the women of reproductive age is that, the educated women are more likely to embrace new ideas about marriage. She stressed the point that, as the passion of sexual attraction may emerge; spouses may wish to end an unexciting marriage in favour of a relationship that will provide a renewed excitement. Adedokun however, observed that increasing participation of educated women in the labour force may have reduced the extent to which they are dependent on men.



The study also found a number of husband's characteristics that promote marital instability. Specifically, women whose husbands were unemployed are more likely to experience marital dissolution compared with other women with employed husbands. Spousal living arrangement is also very significant as a high proportion of women that reported that their husbands lived in a separate apartment/area experienced high marital dissolution compared with women lived with their husbands in the same apartment/area after their marriage. The study discovered significant relationships between parents' place of residence, form of marriage and women marital dissolution. The empirical data generated in the study show that women who their parents were living in rural areas experienced high marital dissolution compared with women who their parents were living in the urban areas. Also women who their parents were in polygynous union experienced high marital dissolution compared with women who their parents were in a monogamous union.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

The generated data in the study show the interplay of the three background factors (personal, spousal and parental) mediate through a tripartite nuptiality components which are proximate determinants of marital dissolution namely i) nature and process of mate selection, ii) quality of the character and personality of the spouses and iii) products/context of the union to affect marital stability. These endogenous and exogenous factors produce marital tensions and the problem of marital incompatibility which invariably and usually lead to a strong desire and aspiration for spousal homogamy in terms of age, educational level, religious affiliation, social and economic status which result into separation or divorce among ever married women in the contemporary Yoruba society. Inability to meet these desires lead to marital dissolution either by separation or divorce. On the basis of the above findings, the following interventions are recommended: 1.) Nigeria, where Yoruba society is domicile, is a transitional society with many social and economic challenges that have direct effect on marital stability. Some of these problems are traditional practices that are against women. One of such problems is domestic violence against women. With globalisation, modern technology and great awareness through print and electronic media including social media across the globe, many of such domestic abuse are becoming evident in Yoruba society due to quick and prompt reporting. On the basis of the tenet of universal human rights declaration, abusive nuptial relationship is bad and should be discouraged totally in all cultures. Consequently, women and men alike should not be coerced to remain in such life threatened relationship. In order to stem the observed inter-generational increase in the level of marital dissolution due to separation or divorce in the study location, efforts should be put together to reduce to barest minimum or to eradicate completely the issue of domestic violence among couples. Thus, pragmatic programmes should be put together by government ministries, departments and agencies, national and international development agencies, NGOs and CBOs working on marital harmony in the region. The interventions of these state and non-state actors should focus on the following: total discouragement of early marriage and polygynous relationships among women. This strategy will reduce to a barest minimum all forms of marital abuse and it will promote harmonious nuptial relationships in the study location. Furthermore, community education should emphasis mutual respect among couples. This will invariably engender marital harmony and stability. 2.) The living arrangement of couples after marriage should be encouraged to be together as couples living in a separate apartment after marriage are more likely to experience marital dissolution than those who live together immediately after the consummation of their marital unions. 3.) At the proximate level, mate selection should be guided by marriage counsellors. This



will ultimately minimise the incidence of marital incompatibility among couples in the study location in terms of age, educational level, religion, social class and economic status. In addition, it will reduce the level of marital tension and associated marital dissolution among the Yoruba people of South-western, Nigeria.

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