COMPARISON OF IMPLICATIONS OF CHILDLESSNESS AMONG CHRISTIAN COUPLES OF THE *NONGO U KRISTU U I SER U SHA TAR* (NKST CHURCH) IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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FEBRUARY, 2020

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis entitled, 'Comparison of implications of childlessness among Christian Couples of the *Nongo u Kristu u iSer u Sha Ta*r (NKST church) in Benue state, Nigeria' was carried out by me in the Department of Arts and Social Science Education under the supervision of; Prof. J.N. Kwasau, Rev. Fr. Prof.P.B.Tanko and Rev.Fr. Prof. J.H. Mamman. The information derived from the literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of reference provided. No part of this thesis has previously been presented for another degree or diploma in any university to the knowledge of the researcher.

_____ _____

Christopher TerandeANNGER Date

CERTIFICATION

This thesis entitled COMPARISON OF IMPLICATIONS OF CHILDLESSNESS AMONG CHRISTIAN COUPLES OF THE *NONGO U KRISTU U I SER U SHA TA*R (NKST CHURCH) IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIAby Christopher Terande ANNGER meets the regulations governing the award of Doctor of Philosophy Degree (Ph.D) of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and is approved for its contribution to knowledge.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wife, Lois Annger, our children: Delight Tersen and Destiny Terande, and my mother, Racheal IyueAnnger.

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on comparison of implications of childlessness among Christian Couples of the *Nongo u Kristu u iSer u Sha Ta*r (NKST church) in Benue state, Nigeria. The pain associated with childlessness is a concern throughout the world and particularly in African societies and the church which believes so much in the biblical command of God to Adam and Eve to multiply and fill the earth. The social, cultural and biblical factors attached to children make childless couples go through intense pain, loss of faith, anger and frustration. This research is therefore carried out with the specific objectives to investigate the implications of childlessness on the social life of Christian married couples in NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria. Investigate the implications of childlessness of Christian couples on the growth of the NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria. Survey design was used in the research and the target population reasonably reached. Their views were collected and analyzed.The total population for this study was 517 childless members of the NKST church in Benue. Census sampling technique was used since the population was small. The instruments used to generate information from respondents for this research were questionnaire and interview. After analysis of the data, the findings therefore, are presented as follows;

It was discovered by the researcher that childless wives suffer in the hands of their husband's relations, these women were totally disrespected and treated as outcasts as presented on table 7 that shows the mean of 2.87 as the highest. The findings on the growth of the church in Benue shows that when couples procreate, the church also increases its membership; reversibly, the church suffers numerically as shown by the highest mean of 3.31 in table 11. From the findings of this study, it is recommended that, major stake holders in the Christian community should lead in a crusade against ungodly

cultural tendencies like reproach, condemnation and shame that sometimes left these couples with no option but withdrawal from the public on account of their childlessness.

Distressed and dissatisfied life from childless couples should be discouraged through the use of biblical teaching in church sermons, workshops and seminars. The NKST church in Benue state should also provide medical information and or assistance to the childless couples from time to time.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

NKST: *Nongo u Krist u iSer u Sha Tar* It's an acronym in Tiv which is translated as Universal Reformed Christian Church

Childlessness: State of having no children after two years of marriage.

Christian couples: Christian couples are those who are baptized and married legitimately in the church before the church pastor.

Male: This refers to men or sex that fertilizes eggs, and does not produce babies

Female: This means women or sex that bears offspring

Literate: Someone that can read and write.

Illiterate: Someone who cannot read nor write.

Employed: Any person that has a pay job.

Unemployed: Any without a job but available for work.

Rural: Areas which are not towns or cities. They are mainly farming areas.

Urban: This is an area where many people live together and work together. There are cities.

Youth: A period of life between eighteen years to forty years.

Adult: A period of life between forty years and above.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The command by God to Adam and Eve at creation is to increase and multiply. In Genesis 9:1, God make child bearing one of the essential and blessed part of marriage. However not all Christian marriages are blessed with a child or children. Seen in biblical times certain marriages were childless (Genesis 20:18; Levticus.20:21 & Luke 23:29). Childlessness is a serious challenge and life stressor among childless couples in the *Nongo u Kristu u iSer u sha Tar* (NKST) Church in Benue State.

The knowledge about the command by God to procreate fashion the affected couples wandering whether they are truly loved by God or not. In Genesis 1: 28 “God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it”. This command was given to the first family established by God. The family therefore is the oldest institution on the surface of the earth, dating back from the time of creation in the Garden of Eden.

In Genesis 2:18 God said “it is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him”. Children are legitimately brought into the world through the family hence, it is through the marriage platform that procreation takes place legally. Therefore, it is the general expectation of every married couple, that it is blessed with a child or children. Child bearing is good and parenthood is celebrated by many cultures and societies hence the Psalmist says: "Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord. The fruit of the womb is his reward. Like arrows in the hand of the warrior, so are the children of one's youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them . . ." (Psalm 127:3-5a). It is important to note that "God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under

law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive the full rights of sons" (Galatians 4:4). That is, God chose to use the process of procreation to bring his Son into the world, through the virgin (Mary). It is with this biblical position and understanding that childlessness becomes very painful and stressful for the affected couples. The teaching of the bible is very clear that children are blessings from God and childlessness is seen as a curse. As recorded in the Bible, Abraham and Sarah, Samson's parents, Hannah and Elkanah in the Old Testament and Elisabeth and Zechariah in the New Testament experienced childlessness and suffered humiliations of various kinds.

The desire to have children arises from both the biblical and traditional world-view and value system where children occupy a very important place and are greatly cherished in the family. This desire to have biological children is however sometimes, impeded by one reason or another. Mbiti (1969) notes that it's God who gives children. Therefore conception in the African mind, is thus, not merely the result of the coming together of a man and a woman during sexual intercourse, but rather, it is the result of blessings from God and the ancestors. Every individual is the outcome of human act, God's creation and ancestral blessing. Procreation is from this standpoint, taken as a central requirement of marriage while childlessness is abhorred.

The researcher observed that in some societies in Nigeria, marriage and procreation are synonymous. Marriage is not fully consummated until the wife has given birth. Among the Tivs for instance, the husband of a childless woman is constantly asked by his people whether his wife is 'good'. Meaning that, a childless woman is not a good woman and can only be traditionally and culturally good when she has children. For these reasons, in most African societies, unhappy is the couple that has not been blessed with a child or children. Childlessness is a common problem in Benue State among Christians in the NKST Church as most couple feel so frustrated, confused and in some cases such

couples doubt and question the power of God: this situation can be so challenging that it affects the faith of the Christian couples.

Generally, Benue State where this research is carried out is largely a Christian community with over 250,000 members from the NKST Church, and approximately one percent (1%) of childless members (NKST secretariat, 2017). No doubt therefore, that when couple experience childlessness, it increases frustration, doubt, discrimination and humiliation which eventually leads to separation and divorce. Failure in addressing problems of childlessness may bring about decline in the zeal the people have for the Lord and doubts may take over the mind of childless couples in the NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The pain associated with childlessness is a concern throughout the world and particularly in African societies. Children are regarded as great treasure to their parents, relations and the immediate community. Childless couples are constantly under stress, frustration and disappointment. They loss respect and most times suffer ridicule. They are always tensed and sorrowful. Childlessness causes constant fights, misunderstanding and suspicion in the marriage and sex becomes unfulfilling. Infertility is a serious problem in the Nigerian context because must often marriages are threatened with divorce, separation and polygamy.

Report from NKST Church Women Fellowship Conference (2016) shows that the number of childless couples is tremendously on the increase in the Church. The church as part of the larger society is affected hence the need for this research. The church is made up of Christian families, therefore, when Christian homes are united, the Church is united but when Christian families no longer live in peace, the church is affected, and

one of the problems that brings about disunity in Christian families is childlessness. Childlessness among Christian couples causes physical violence, psychological violence, marital instability or uncertainty, social isolation and deprivation of different kinds. Childlessness can be very traumatic for couples.

There are a lot of problems that are associated with the childlessness. The social and cultural factors attached to children make childless couples to go through various health-seeking or fertility-seeking processes. As they desire to fulfill the obligations of marriage increases, both the man and the woman experience intense pain, anger and frustration, sometimes basic family issues suffer as both couple withdraw from the regular husband and wife communications. In the mist of these, they are constantly struggling so hard to protect their relationship. At some point they express desire for emotional connection/interaction at one moment and another moment they emotionally withdraw this. Childless couple may not be enjoying their marital relationship, by continually shifting blames leading to malice and other forms of marital discord. Medical decisions most times are not easily made as sometimes one partner may not be in support and this causes depression in the couples. The normal menstrual period for a woman creates anxiety between the couples as they anxiously wait, the woman will miss her period and be pronounced pregnant.

The researcher is a clergy and has personal experience of counselling several families affected by the situation of childlessness. Their frustration, anger, loss of faith and bitterness expressed by the affected couples within the church is a cause for concern and has prompted him to undertake this research, with the hope of finding out the implications of the condition of childlessness among Christian couples on NKST Church in Benue State.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is ‘‘Comparison of implications of childlessness among Christian Couples of the *Nongo u Kristu u iSer u Sha Ta*r (NKST church) in Benue state, Nigeria while the specific objectives are to:

1 investigate the implications of childlessness on the social life of Christian couples in NKST Church in Benue State Nigeria;

2 find out the psychological implications of childlessness on Christian couples in NKST Church in Benue State Nigeria;

3 determine the implications of childlessness on the economic life of Christian couples in NKST Church in Benue State Nigeria;

4 assess the implications of childlessness on the moral and religious life of Christian couples in NKST Church in Benue State Nigeria;

5 investigate the implications of childlessness of Christian couples on the growth of the NKST Church in Benue State Nigeria.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to facilitate the success of this study:

1 what are the implications of childlessness on the social life of Christian couples in the NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria?

2 what are the psychological implications of childlessness on Christian couples in NKST Church in Benue state of Nigeria?

3 what are the economic implications of childlessness on the life of Christian couples in the NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria?

4 what are the moral and religious implications of childlessness on Christian couples in NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria?

5 what are the implications of childlessness of Christian couples on the numerical growth of NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to give direction to the investigation:

Ho_1 there is no significant difference in the opinions of male and female respondents on the social implications of childlessness of Christian couples in NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria.

Ho_2 there is no significant difference in the opinions of literate and illiterate respondents on the psychological implications of childlessness on Christian couples in NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria.

Ho_3 there is no significant difference in the opinions of the employed and unemployed respondents on economic implications of childlessness of Christian couples in NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria.

Ho_4 there is no significant difference in opinions of rural and urban respondents on the moral and religious implications of childlessness on the life of Christian couples in NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria.

Ho_5 there is no significant difference between the opinions of youth and adult respondents on the implications of childlessness of the Christian couples on the numerical growth of NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study will be significant to childless couples, intended couples, church ministers, counsellors, the general public, and academics in the following ways:

To the childless couples, it could help them to appreciate that people are concern about their plight even in the academic sector. The result could be a road map for their understanding on how to deal with the challenge(s) of childlessness. They will be sensitized on the adverse implications of using ungodly means to resolve the situation. Couples that are blessed with children would also understand from this research that, childbearing is a gift from God.

Intended couples would also benefit from this study in the sense that it could be an eye opener? They would be exposed to the causes of childlessness such as premarital sex, abortion among others which can be avoided while they are still single. Furthermore, additional precautions shall be given as recommendations.

This work is hoped to be a good reference material to the clergy. They could use the findings of this study for several purposes and different forums. It could be used to sensitize these groups of individuals in special meetings such as workshops, seminars and personal visitations. Again, the clergy can use it as church sermons on the need to respect and encourage childless couples.

The counsellors could use this to make people to realize the challenges being faced by childless families and understand the extent to which childlessness has destabilized many Christian families. The findings and recommendations would serve as counselling tips with their clients. They are to identify those in need of their services and offer the best advice.

On a general note, the general public could benefit from this research because the problem of childlessness is not limited to particular countries or religions. It is experienced by many couples all over the world. So it could benefit couples in other country and religions. Childlessness can be experienced by anybody irrespective of his/her status.When someone reads a book that is written based on this work, the proposed book of this nature would generally be helpful.

This work would serve as a reference document that other researchers can use to advance the course of academics in Nigeria and beyond. Future researches could consult and make reference to it as it adds to the literature. It is expected that lecturers of institutions could recommend this material to their students who may also see it in their libraries. Clergy men can also make reference to the work or material.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The challenge of childlessness isa universal phenomenon. For this study, the focus was on childlessness among Christian couples in NKST Church in Benue State, Nigeria. Benue State has twenty three (23) Local Government Councils with three (3) Geo-political zones. The research covered all the three zones in the state. This research concentrated on the implications of childlessness on the social, psychological, economic and moral life of Christian couples on the NKST in Benue state. Benue State is chosen because the researcher is a minister in the church and an indigene of Benue state. He is aware of the challenges as a minister or clergy who live with these childless couples. Again, NKST Church can be found in other states of the country,therefore, the findings can be generalized to childless couples in the Nigerian church and beyond.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant works on childlessness. It examines the following; meaning and history of *Nongo u Kristu u iser u Sha Tar* (NKST) Church, the concept of marriage, childlessness in the Bible, childlessness in African setting and the implications of childlessness, empirical studies on childlessness and related topics.

2.2 A Brief History of NKST Church

The acronym NKST in Tiv language stands for *Nongo u Kristu u Iser u Sha Tar* which is translated as '*the Universal Reformed Christian Church'*.This Reformed Church was established as a result of missionary activities of the Sudan United Mission and Dutch Reformed Church in a little village called Sai in Katsina – Ala Local Government Area of Benue State in the year 1911. *Nongo u Kristu u Iser u Sha Tar* (NKST) was first established in Sai, Benue State which remains the National Headquarters of the Church in Nigeria. NKST founded by the Dutch Reformed Church Mission from South Africa in 1911. It is an indigenous, self- governing, self- supporting and self -propagating Nigerian Church with her Headquarters at Mkar, Benue State (Ahenakaa&Achineku, 2007).

The Dutch Reformed Church Mission (DRCM) reached an agreement with the Christian Reformed Church Branch of Sudan United Mission (SUM) working among the Jukuns and other tribes to take over this young Church and nurse it to maturity. The SUM-CRC continued with work and later handed over the Church to NKST on the 9th January 1957, NKST became an indigenous self- governing, self- supporting and self-propagating Nigerian church with her headquarters at Mkar in Benue State (Ahenakaa&Achineku, 2007:57).

Tyoyer (2009:25) asserts that the NKST Church started on the 17th of April 1911 at Sai, in present day Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State. According to him (Tyoyer),it was founded by the joint efforts of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission (DRCM) and the Christian Reformed Churches (CRC-SUM) following the 1910 resolution by the Conference of Reformed Churches of Nigeria to establish churches among Nigerian ethnic groups with populations exceeding fifty thousand. It was pioneered by four missionaries who arrived Tiv land to commence the evangelization assignment. Mr. J.G Botha, was a Linguist whose mandate was to break the language barrier within the shortest possible time. Mr. V.H. Hosking was a medical personnel while Mr. C. Zimmerman was a carpenter/agriculturist. Dr. Karl Kumm was also part of the team which made use of their professional knowledge to advance the course of evangelism in Tiv land till 1957 when the South African missionaries, ordained four indigenous pastors (of Tiv extraction) and granted local autonomy to the congregation on January 9th 1957.

Tyoyer(2009) further states that the choice of the name NKST in a local language was significant at that time due to the fact that, it is an indigenous church; it also signifies autonomy in line with the general quest for political and other forms of independence of the time. The choice of this name (NKST) could also have been informed by the fact that at that time the level of literacy was very low both on the side of the leaders who were newly ordained and the people that formed the congregation. They were both more proficient in the use of the local language in the conduct of both church liturgy and administrative activities. In 1907, Dr. Kumm was invited by South Africa to present the needs of Nigeria and the Sudan. There was great interest in his message, and two men felt the call to come to Nigeria: Mr. George Botha, a member of the Dutch Reformed Church, and Mr. V.H. Hosking, went to England to prepare themselves for the challenge

in Nigeria. At the end of that year, they travelled with Dr. Kumm to Nigeria (Palmer, 1996:59)

The original intention was to work with the Tiv people, but when they arrived in England they discovered that the American (Evangelical Church) branch of the SUM was working in Wukari and had responsibility for the Tiv field. So in 1909, Hosking, Botha and Karl Zimmerman began work around the Benue River among the Mbula people who numbered only 8000 people with a strong Muslim influence there. The SUM then decided that it would be better for the missionaries to work among the Tiv people (Palmer, 1996:59)

Palmer (1996) asserts that, work among the Tiv people started in a little village called Sai, in Katsina-Ala Local Government of Benue State at the beginning of 1911 when Mr. Guiter and Rev. Botha came to explore the possibilities of working there. The people of Sai accepted them and on April 17, 1911, Mr. Karl Zimmermann arrived in Sai and spent his first night in the compound of Mr. Sai, the then village head.

The presence of these missionaries marked the beginning of the gospel in Tiv land which gave birth to the NKST Church. The history of *Nongo u Kristu u Iser u Sha Tar* (NKST) was the creation of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission (DRCM). It became operational in Tiv land in the year 1911. History had it that there was a group of Protestants that met in England in 1902 and prayed for the success of the gospel work in Africa with particular attention to the then Sudan region. Dr. Karl Kumm and his wife Lucy Kumm were part of this prayer group and had been to the Sudan region in Africa. They appealed that missionaries should be sent to Sudan to check the Muslims and prevent them from domination.

A follow up group known as Sudan Pioneer Mission (SPM) was formed on 13th November, 1902. This action brought about motivation on the side of other Protestant Churches in support of the missionary work in Sudan. In 1904, they met at Edinburg in England and a new name, Sudan United Mission (SUM) was suggested. This was because it was not only one church, so the unity of different churches had to be emphasized. These missionaries arrived Lokoja on 10th August, 1904.They had access to the Tiv people on 17th April, 1911 at a village called Sai in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State. Their arrival gave birth to the NKST Church.

Avav (2011) posits that the first missionary station in Tiv land was established at Sai by Karl Zimmermann in 1911. However, the British Colonial Movement restricted the movement of the missionaries in Tiv land, because the Tiv people were regarded as warriors and they had been brought under the control of the colonial administration. The missionaries were, therefore, allowed to preach only in the villages along the road from Wukari to ZakiBiam.

At the initial stage, it was very difficult for the missionaries to woo the Tiv people. So it became necessary for them to strategize on how best they could catch the attention of the Tiv man. One of such strategies as submitted by Avav (2011) is the missionaries' use of medical care and gifts to attract the people. Thus, through kindness and medical attension, Mr. Karl Zimmermann won a reasonable size of converts. The missionaries later found out that the station at Sai was not conducive for the work of evangelization of the Tiv people due to its extremity in the eastern side of Tiv land. Therefore, in 1914, they moved further west and established a station at ZakiBiam. Still, they were not satisfied. So they moved further west and established a station at Sev-Av in 1920. Sev-Av is at the bank of River Katsina-Ala but the station was still on the eastern side of the river.

Mkar station was established in 1923. Adikpo and Kunav (Mbaakon) stations were also established in the same year. Turan (Jato-Aka) station in the south west was established in 1926, and Makurdi in the North West in 1931. From Makurdi, they moved southwards and established two stations in Apir and Shangev-Tiev (Mbaakpur) in 1936; Iber station in 1946 and Uavande, the last station by DRCM, in 1957. The SUM-CRC established stations in Asukunya, Isherev, Ityoshin (Atukpu) and Harga (Avav, 2011:2-3).

According to Palmer (1996), the NKST Church is of a reformed faith which follows the teachings of John Calvin. The NKST Church as a member of the reformed family, has adapted to different cultures and situations at different periods or times. Church traditions include the practices, customs, conventions, beliefs, ways, patterns, styles, set of rules or set guidelines accepted and adopted by the church in the conduct of services/programmes. The practices of the church drive her activities towards attaining stated evangelization goal and maintaining her position. These practices are inseparable properties and ingredients that clearly identify and distinguish one denomination from the other.

Annger (2011) submits that such practices are properties that clearly distinguish a group of people from another. In a church setting, almost every denomination has unique practices which identify her. The NKST Church practices the congregational system of government, where a congregation is self-governing but they belong to distinct (*Classis*) associations. They accept the Bible as standard for belief and practice. The Church accepts the ancient creedal statements as sound interpretations of belief. Justification is believed to be by faith, two sacraments, baptism and the Holy Communion.

The denomination believes that church and state should be kept separate particularly when it has to do with church officers. This particular belief is not actually practiced as it

should, probably because of the poverty level in the country because most times, the church takes directives from the state instead of the state listening to the church. The democratic era of Nigeria as a country has worsened it all; this is as a result of the existing unity between the church and state (NKST Synod Resolutions, Nov.2011). The Church also practices the baptism of both infants and adults by touching. Children of members are baptized at a tender age with the hope that their parents would teach them the words of the Lord as taught by the Church. Again, adults who became members are also baptized the same way.

The NKST Church believes in the basic Christian teachings that are found in the Apostles' Creed and which are held by Christians throughout the world. According to Palmer (1996), the Apostles Creed' proceeded out of the apostolic belief in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Nicene Creed and Athanasian Creeds proceeded out of the Council of Nicea in AD 325. At that time, Arius was saying that Jesus is not fully God. But Athanasian and the Council of Nicea confessed that Jesus is indeed God. The Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed are clear statements of the Divinity of Christ and the nature of the Trinity.

The NKST Church has her beliefs and practices in line with the Heidelberg Catechism. The Heidelberg Catechism is a document that is seriously accepted and used in the NKST Church. It contains the complete doctrine of the Bible and has lessons for all believers. The whole world belongs to God; this is a contemporary confession which relates the reformed faith to the modern world. The NKST Church believes in the Lordship of Christ over every part of life. This belief relates Christ's Kingship to different areas of today's world. So the Church stands in the main stream of Christian orthodoxy (Aben& Palmer, 2005).

Palmer and Aben (2005) affirm that 'the NKST Church believes in the 'Heidelberg Catechism'. Heidelberg Catechism is a document that was written during the protestant reformation. It is a beautiful pastoral statement of the reformed beliefscalled Catechism because it has questions and answers about the reformed faith. This catechism has three parts: Sin, Salvation and Service, in other words, human misery, deliverance and gratitude. "I belong, body and soul, in life and in death to my faithful saviour, Jesus Christ."

Bierma (2005) submits that the Synod of Heidelberg approved the Catechism in 1563.In the Netherlands, the Catechism was approved by the Synod of Wessel (1968), England (1586), as well as the great Synod of Dort of 1618-1619, which adopted it as one of the three forms of unity, together with the Belgic confession and the canons of Dort. Elders and deacons were required to subscribe and adhere to it, and ministers were required to spread on a section of the Catechism each Sunday so as to increase the often poor theological knowledge of the church members. In many Dutch Reformed Denominations, this practice still continues. Today, all NKST churches and their pastors are encouraged to teach this Catechism to every member of the Church. The NKST Church teaches this to her members every Sunday after the conventional sunday service. Topics like Christian marriage and family life is also treated in the catechism.

2.3 Concept of Christian Marriage

Wayne (2019), states marriage, is a relationship between a man and a woman and was designed with a hierarchical arrangement as clearly shown in the New Testament that the husband is to be the head of his wife, just as Christ is head of the church. The wife is to submit to her husband (Eph. 5:22ff; cf. 1 Cor. 11:3). Wayne further stresses that it is not a license for a dictatorship or any form of abuse, but it does acknowledge a graduation of authority within the home. Sproul (2013), states that in the earliest chapters of the Old

Testament, where creation account is found, God creation was in stages, beginning with the light (Gen. 1:3) and concluding the process with the creation of man (v. 27). At every stage, He utters a benediction, a "good word." God repeatedly looks at what He has made and says, "That's good" (vv. 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). But then God noticed something that provokes not a benediction but what we call a malediction, that is, a "bad word." What was this thing that God saw in His creation that He judged to be "not good"? We find it in Genesis 2:18, where God declares, "It is not good that the man should be alone." That prompts Him to create Eve and brought her to Adam. God instituted marriage, and He did it, in the first instance, as an answer to man's loneliness. For this reason, God inspired Moses to write, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (v. 24).

This pronouncement is very important, and it is a covenant relationship between the two (husband and wife). The whole idea of covenant is deeply rooted in biblical Christianity. The Bible teaches that our very redemption is based on a covenant. Much could be said here about the character of biblical covenants, but one vital facet is that none of them is a private matter. Every covenant is undertaken in the presence of witnesses and this is why guests are invited to weddings so that they will witness the vows and hold couples accountable to keep them.

It is one thing for a man to whisper expressions of love to a woman when no one hears, but it is quite another thing for him to stand up in a church, before parents, friends, ecclesiastical or civil authorities, and God Himself, and there make promises to love and cherish her. Wedding vows are sacred promises made in the presence of witnesses who will remember them. It is believed that marriage is the most precious of all human institutions. There is always an out pour of the greatest and deepest expectations in marriages. We put our emotions on the line. In marriage, we can achieve the greatest

happiness, but we also can experience the greatest disappointment, the most frustrations and pain. With that much at stake, we need something more solemn than a casual promise.

Even with formal wedding ceremonies, even with the involvement of authority structures, roughly fifty percent of marriages fail. Sadly, among the men and women who remain (if granted chance) together as husband and wife, many would not marry the same spouse again, but they stay together for various reasons. Something has been lost regarding the sacred and holy character of the marriage covenant. In order to strengthen the institution of marriage, the NKST Church considers strengthening the wedding ceremony, with a clear, biblical reminder that marriage is instituted by God and forged in His sight. The Bible defines "family" in a narrow sense as the union of one man and one woman in matrimony which is normally blessed with one or several natural or adopted children. In a broad sense, this family also includes any other persons related by blood (the extended family). In the book of Genesis, we read that God in the beginning created first the man (Adam) to exercise dominion over his creation and subsequently the woman (Eve) as the man's "suitable helper" (Genesis 2:18, 20). Thus, the inspired writer remarks, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). This verse sets forth the biblical pattern instituted by God at the beginning one man united to one woman in matrimony, and the two form one new natural family. In this regard, "become one flesh" not only refers to the establishment of one new family but also to the husband and wife's sexual union leading to the procreation. This, in turn, is in keeping with God's original command to the first human couple to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion" over all of creation (Genesis 1:28).

Zech (2016) states that these aspects of marriage, the complementarily role of male and female, and the irreplaceable role of male-female relations in reproducing the human race, are part of the original order of creation, and are evident to all human beings from the enduring order of nature. These common elements of marriage are at the heart of our civil laws defining and regulating marriage. Therefore, people of all cultures and religions, including those who have no faith in God, Christ, or the Bible, are capable of participating in the institution of marriage. However, Christians believe that the fullest understanding of God's will for marriage can be derived from a careful examination of scriptural teachings. It is incumbent upon the church to educate both itself and the larger culture regarding the full breadth and depth of God's intentions for marriage.

Kostenberger (2016) adds that marriage is a covenant, a sacred bond between a man and a woman instituted by and publicly entered into before God and normally consummated by sexual intercourse. He further says that God's plan for the marriage covenant involves at least the following five vital principles, highlighted below.

i. **The permanence of marriage:** Marriage is intended to be permanent, since it was established by God (Matthew 19:6; Mark 10:9). Marriage is a serious commitment that should not be entered into lightly or unadvisedly and it involves a solemn promise or pledge, not merely to one's marriage partner, but to God. Therefore,divorce is not permitted. Wilcox (2018), states Hosea was called to love his bride, even though she was unfaithful to him and this was a practical demonstration of God’s love for His bride. It is expected in marriage that the couple faithfully remain in the union till death.

ii. **The sacredness of marriage:** Marriage is not merely a human agreement between two consenting individuals (a "civil union"); it is a relationship before

and under God (Genesis 2:22). Hence, a "same-sex marriage" is an oxymoron, a contradiction in terms. Since Scripture universally condemns homosexual relationships. God will never sanction a marital bond between two members of the same sex. Briam (2009) adds that most people view marriage as a sacred and holy event with weddings typically performed before a minister and in a church. Most people also realize that marriage should be honored and cherished and that unfaithfulness to one's spouse is forbidden. Marriage is also sacred because it directly symbolizes the relationship between Christ and His followers. The Apostle Paul gave the following instructions, *'Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for her'* (**Ephesians 5:25)**.

iii. **The intimacy of marriage**: Marriage is the most intimate of all human relationships, uniting a man and a woman in a "one-flesh" union (Genesis 2:23 - 25). Marriage involves "leaving" one's family of origin and "being united" to one's spouse, which signifies the establishment of a new family unit distinct from the two originating families. While "one flesh" suggests sexual intercourse and hence, procreation, at its very heart. The concept entails the establishment of a new kinship relationship between two previously unrelated individuals (and families) by the most intimate of human bonds.

iv. **The mutuality of marriage**: Marriage is a relationship of free self-giving of one human being to another (Ephesians 5:25-30). The marriage partners are to primarilybe about their wellbeing and be committed to each other in steadfast love and devotion. This involves the need for forgiveness and restoration of the relationship in the extent any of the partner'ssin. Mutuality, however, does not mean sameness in role. Scripture is clear that wives are to submit to their husbands and to serve as their "suitable helpers," while husbands are to bear the

ultimate responsibility of loving their wives (Ephesians 5:22-24; Colossians 3:18; see also Genesis 2:18, 20).

v. **The exclusiveness of marriage**: Marriage is not only permanent, sacred, intimate, and mutual; it is also exclusive (Genesis 2:22-25; 1 Corinthians 7:2-5). This means that no other human relationship must interfere with the marriage commitment between husband and wife. For this reason, Jesus treated sexual immorality of a married person, including even a husband's lustful thoughts, with utmost seriousness (Matthew 5:28; 19:9). For the same reason, premarital sex is also unacceptable, since it violates the exclusive claims of one's future spouse. As the Song of Solomon makes clear, only in the secure context of an exclusive marital bond can free and complete giving of oneself in marriage takes place.

2.4. Childlessness in the Bible

Both the Old and New Testament reveal the seriousness of the problem of childlessness. This is not necessarily God-given shame, but the natural outflow of knowing that usually, children are given at some point(s) in a marriage. But now that more is known about conception, it is also to be noted that sometimes things just don't go right for a variety of biological factor, such as a wife whose body is allergic to her husband's sperm, or hormone levels not conducive for maintaining a pregnancy. In these instances, it's helpful to recall the biblical concepts of marriage. The sovereignty of God is to be acknowledged that no one can conceive unless He (God) calls that child into being. With the proliferation of sexually transmitted diseases that result in the childlessness of one or both partners, the consequences of premarital or extramarital sexual sin may include childlessness. In this case, a biblical perspective sadly includes the principle of sowing and reaping, where childlessness is the result of sinful lifestyle.

When couples try to have children and cannot, then the biblical call to trust God becomes crucial. It may mean seeking medical attention or building one's family through adoption or choosing to live without children to free up energies for Kingdom work. A childless couple may not experience shame over their childlessness, but it would be important to give voice to the grief, disappointment and deep sense of loss over it. David wrote in Psalm 51, "I know that you desire truth in my inmost parts," and we know that mental and spiritual health means being honest about what's going on in our hearts.

Barga (2016) queries, how do we open up conversation in our congregations about health care issues surrounding the beginning of life? Preaching that is sensitive, careful, and challenging is a critical step in bringing childlessness out of the shadows in Churches. The Bible is replete with passages that provide fodder for stimulating sermons on procreation, childlessness, and the beginning of life. Childlessness in the Hebrew Bible is presented as particularly a female problem. No biblical stories center on an infertile man, nor is the imagery of barrenness ever applied to a man. Perhaps this is because of the patriarchal image in the Hebrew culture.

Consequently, Bible is of little help to the permanently childless couple. Every story of a childless woman in the Bible concerns is how that situation is reversed. Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Samson's mother, and Hannah are all described as having suffered a condition of barrenness, which finds its resolution in divine intervention. The perception of women promoted by the Bible is that their sole purpose in life was accomplished through child birth. This mind-set is found from the opening chapters of the Bible. In Genesis 3:16-18, God's words to the woman concern her destiny to bring forth children in pain while the man is destined to toil on the earth to produce food. According to the Bible, the impulse to procreate is basic to human nature as ordained by God. The first chapter of the Scripture includes a divine mandate, to the newly created humans, to be fruitful and

multiply (Gen. 1:28). This command was repeated to Noah and his family as they set foot on dry land again after the flood (Gen. 9:1). To have offspring from biblical view, is to carry on and support the work of creation. To procreate originates from a Latin root which means, to act on behalf of creation. From the Old Testament, God is the ultimate source of all life, and human procreation is therefore both a gift and a mandate from the life-giving God.

Barga (2016) further notes that, preaching on these biblical materials can increase thedesire for children, and to see the basis for that powerful impulse in our biology and our theology. But for many couples, the biblical directive to be fruitful is difficult, if not impossible, to follow. Secondary infertility, the inability to bear achild, affects perhaps half of infertile couples. The incidence of infertility is on the increase, largely because of a variety, of environmental, medical, and sociological factors. These include later marriages, postponed attempts to conceive, sexually transmitted infections, and some forms of birth control. Ninety percent of the time, a physical problem can be identified and of that percent, roughly a third of the time the difficulty can be attributed to the man, and a third of the time to the woman; in the remaining cases, it is a problem for both members of the couple, and in some sense, that is always so.

Biblical stories reveal the pain that accompanies the inability to conceive and bear children. Rachel's plea to Jacob offers an engaging title for a sermon on this subject: "Give me children or I shall die!" she demands in desperation. Jacob angrily responds, "Am I in the place of God', who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" (Gen. 30:1-2). For the biblical women were barren, God is identified as the cause; God is the one with power to close and open the womb. Sarah observes to Abraham, "You see that the LORD has prevented me from bearing children" (Gen, 16:2). The author of 1Timothy writes, women will be saved through bearing children (2:15). These passages

seem to leave childless women doubly doomed, both here and hereafter. To the natural pain of infertility and the accompanying sense of failure (the questioning of our virility, the loss of our dreams) such texts seem to add theological condemnation. Pastoral preaching on infertility should sensitively address the various aspects of pain these texts engage.

Barrenness often functions as the driving motif in a biblical narrative or a sequence of narratives: for Sarah (Gen. 11:30; 16:1), for the women of the house of Abimelech (Gen. 20:18), for Rebekah (Gen. 25:21), for Rachel (Gen. 29:31; 30:1), for the wife of Manoah (Judg. 13:2), for Hannah (1 Sam. 1:2, 5-6), and for Elizabeth (Luke 1:7). In all these stories, barrenness is not the final word; it is a foil for the life-giving power of God. In each case, though divine intervention the curse of barrenness gives way to the blessing of conception and childbearing. But in some of these stories, before God gets around to satisfying their desire for children, people take initiative to find solutions. Despite its distance from our world in time and technology, the Bible also includes stories of people who, facing a life that isnot turned out as they expected, use their ingenuity to overcome their barrenness. Like the ancients,we wrestled with the perennial human problem of what to do when life fails to live up to our hopes and expectations, when it dashes our dreams. This dilemma is the stun or good sermons.

When Abraham and Sarah were not able to conceive their promised child, they used Hagar as a surrogate (Gen. 16:1-1 5). As in the Buzzanca story, this surrogacy arrangement has its complications. In the end, both Sarah and Abraham acted with contempt toward Hagar and Ishmael, and shamefully drove them away (Gen 21:9-14). Only because God stepped in that Hagar and Ishmael survived and flourished. When Rachel, Jacob's beloved Wife, founds herself barren, she said to Jacob, "Here is my maid Bilhah; go in to her, that she may bear upon my knees, and that I too may have children

through her' (Gen 30: 3-7) Jacobs other wife Leah, experienced some secondary infertility after having had four children, she gave Jacob her maid Zilpah, and had two more children through her before conceiving more on her own (Gen. 30:9-13). Deuteronomy 25:5-6 prescribes the practice of levirate marriage, a kind of surrogacy: "When brothers reside together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the deceased shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband's brother should go in to her, taking her in marriage," and the first son whom she bears "will succeed the name of his brother who is dead." These texts illustrate the possibilities for human intervention to overcome childlessness, as well as the complications that sometimes attend such arrangements.

There are many biblical stories which pastors can draw on to preach about God's care for human procreation and the human pain and dilemma surrounding childlessness. Other appropriate biblical materials for beginning-of life sermons are birth predictions, announcements of pregnancies, stories of birth, and texts expressing God's concern for life in the womb. Such sermons should introduce members to pastoral needs at the beginning of life, and to the complex ethical and health care issues surrounding infertility. Good pastoral preaching will create opportunities for people to open up their own hurts, needs, and decisions, and will allow for the expression of unresolved anguish. Furthermore, the issues surrounding childlessness in Africa and Nigeria as captured above are problematic in nature because of the mystique associated with them. This may be because childbearing is viewed as a natural part of adult life in traditional African setting. In fact infertility has been labelled as an act of God, a punishment from unhappy ancestors, or the result of witchcraft. From the foregoing, there is need to understand the perceptions and beliefs surrounding childlessness in NKST community in Benue state and the plight of childless couples.

Barga (2016) submits that childlessness is a great burden which people suffer physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Many married couples feel the individual pressure of the command to "be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1: 28) As such, they may not understand that the command given to Adam and Eve (representatives of all mankind) is general for all human beings. Consequently, they Might not know that God may be directing them to remain childless. Scott and Robert (1998) observes that, while in this situation of yearning, questioning, frustration, and hope, couple needs to understand the parameters and God's role in procreation. Regardless of the outcome for the infertile Christian couple, God uses, and may even give, barrenness as a gift (Rom. 8:28). For instance, as with the patriarchs and matriarchs, God uses barrenness to increase faith in God as the merciful, loving Creator and Saviour of life. Furthermore, God may use barrenness to direct a couple's Christian vocation. For some couples God may mercifully give the task of raising His children, but for others He may not and so direct them to use their time and freedom to serve in ways that married couples with children cannot serve. Scott & Robert (1998) again emphasise that, God may use barrenness as opportunity for adoption, a gift to both a child and a married couple. Finally, God may use barrenness as a witness to those who have children to cherish them as God's gift. Through all of these, God's purpose may not be immediately apparent. God's timing and patience are greater than man. Abraham and Sarah waited for twenty years for Isaac. Therefore, along with prayers of faith, childless couples need also to pray for patient trust.

Teg-Nefaah and Baba-Ado (2013) report about unhappiness in marriagesthat according to some, their ultimate dream of marriage is to have children. Their unhappiness also has a direct impact on their sexual life as many reported a reduced interest in sexual activity with their childless partners. Even in the Christian setting, there are mixed responses concerning the experiences of couples within the extended family setting. While some

childless couples receive support from their families, others blamed their families for their predicament. Women mostly complain of suffering in the hands of family members as they are perceived to be responsible for the couple's childlessness. They are badly treated by their mothers-in-law who demand for grandchildren unfortunately, most times these people are members of the church of God.

The problem is that failure of Christian couples to meet these important social, religious and ethical obligations, implies that they will miss important rights and privileges in their society. This is because children on their part are used as criteria to help qualify parents for statuses as: the question of who inherits the parent's property, contribute to economic growth, the need for Security, befitting burials, and remembrance of departed parents and so on. It stands that one who does not marry and bear children will have nobody to remember him/her after death.

There is a huge challenge in selecting the needed words to mourn childlessness in a family. For the loss of a parent, grandparent, spouse, child or friend, we have all manner of words and phrases. Still we are conditioned to say something, even if it is only "I'm sorry for your loss". But for childlessness, there are no words to capture that particular, painful emptiness. For those who deeply desire children and are denied or not opportune, those missing babies hover like silent ephemeral shadows over their lives. Who can describe the feeling of a tiny hand that is never held? Societal sentiments generally favours the parents that have children than the couples that are childless. The childless couple's parents experience pitied, criticised, or stigmatized in some way for not having grandchildren. These make childlessness very worrisome, even for parents who have been successful in other aspects of life. Childlessness is a life stressor to the affected with numerous consequences which include frustration, depression, anxiety,

hopelessness, guilt, and feelings of worthlessness in life. Childlessness is a life crisis having a wide range of social, emotional, psychological, economic and moral problems.

The society greatly values and encourages parenthood, childless women and men may worry that they have lost their status or prestige in the eyes of others. From the inevitable question, “Do you have children?” or “how many children do you have?” to messages in church to “multiply and replenish the earth,” are all a reminder of society's expectations of every couple. Many childless couples assume that their church constantly reminds them of their special duty to multiply and have a family. They may even have the feeling that they are considered not worthy because of childlessness.

Teg- Nefaah and Baba Ado (2013) further stress that, some couples especially women express intense emotions when talking about their childless marriage and cry out profoundly. Men and women experience sadness, guilt, loneliness and fear for an insecure future. Family gatherings during holidays, children's birthday parties and other occasions about children remind them of their childlessness and make them feel sad. For some couples, being in their homes make them face the fact that they have no children, as the cry of a baby is never heard. The feeling of an empty house without the sound of children, and in the evening the imagination of a house, filled with the laughter, cries of children become a disturbing thought, leaving couples to feel like their house is too big for just the two people. Sometimes both the man and the woman become unfaithful to themselves in a quest to get children by going out of their matrimonial home. Swinford (2013)statesthat challenge of childlessness has caused many Christian childless couple have children out of their wedlock, leading to some cases permanent separation.

Sandra (2008) states thatreading the Bible cover-to-cover, one would find lots of stories about childless couples from Abraham and Sarah, Samson’s parents to Hannah and

Elkanah in the Old Testament and Elisabeth and Zechariah in the New Testament. In each of these stories the couple finally had a child. That's because the Bible is not a textbook on childlessness. The stories are selected histories included as part of a bigger story, the story of God's redemption of humankind and childlessness is often the way God uses to demonstrate His ability to do the impossible. In the Old Testament, we also find promises that God will curse his people with childlessness if, as a nation, they do not obey him. A problem arises when we read these sections and wrongly conclude that childlessness is a curse from God.

The curses God outlined involved entire populations, including humans and livestock. He was not talking about individual childlessness. Michal, David's wife who laughed at him for dancing before the Lord, is said to have been barren, but that does not necessarily mean she was "struck" with infertility. It may be that David just never "summoned" her again. In one other instance in the Law, we see that an adulterous woman was cursed with childlessness. But overall, childlessness is more an affliction of the righteous than the unrighteous. In the New Testament when Elisabeth conceived, she rejoiced that God has removed her shame in the eyes of the people. Sue & Ray (2006) add that, thinking Biblically on the subject of childlessness, the following will be considered;

Reproducing. The first command given to humans were to be fruitful and multiply and to have dominion over the plant and animal kingdoms and the earth itself. The last command is to make disciples. So while reproducing physically is a wonderful part of being human, it is not the only way God has ordained and blessed for leaving a lasting legacy.

Longing. In Proverbs 30, we read that when we look around and observe the natural world as God made it, we see that it's normal for a childless person to have deep, unfulfilled longing. Childlessness can cause a lot of grief, and it is not "unspiritual" to feel a profound sense of grief.

Gifted living. The apostle Paul called celibacy a gift (1 Cor 7), and in one translation of the Psalms, children are called "a gift." (Though in the context, Psalm 127, the actual phrase is "sons are an inheritance/heritage.At that time children were the means to economic success and many sons assured military protection). A wife is called a gift. So one way to think biblically about childlessness is to recognize that while the gift of children has been withheld, children are only one of many gifts through which God gives his blessing. If Aquilla and Priscilla ever had children, they are not mentioned.

Limits on dominion. Reading through Genesis 1-2, gives the understanding that while God gave humans dominion, he put limits on what they were to manage or subdue. They were given stewardship of the earth and its animal and flying creatures. But notice that they were not given dominion over each other. Humans were made in the image of God, so all humanity, even at the one-cell stage, is precious to Him. One of the ways of thinking biblically about childlessness is to recognize this and to tread carefully when considering advanced reproductive technologies (ARTs). There are ways to use ARTS that honor God and human life and some others do not.

Couples are not given the option of chosen childlessness in the biblical revelation. To the contrary, we are commanded to receive children with joy as God's gifts, and to raise them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. We are to find many of our deepest joys and satisfactions in the raising of children within the context of the family. Those who reject children want to have the joys of sex and marital companionship without the

responsibilities of parenthood. They rely on others to produce and sustain the generations to come.

Barga (2016) gives an overview of childlessness in the scripture, he said cases of barrenness recorded in the Old Testament are Sarah (Gen. 11:27-21:7), Rebekah (Gen. 25:20-21), and Rachel and Leah (Gen. 29:31-30:24), the first four matriarchs. Other Old Testament cases include Abimelech's wife and female slaves (Gen. 20:17-18), Manoah's wife (Judges 13:1-24), and Hannah (1 Sam. 1:1-20). The New Testament gives the account of Elizabeth (Luke 1:5-57). The one probable case of sterility is the Shunammite husband recorded in 2 Kings 4:8-17.4 In all cases of barrenness recorded in the Scriptures, the exclusive parameter for procreation, is marriage. God's Word in Genesis 2:24 indicate this parameter while God's actions verify it throughout these stories of infertility. God never brings fertility to all unmarried barren woman or to an unmarried sterile man.

The Lord God only brings fertility "to situations which leave no doubt as to the identity of the potential father." Another fundamental point which these texts make is that God is not only in control of infertility, but also sometimes purposefully allows infertility or barrenness. For instance, Genesis 20:18 says that God had closed the wombs of Abime1eth's wife and female slaves. Here God uses infertility as a punishment because of unfaithfulness to God and His Ways (Gen. 20:3; Lev. 20:20-21).

Still, God does not always nor primarily cause childlessness because of sin and for the sake of punishment. For instance, 1Samuel 1:5 says that God had closed Hannah's womb, yet there is no reason to see this as a punishment. Instead, Hannah sees her previous barrenness as a joyous example of God's control over life: "the barren bears seven and she who has many son's withers. Yahweh kills and brings back to life; He

brings down and He rises up" (1 Sam. 2:5-6). So, too, Sarah acknowledges that God has prevented her from bearing children; however, she neither blames God nor sees this as a punishment (Gen. 16:2) (Scott & Robert 339).

2.5. Childlessness in the African Setting

Marriage is an important institution in the world andthe reason(s) for its contraction varies from one culture to another. In Nigeria and indeed specifically among the people of Benue State in the North Central zone of Nigeria, marriage is contracted for procreation hence, marriages are expected to be blessed with children. For many ethnic groups in Central Nigeria, like the Tiv, traditional value system marriage is an expression of their being, their self-transcendence, which culminates in giving birth to children. Ihuah (2010) opines that sex is therefore considered sacred as it is connected with life and it's a process that leads to procreation therefore it mustnot be abused, the misuse of sex was forbidden and sanctioned. Its use was expected to be healthy because, it is a means for procreation. It can thus be argued that the problem of childlessness is a problem that cuts across many races and cultures.

Africans place much premium on marriage and procreation as conditions for the establishment of a family. As a result, the preservation and continuation of the family through procreation are of paramount importance to Africans. Childlessness is seen as a terrible situation that creates feeling of disappointment, frustration, sadness and depression. For most people, getting married and starting a family- having children-is not a matter of choice; they are a rite of passage. Acording to Netsayi (2013), Childlessness is not yet embraced in Nigeria, where pronatalist culture is still very strong. In marriage, childlessness is one aspect of the diversities inherent in contemporary experience of marriage and the family. For most of history, childlessness has been regarded as great personal tragedy involving much emotional pain and grief, especially if it is result from

failure to conceive or from the death of a child. Bamidele and Rosak (2017) posit that before conception was well understood, childlessness was usually blamed on the woman and this in itself added to the high level negative emotional and social effects of childlessness. Some wealthy families adopted children as a means of providing heirs in case of childlessness or where no son had been born, the monetary incentives offered by westerners desire for children is so strong that a commercial market in child laundering business exists (Rosak 2017).

Nonetheless, childlessness is a concern, partly because of its implications for the maintenance of societies and partly because of its unwanted consequences for individuals. However, societies regard children as being central every successful marriage and for this reason; childless couples become objects of ridicule in their communities. The dynamics of culture and human relationships have made researchers to observe many influences, manifestations, happenings and occurrences in marriage stability.

Ugwueye and Umeanolue (2015) submission is that African pre-colonial society condemned a childless marriage. Preciously, African culture provided solutions to the unacceptable experience of childlessness. These Afro-cultural solutions included marrying additional women, secretly arranging for another man to impregnate the woman in her marital home with the consent of the sterile husband. A survey of these Afro-cultural solutions reveals that much consideration was given to what could have been the known and unknown causes of the problem. Christianity with its claim of having solutions to all problems has condemned the traditional ways of addressing concretely the problem of childlessness in African culture and it has not proffered a lasting means of dealing with the problem. The tension and pressure generated by these Christian principles of handling the problem and dissatisfaction on the side of those

affected sometimes lead many childless couples into doing many detestable things in search of solution to childlessness.

Ginsburg and Rapp (1995) conducted research on childlessness in sub-Saharan Africa and the research built on demographic and anthropological research showing how social and economic contexts influence local meanings of fertility and infertility. Much of this literature is situated in the broader anthropological discourse on reproduction. There is ample documentation that women primarily bear the social consequences of childlessness, especially in sub-Saharan Africa (Inhorn& Van Balen, 2002). Inhorn (1996) also have shown that in Egypt, women receive the major blame for reproductive mishaps. With reference to a survey in Nigeria where respondents generally agreed that a woman who has not given birth to a child may as well never have been born.

Cornwall (2001) opines that, children are a source of power for women in relation to men, and infertility threatens their power and the social order. More recently, Johnson-Hanks (2006) shows that even highly educated Beti women in Cameroon so conflate honor and respectability with childlessness are routinely brought to ritual specialists for treatments, regardless of whether they have been intentionally managing their problem to avoid pregnancy (Johnson-Hanks, 2006:81, 249). Child bearing has been shown to be important in the progression of couples through life stages. A childless woman among the Tswana in Botswana, according to Suggs (1987), for example, cannot attain full adult womanhood, similar to a finding for Ijo women (Hollos et al, 2009). For a woman in the Upper Zambezi, ‘childlessness is a tragedy that she cannot escape biologically nor socially because it threatens the continuity of her family lineage’ Social mechanisms can alleviate some of these problems and help women deal with childlessness. These include voluntary associations and groups that support women with infertility problems. Infertile women also respond to their conditions in locally specific (healers, fostering, and

adoption) and in biomedical arenas and through their kinship networks. Though childlessness is not just a woman problem because sometimes the man is completely responsible for the problem. But because women suffer the greatest consequences of childlessness, they actively use resources at their disposal and devise strategies not only to challenge but also to alter oppressive systems" (Silva, 2009:180).

Densy and Raymond (2013) conducted a research on Childlessness among the Tiv people in Nigeria using Mkar which is the headquarters of NKST Church.The study investigated the marital instability among couples experiencing involuntary childlessness. The result of the study showed that both men and women were in disbelief when they found that they were infertile. Similarly, men and women reacted differently to infertility and this is connected with family and community treatment. Furthermore, community members linked childlessness to evil spirits, ancestral curses, witchcraft manipulations and promiscuity. The study concluded that community education and sensitization is vital towards dispelling the myth associated with causes of childlessness, prevention and treatment and the understanding that only women can be infertile.

Barga (2016) presents areas where childless couples suffer the stigma of childlessness in marriage in the African culture. Imagine the frustration of one family member who, unlike all the women around her, has difficulty conceiving. All sorts of gossip are spread about her situation. Is she cursed? Is she the victim of witchcraft? Surely, she must have done something to deserve such a harsh fate. For, to every adult within the family, there could be no harsher fate than not being able to conceive. There is no denying the fact that the stigma attached to being childless in Africa is far greater than anything one has ever witnessed in the western world.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) report (2015), in 50 of cases, the reason why a couple is unable to conceive is because the man in the relationship is infertile. Unfortunately, it is the women who are perceived to be the problem often. It is difficult to establish the number of men that are infertile because it is difficult to ascertain whether it exists or not. On the other hand, absence of pregnancy in a woman definitely is an indicator of infertility. But in the case of men, there is no obvious sign that will set as indicator of infertility. At times, some of the men whose wives could not be pregnant do marry other women, who finally give birth. In such situation, such men are exonerated.

The meaning of, and reaction to childlessness is mediated by Socio-cultural factors, which vary widely between societies. In Sub Saharan Africa, the traditional belief systems based on continuity of lineages place a high premium on fertility. As a result, the perception of people regarding childlessness especially in womEn, whose primary function in childbearing and whose economic and social status is often hinged on their ability to have children, is often derogatory and judgmental. Whatever the cause, as a result of existing social and gender norms, women are often blamed if a couple is childless. McQuillan (2007) adds that Childless couples may suffer any or a combination of the following as a result childlessness - distress, depression, lowered self-esteem, social stigma, open ridicule, isolation, economic deprivation, physical violence, threats from husbands and husbands' family, rejection, loneliness, abandonment and divorce (McQuillan, 2007:1014). In a more elaborate way, Barga discusses further the following problems of childlessness in marriage as follows:

i. **Possible Dangers of Loss of Faith**

In their search for a child, childless couples will leave no stone unturned. They may have to consult spiritualists, prayer houses, a traditional medicine doctor (herbalist) or an orthodox doctor, and in most cases, without the desired results. They engage in ritual activities to deities and divinities whom they feel are responsible for their unfortunate condition and could help them out of their plight. In their desperation to have a child of their own, the couples will do anything even if it means backsliding in church-practice and getting initiated into occultism.

ii. **Sadness and Misery**

Like the biblical Hannah (1 Sam 1:10, 15-16) childless couples are always in a continuous state of bitterness, sadness, sorrow and grief. In a culture where the ultimate in marriage is child-bearing, these couples cannot help, but wonder why they have missed this gift from God. Infertility affects both men and women, but' the woman's suffering tends to be' particularly noticed and pronounced. This is why Rachel cried to her husband Jacob in the book of Genesis: "Give me children, or I shall die!" (Genesis' 30:1; Catechism of the Catholic Church,2374).

iii. **Dissatisfaction and Discontentment with Life**

The couples may be well-to-do or socially better placed in the society, but they often remain unhappy and dissatisfied with their life. Their distress is further accentuated by the fact that society views childless as un-dignifying especially, where there is no direct, heir in for the family. It is more heart breaking and frustrating if the family head is from royal family. In such situations, it may even lead to denying the childless couple certain rights and privileges in the community, for instance, chieftaincy title.'

iv. **Loneliness, Anxiety and Insomnia**

Childless couples may have many relatives and yet they still feel terribly lonely. Parents sometimes do complain about the difficulties associated with raising children as some children are a source of sorrow for their parents, but there is something that makes parenting satisfying; a certain joy derived in having children that childless couples long to experience. Anxiety and sleeplessness become part and parcel of their daily life, especially, for the woman who is in danger of being thrown out of her matrimonial home one day. Many infertile couples perceive that they are "second-class citizens" even in the church. "You're not quite as important as these people with a life that they have to take care of," said one young man. Many described their church experience as isolating and lonely. Lone(2009) adds that Long-term studies of involuntary childless women following unsuccessful treatment show that although many of them adjust well psychologically, their childlessness is a major theme of their lives. Most studies are based on cross-sectional studies among couples seeking fertility treatment and focus on individual characteristics, for example, stress level, anxiety and symptoms of depression. There is a lack of studies investigating the impact of infertility and its treatment on social relations as well as studies earlier conducted. More large-scale, long-term prospective studies which address the social as well as the psychological consequences of infertility are needed.

v. **Marital Breakdown and Divorce**

Johnson (2016) supporting Bargas submission states that many women look forward to motherhood – getting to know a tiny baby, raising a growing child, developing a relationship with a maturing son or daughter. All over the world, people believe that parenting is the most rewarding aspect of life and it is good that so many women treasure the mother / child bonding because the transition to parenthood causes profound changes in a woman's marriage and her overall happiness. The belief that having children will

improve one's marriage is a persistent myth among the young who are in love. In a society where fathering a child is the test of manhood, childless couples are usually under severe pressure, especially the menwhose family members especially the mother assume the responsibility of persuading her son to take a new wife who will give her a grandchild. Similarly, the woman will be under pressure from colleagues though not very often, to have extra-marital affairs to save her from the reproachof barrenness. Consequently, suspicion, distrust and fear creep into the marriage causing misunderstanding between the couples. Family unity and fidelity are compromised. This may lead to daily squabbles ending in total family breakdown or divorce.DSN (2016) says that Couples without children divorce more often than couples that have at least one child.

vi. **Mockery and Ridicule**

Our culture trivializes the despair of those who suffer from infertility, sometimes thinking that infertility is a failure of the will. More often than not, childless couples in the village are disparaged. The woman, in particular, is blamed for the childlessness. She becomes. The topic for discussion, ridicule and gossip among the womenfolk. They deride her, call her names and wonder aloud why she has not gone back to her place of birth. If she ever beats or scolds other women's children, she is told it is because she has not experienced the pains of childbirth. Childless couples are vulnerable to all sorts of abuse because there is no one to defend and fight for them especially when they are sick or old.

vii. Low Self-image

It is difficult for childless couples to socialize. They avoid social functions which involve kids because in such gatherings, they feel inferior to other couples blessed with children.

Sometimes, this situation makes them develop hostility towards anyone around them. Those who live away from home take a long time to come back thereby becoming recluses. The condition is worsened where the environment has wicked and bad neighbours or relatives who sneer at the couples and attribute the cause of their woes to a curse from their gods and ancestors for sin(s) which both or either of the parties have committed.

viii. Child Adoption

Childlessness is one aspect of the diverse contemporary experiences of marriage and the family. Nonetheless, childlessness is a concern, partly because of its implications for the maintenance of societies and partly because of its unwanted consequences on individuals. Rising level of childlessness is contributing to falling birth rates and strengthening prospects of prolonged population decline in many industrialized countries. For some people, conditions of employment can make it difficult to combine having children with the pursuit of an income or a vocation. A long-term consequence, in later life, is that the childless have fewer resources for family interaction and support. In industrialized countries, childlessness was more prevalent at the start than at the end of the twentieth century.

It was, however, less conspicuous because it occurred in conjunction with a large family system: That some had four or more children partly offset the childlessness of others, keeping birth rates relatively high. In the present situation, one reason why the effects of childlessness are now more apparent, is that smaller families are more prevalent, with pronounced preferences for two children; relatively few couples have four or more. Childlessness can now make the difference between maintaining population numbers and precipitating long-term decline. A viable solution for the childless couple is child

adoption. But, this is no without its aches. First, the couple has to agree upon the age of the child and whether the child is to come from a hospital or an orphanage. Next come the negotiations with the parties concerned with child adoption. After all this has been done, the couple must remember that the child may be entering their home with strange traits and moods. That is why in many African societies child adoption is not encouraged. Worst still the child of adoption is often seen as illegitimate in the society.

ix. **No Heir and No Continuity**

The overriding concern of childless couples is that there will be no one to uphold the family lineage and inheritance after when they die. As a result, the man, in particular, is in perpetual agony and worry at the mere thought that nobody will answer his name after his death and inherit his property (Scott & Robert, 1998, 234-245). The frustrating pursuit of parenthood is an indeterminate kind of suffering. A bad marriage can be ended; a death can be grieved; an addiction can be conquered. Infertility is not like that, it is hard to deal with because every month the couple expect a miracle.

x. **A Sad end in this Life with no Future in the Next**

When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister; and she said to Jacob, “Give me children or I shall die” (Genesis 30:1). In most African cultures, child birth is seen as one of the essential requirements for a befitting burial. Childless couples, therefore, feel that they will miss it. Even more disturbing is the belief that these couples can neither reincarnate (having no offspring or surviving families into which their spirits can be born) nor be regarded as ancestors in the true sense of the word. They do not have children who will pour libation on them. Therefore, they cannot be admitted into the company of the ancestors. Bronya and Yuen (2014), add that infertility affectcouples in the following four aspects of their life: psychological well-being, marital relationships,

sexual relationships, and quality of life. There is evidence that infertility has a negative effect on the psychological well-being and sexual relationships of couples, but the evidence is inconclusive about the effect on marital relationships, quality of life.

xi. A Rocky Road

Childless couples travel the rocky road (hard life) of uncertainty. They find themselves asking, "what can we hope for? "Some couples see infertility as a malady and become consumed by it. Their longing for a child overshadow the joy in their lives. Money and time are no object in their pursuit to adopt or become pregnant. They will do anything, make any sacrifice, to have a child. They may have uncomfortable feelings toward those who are blessed with children. They may find fault with each other or become angry with themselves. They may doubt Gods wisdom as it applies to their lives. These are intense feelings and very real. Infertile couples often spend many years seeking medical treatment. Sometimes they succeed in the search for a child when the woman eventually conceive. At other times, treatments are unsuccessful.

It may not be clear even to a physician why a couple cannot conceive. In these areas, infertility has been an unbearable social problem for the woman, the couple, the extended family and the entire community. It is seen as a factor for genealogical termination and as such it is hated by all, but feared most by women. In particular, childless women suffer a lot because women are always blamed, for the childless situation.Motherhood is so often seen as the only way for a woman to stabilize her position in her husband's family and community. Studies have also shown that infertile men suffer more health complaints including sexual dysfunction compared to fertile women. Across African culture, children offer assurance of both personal immortality and old age insurance. Infertility is always a serious problem for the childless women.

Thus, childlessness could have lifelong impact on women and could affect their quality of life negatively. Furthermore, there are other socially sanctioned ways in which men can mask their infertility. Childless men may therefore be less traumatized: However, in cases where the infertility of a man is known in the society, such man may also suffer different kinds of trauma and stigma. In some cultures, childless men have lesser status in the community compared to their peers with children and their views may not be considered or they may not be allowed to contribute in some discussions. In Nigeria, high premium is traditionally placed on having children and this is celebrated in the societies by rites and rituals. Voluntary childlessness is rare with less than one percent of men and women stating zero as their ideal number of children (this most likely includes men and women with confirmed fecundity, and that have accepted their status as such).

xii. **Stigmatization of Infertile Women**

Negative consequences of infertility are usually stronger in Africa and are characterized by social stigmatization. The greatest stigmatization comes from the mother- in-law. The attitude of mother-in-laws towards their infertile daughters-in-law is usually unfavorable. The attitude of in-laws unfavorable towards the childless woman and in the Long-run they do support her dehumanization because they believe that the childless woman is aiding the termination of their lineage. As such, in-laws encourage the managing a second wife in attempt to ensure the continuation of their lineages. Other women do look down on the childless women, most of the time believe that the childless women are the architect of their condition. The unfavorable attitude against the childless women by other women include, gossip, scornful laughter downgrading looks, direct/indirect reference to their plight and sometimes open confrontation. The attitude of some children to the childless sometimes is pitiable.

The attitudes exhibited by some children towards infertile women is not good. They do not usually respect the childless women. Children feel that they do not have peers in the childless woman's house and as such do not have much to benefit from her. Sometimes, children do mock the childless women, calling them witches and they hardly help or assist them in any chore. However, this attitude changes when the childless woman fosters a child and as a result of the presence of that child, their attitude automatically becomes favorable.

In most part of Nigeria, a childless widow's life is one of misery. Childless widows struggle to survive in a deeply patriarchal and superstitious world, which grossly abuses them. An international organization Empowering Widows in Development (EWD) noted that the stigma and shame of their (childless women) state means that such widows are ostracized and forced to endure extreme poverty, ill health, violence, homelessness and discrimination in law and custom. In most parts of Nigeria, culturally speaking widows themselves are part of the inheritable property. Some widows may be lucky to be inherited by the brothers of her deceased husband who are wise and kind. But nobody ever inherits a childless widow. There is always superstition surrounding her existence.Miller (2017) says most people rates childless couples as significantly less fulfilled than men and women with children. This effect is driven primarily by feelings of moral outrage anger, disapproval and disgust toward the childless couples.

The discrimination against widows in inheritance is responsible for woman's desperation to have children and this desperation has its own consequences. Again on stigmatization of infertile woman, Laura (2009) asserts that many studies cite infertility as highly stressful, yet women's responses to infertility are quite variable. Lazarus and Folkman's cognitive phenomenological theory of stress, coping, and appraisal may explain this variability. Gender role identity, career role salience, and societal pressure for

motherhood are variables hypothesized to affect a woman's cognitive appraisal of infertility, thus influencing distress level.

A path analysis assessed the effects of gender-role identity, career role salience, social pressure for motherhood, and cognitive appraisal on distress. Women experiencing social pressure for motherhood viewed infertility as more stressful, women identifying with more positively valued instrumental gender role traits reported less distress, and women who endorsed more negatively valued instrumental gender role traits and cognitively appraised infertility as stressful reported greater distress.

2.6. Causes of Childlessness

Childlessness in marriage is one of the major causes of marital maladjustment and final breakdown of marriages in Nigeria. Given the premium which Africans in general and Nigerians in particular attach to children, any marriage that has nothing to show for it in terms of children after two years is usually under tension. Even where the man claims that he is not perturbed and is not worrying the wife about their childlessness, the woman herself does not feel at ease. The family of the man usually blames the woman for their childlessness even when the man is responsible for the problem. She is often called all sorts of names including being “a man”.

Bamidele and Oladipo (2017) opines that medically, there are different causes and risk factors for couples’ childlessness. According to Eisenberg (2011), infertility for men is most often caused by low or no sperm count and blockage of the tubes that transport sperm. Infertility in women on the other hand, is caused by a range of other factors such as problem with ovulation, blockage of fallopian tubes and physical damage to the uterus. Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD), advanced age, smoking, and excess alcohol use are also mentioned as factors of infertility. However, a considerable number

of people in the world have limited knowledge about the medical causes of infertility. The problem is thus usually perceived as caused by other factors other than medical ones. Some associate infertility with supernatural powers and others associate it with diseases or with the absence of reproductive organs.

A publication by Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research MFMER (2017) enumerates causes of childlessness in male, these include the following:

i Abnormal sperm production or function due to undescended testicles, genetic defects, health problems such as diabetes or infections such as chlamydia, gonorrhea, mumps or HIV. Enlarged veins in the testes (varicocele) can also affect the quality of sperm.

ii Problems with the delivery of sperm due to sexual problems, such as premature ejaculation; certain genetic diseases, such as cystic fibrosis; structural problems, such as a blockage in the testicle; or damage or injury to the reproductive organs.

iii Overexposure to certain environmental factors, such as pesticides and other chemicals, and radiation. Cigarette smoking, alcohol, marijuana or taking certain medications, such as select antibiotics, antihypertensives, anabolic steroids or others, can also affect fertility. Frequent exposure to heat, such as in saunas or hot tubs, can raise the core body temperature and may affect sperm production.

iv Damage related to cancer and its treatment, including radiation or chemotherapy. Treatment for cancer can impair sperm production. In female childlessness, according to MFMER sometimes severely causes of female infertility may include:

a Ovulation disorders, which affect the release of eggs from the ovaries. These include hormonal disorders such as polycystic ovary syndrome.

Hyperprolactinemia, a condition in which you have too much prolactin the hormone that stimulates breast milk production may also interfere with ovulation. Either too much thyroid hormone (hyperthyroidism) or too little (hypothyroidism) can affect the menstrual cycle or cause infertility. Other underlying causes may include excessive exercise, eating disorders, injury or tumors.

b Uterine or cervical abnormalities, including abnormalities with the opening of the cervix, polyps in the uterus or the shape of the uterus. Noncancerous (benign) tumors in the uterine wall (uterine fibroids) may rarely cause infertility by blocking the fallopian tubes. More often, fibroids interfere with implantation of the fertilized egg.

c Fallopian tube damage or blockage, often caused by inflammation of the fallopian tube (salpingitis). This can result from pelvic inflammatory disease, which is usually caused by a sexually transmitted infection, endometriosis or adhesions.

d Endometriosis, which occurs when endometrial tissue grows outside of the uterus, this may affect the function of the ovaries, uterus and fallopian tubes.

e Primary ovarian insufficiency (early menopause), when the ovaries stop working and menstruation ends before age 40. Although the cause is often unknown, certain factors are associated with early menopause, this include immune system diseases, certain genetic conditions such as Turner syndrome or carriers of Fragile X syndrome, radiation or chemotherapy treatment, and smoking.

f Pelvic adhesions, bands of scar tissue that bind organs after pelvic infection, appendicitis, or abdominal or pelvic surgery.

g Cancer and its treatment. Certain cancers particularly female reproductive cancers often severely impair female fertility. Both radiation and chemotherapy may affect fertility.

h Other conditions. Medical conditions associated with delayed puberty or the absence of menstruation (amenorrhea), such as celiac disease, poorly controlled diabetes and some autoimmune diseases such as lupus, can affect a woman's fertility. Genetic abnormalities also can make conception and pregnancy less likely.

Risk factors

Many of the risk factors for both male and female infertility are the same.According to Mayo Foundation for Medial Education and Research (MFMER), the risk fators include:

i ***Age***. A woman's fertility gradually declines with age, especially in her mid-30s, and it drops rapidly after age 37. Infertility in older women may be due to the number and quality of eggs, or to health problems that affect fertility. Men over age 40 may be less fertile than younger men, and may have a higher rate of certain medical conditions in offspring, such as psychiatric disorders or certain cancers.

ii ***Tobacco use***. Smoking tobacco or marijuana by either partner reduces the likelihood of pregnancy. Smoking also reduces the possible benefit of fertility treatment. Miscarriages are more frequent in women who smoke. Smoking can increase the risk of erectile dysfunction and a low sperm count in men.

iii ***Alcohol use***. For women, there's no safe level of alcohol use during conception or pregnancy. Avoid alcohol if you're planning to become pregnant. Alcohol use

increases the risk of birth defects, and may contribute to infertility. For men, heavy alcohol use can decrease sperm count and motility.

iv ***Being overweight***. Among American women, an inactive lifestyle and being overweight may increase the risk of infertility. A man's sperm count may also be affected if he is overweight.

v ***Being underweight***. Women at risk of fertility problems include those with eating disorders, such as anorexia or bulimia, and women who follow a very low calorie or restrictive diet.

vi ***Exercise issues***. Insufficient exercise contributes to obesity, which increases the risk of infertility. Less often, ovulation problems may be associated with frequent strenuous, intense exercise in women who are not overweight.

Utsua (2012) observes that despite the desire for children as a gift for the achievement of self-fulfillment and continuation of lineage, childlessness stands remains a serious impediment. The causes of childlessness may be spiritual, physical or psychological (emotional). Skafte (2016) notes that there are a lot of causes for involuntary childlessness and in about 2/3 of the cases, it is for the individual couple a combination of several causes. According to him, the causes are categorized into four.

i. **Low sperm count can hinder pregnancy**. If there are not enough sperm or if the sperm are unable to swim up into the Fallopian tubes, pregnancy is not possible. Hereditary circumstances and possibly environmental circumstances play a role in the quality of the sperm. The mumps or illnesses in the scrotum may also lower the sperm count. Changes in the cervix, for example cervical catarrh or reduced production of mucous can be the cause of the sperm not being able to reach and fertilize the egg.

ii. **Lack of ovulation hinders pregnancy**. Often, this is caused by hormonal circumstances, hereditary conditions or obesity.

iii. **Adhesion of the Fallopian tubes can prevent pregnancy**. The egg coming from the ovary is not caught and therefore fertilisation is unable to take place. Adhesion of the Fallopian tubes can, for example arise after a pelvic inflammatory disease (chlamydia infection) or stomach surgery.

iv. **Changes in the uterus**, for example fibroids or polypi, can be the cause of the fertilised egg being unable to attach to the mucous membrane of the uterus. With approximately 25% of the involuntary childless there is no evidence of abnormal conditions with neither the woman nor the man.

The woman's age is of critical importance. The older the woman is, the harder it is for her to become pregnant. Zeck (2015) says that, involuntary childlessness can have various causes, such as hormonal imbalance, pathological alterations in human organs and serious illness. Moreover, it is often due to an unhealthy lifestyle

i. Disorders in development of ovum and sperm

ii. Problems with the fusion of egg and sperm

iii. Problems arising after fertilization

iv. Same sex partnerships

i. **Disorders in Development of ovaries and Sperm**: The reason for childlessness may be that no oocyte (oogenesis) or no sufficient number of sperms (spermatogenesis) reach maturity. If no oocyte matures, this is mostly due to a malfunction of the endocrine system with its endocrine glands (hypothalamus,

pituitary gland, ovaries etc.). The underlying endocrine disorder has to be determined by doing hormone analysis and eventually treated appropriately.

The presence of spermatozoa is assessed by a microscopic examination of the semen sample. Many millions of motile spermatozoa are necessary for the successful fertilization of an oocyte. However, only a few of them actually reach the fallopian tube. Within the fallopian tube the oocyte has to be surrounded by several hundreds of sperms for fertilization. Too few mobile sperms result in a failure of fertilization. It is rare that sperm abnormalities are only caused by hormonal deficiency, but more frequently by a defect in the testicles themselves, which are more difficult to treat (compared to problems with the egg ripening process in women). The diagnosis of male infertility as a course of childlessness requires special tests. Treatment with drugs or hormones may be tried in order to improve number and quality of mobile spermatozoa. Currently, there are hardly any treatment options for neither testicular degeneration nor genetic disorders that may affect the testes.

ii. **Problems with the fusion of egg and sperm**. Even if there is a mature oocyte (oogenesis) and sufficient mobile spermatozoa, there is still a multitude of factors that may inhibit the fusion of ovum and sperm (fertilization). Tubal blockage preventing gamete fusion accounts for the majority of cases. These include adhesions in the fallopian tubes as a result of infections, adhesions between the tubes and ovaries, absence of the tubes as a result of previous surgery as well as tubal obstruction after sterilization. In some very rare cases immunological processes in the cervix (neck of the uterus) can impair the motility of sperm cells.

iii. **Problems arising after fertilization**. The early embryo might die before implantation (or nidation) due to either inherited or acquired developmental

deficiencies. Furthermore, implantation may fail, because the lining of the uterus (endometrium) is not properly prepared. In some cases the mother's immune system may identify the embryo as exogenous protein and reject it. Unexplained childlessness (infertility) is also referred to as idiopathic sterility. In these cases, it is important to be aware of psychosomatic components, for emotional issues can have a major impact on the human body. Therefore, psychological issues should be evaluated in order to take the necessary steps to improve the chances of conceiving.

v. **Voluntary Childlessness**: Chanie (2012) says around the globe, more women and men are delaying childbirth, with many deciding against having children altogether. Economic recession, high unemployment rates, education and career ambitions contribute to the phenomenon. In most developed nations, one in 10 women in their late 40s have no children, and in Italy and Switzerland, childlessness rate approaches one in four women. The demographic trend spells trouble for democracies with big entitlement programs for the elderly: Aging electorates could offer less support for education and community programs for children, as a shrinking population of younger adults struggle to pay for elders' health care. To encourage childbirth, governments try cash awards and tax credits and even punitive policies of taxes on childless adults or restricting contraception, careers and education options for women. Of course, unwanted children are another challenge for governments. Among the more successful governments at balancing careers for women and tangible protections for families is France, with maternity/paternity leave, child care, after-school programs and cash allowances.

Chanie (2012) further argued that, Government policies can influence the childbearing rate. Maternity and paternity leave, childcare, part-time employment, job security, cash allowances, tax credits and other financial incentives are among the measures to encourage childbearing. Punitive polices like prohibiting abortion or contraception and restricting girls' education and women's employment are also tried. Providing tangible support forcouples is an critical factor influencing childbearing decisions. For example, in France, where the childlessness rate is around 10 percent, government policies and programs, including maternity/paternity leave, nurseries, afterschool programs and child allowances, facilitate family building and women's participation in the workforce.

Guenthen (1988) argues that adulthood is often described around the task of parenting and understandably so, since 95 percent of Americans marry and expect to have children in the course of their married life. The reality in the United States is that conception is not possible for 10 to 15 percent of married couples. Another 5 to 10 percent experience repeated spontaneous abortions or miscarriages and approximately 5 percent of married couples simply decide not to have children. As more women choose careers, this number will increase. It is predicted that within this generation even more couples will consider remaining childless. The question for the Christian is: Is voluntary childlessness an ethically and morally acceptable choice?

He added that although there are a variety of verses and passages (especially in the Old Testament) which treat the themes of procreation and infertility (Gen. 1:28-29, 11:30f, 20:17,21:1, 29:31,1 Sam. 1:2-2:21, Judg.13:3, Ps. 113:9f., Isa. 49:19, 54:1), there are no texts dealing with voluntary childlessness. Only 1 Corinthians 7:25-40 appears to address the issue of choosing a particular status (i.e., celibacy) as a way of life over against another (i.e., marriage) within the family structure. To choose celibacy is also to choose childlessness. Still, it is very clear that the selected biblical text does not address the

question of voluntary childlessness. There is a parallel between choosing to marry (or not) and choosing to produce children (or not). First, celibacy and childlessness both affect one's lifestyle. Because a marital relationship or children are not at the center of their lives, singles and childless people carry a different set of interests, priorities, and responsibilities than married people. Second, celibacy and childlessness are both considered as deviationfrom the social norm of marrying and producing children. Third, both single and childless people do not participate in the multiplication of the human race although there are more and more exceptions as singles conceive outside of marriage or are allowed to adopt children.

With this voluntary childlessness, the consequences is that the population of childless aged couples, especially women, is expected to grow rapidly. With the decline in large families and upswing in childlessness, the low fertility rates in many developed countries are unlikely to rebound to replacement levels anytime soon, especially given the relatively high levels of youth unemployment, the continuing economic recession and gloomy prospects for a rapid, painless recovery. Couples are not given the option of chosen childlessness in the biblical revelation. To the contrary, we are commanded to receive children with joy as God's gifts, and to raise them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. We are to find many of our deepest joys and satisfactions in raising children within the context of the family. Those who reject children want to have the joy of sex and marital companionship without the responsibilities of parenthood. They rely on others to produce and sustain the generations to come.

This epidemic of deliberate childlessness will not be corrected by secular rethinking. In an effort to separate the pleasure of sex from the power of procreation, modern Americans think that sex totally free from constraint or conception is their right. Children, of course, do represent a serious constraint on the life of parents. Parenthood is

not a hobby, but represents one of the most crucial opportunities for the making of saints found in this life. Meanwhile the legal fights over apartment complexes and other accommodations come down to the claim that adults ought to be able to live in a child-free environment. Others claim that too much tax money and public attention is given to children, and that this is an unfair imposition upon those who choose not to "breed." Of course, the very use of this terminology portrays the rebellion in this argument. Animals breed. Human beings procreate and raise children to the glory of God.

Without doubt, children do impose themselves upon our creature comforts, waking us up in the middle of the night with demanding needs and inconvenient interruptions. Parents learn all too quickly that children are not only the smiling cherub sleeping in the crib, but also the dirty-faced preschooler, the headstrong teenager, and the boisterous grade-schooler. The church should insist that the biblical formula calls for adult to marry and bear children. This is a reminder of the responsibility to raise boys to be husbands and fathers and girls to be wives and mothers. God's glory is seen in this, for the family is a critical arena where the glory of God is either displayed or denied. It is just as simple as that. The church must help the society regain its sanity. Willful barrenness or chosen childlessness must be named as moral rebellion. To demand that marriage means sex but not children is to defraud the creator of His joy and pleasure in seeing the saints raising children for His kingdom.

2.7. Implications of Childlessness

From the perspective of many or most African societies, marriage and procreation are intertwined and inseparable. Obiyo (2016)states that it is almost always presumed that readiness for marriage is readiness for procreation; to get married is an opportunity to contribute freely, through procreation, to the survival of the lineage and society at large. During marriage (both traditional and Christian), one of the most appreciated and

common gestures of good-will shown to the newly married couple is praying for them for the fruit of the womb: “may God grant you many children”, “you shall give birth to male and female”, “in nine months we shall gather to celebrate the birth of your baby”. Having children is a natural part of the reproductive cycle. This expectation emanates from young people as individuals, as a couple, and from the society. The problem arises when a marriage fails in procreation. Childlessness obviously has effects on both married partners and their relations. Some of these include:

Social Implications

Lechner, Balman and Van (2006) states thatm despite recent developments in infertility treatments, around 4% of all couples who want children remain infertile.After a period of many years of waiting, these people remain childless and have to accept that having a child may never be a reality. Childless couples experience distress because of a sense of loss and as a result go through a period of bereavement. Even though there is no actual death apparent, involuntary childless people still go through a process of mourning for a child that they never had. These feelings of distress, sometimes combined with an experienced lack of social support, may result in several physiological and psychological distresses, such as health complaints, depression, anxiety and even complicated bereavement. Jordan and Rovenson (1999) assert that research has shown that this experienced distress is greater for women than for men. Although the distress declines as the period of involuntary childlessness increases, the feelings of loss probably last a lifetime.

Berghuis and Stanton (2003) stress that it’s pathetic the way in which involuntary childless people cope with their loss influences the distress they experience and the possible symptoms related to this distress, such as health problems, anxiety, depression and bereavement. Generally, two coping styles have been identified in childless couples.

People can use an active coping style, often intended to solve the underlying problem. With respect to involuntary childlessness, seeking contact with fellow sufferers and finding a new alternative meaning in life to replace the unfulfilled wish for a child and parenthood are examples of active coping. In contrast, people can use an emotional and passive coping style, often intended to influence the emotions or results that are caused by the problem. With respect to involuntary childlessness, avoidance, withdrawal from external contacts and fixation on children are examples of passive emotional coping. In general, the more active and problem-focused coping styles tend to be more effective in dealing with difficult situations, Holahan *(*1996) says active coping might have a positive influence on dealing with the distress of childlessness; passive coping, on the contrary, might even worsen the effects of the experienced distress. However, because involuntary childlessness is a chronic and uncontrollable condition, the effectiveness of a coping style cannot be determined as clearly as often is suggested.

Terry and Hynes (2009) says studies of childless people under treatment for their infertility reveal that certain forms of active and passive coping styles both prove to be functional in dealing with certain aspects of their treatment for childlessness related diseases Abbey (2008) writes, involuntary childless people experience the need to share their loss with others. Getting the social support they need may be an important step in dealing with the given situation of childlessness. Sufficient social support might even counterbalance the negative effects of an ineffective coping style. However, when these people experience that their grief is not sufficiently acknowledged by their social environment, the social support they get does not fulfil their needs. If getting good social support could protect people from the negative effects of an ineffective coping style, the opposite might also be true. If involuntary childless people are not getting any social

support, or if they are unsatisfied with the support given, this may result in even more distress.

Holahan (2009) discovered that almost all studies of the relations between coping with childlessness, social support and distress focus on people who are under treatment for their situation and therefore have still not come to accept their childlessness as a definite fact. These people still retain hope of a possible conception, and their coping styles and experienced social support might differ substantially from those of people who are not treated for their challenge anymore and consider themselves as definitely childless. However, for those who have not yet acknowledge their involuntary childlessness, there is still little insight into the relationships between distress, coping and social support. Ramezanzadeh (2004) maintains that it is expected that involuntary childless women would experience more distress than involuntary childless men and that experienced distress would decline over the period of involuntary childlessness.

Furthermore, it is expected that a positive relationship between passive coping and distress and a negative relationship between active coping and distress (i.e. health complaints, depression, anxiety and complicated grief)is influenced by the level of dissatisfaction with the experienced social support.

Psychological Implications

Reprod (2014) says the psychological implications include the following: psychological turmoil; being difficult to control in some situations; reduced self-esteem and nursing the feelings of failure. Many childless couples are upset following the events that generated in the treatment process such as hearing negative pregnancy test especially when they spend a lot of money, consuming drugs and passing treatment steps that in some

procedures were invasive. The need for surgery on the genitals or using a surrogacy or oocyte donation cause tremendous shock to them.

Reprod (2014) adds that, frequent failures in remedying childlessness in some couples and learning about the failure of other treatments at the childlessness clinic centers which some participants experienced reduce their self-esteems. Women who become pregnant, which afterwards end in miscarriage, experience a sense of failure as some of the women said with tearful eyes, “So much medicine and treatment substantially reduced my self-confidence’’. Another childless woman stated “I was sure the fetus will stay and that I became mother from the moment they implanted it, but finally I lost my child’’.

Hagestad and Call (2007) maintains that parenthood is central to a meaningful and fulfilling life, and that the lives of childless people are emptier, less rewarding, and, in old age, lonelier, than the lives of parents. More specifically, people tend to believe that parenthood entails substantial social (companionship, intimacy, support), developmental (maturity and growth), and existential (expansion of self and opportunities to love, be loved, and feel useful and needed) advantages.

Rubinstein (1987) assumes the benefits of children are closely linked with core psychological needs for connectedness, engaging activity, meaning, security and control (e.g. reliable support in old age), and experiencing a positive self, the fulfillment of which appears to be major correlate of subjective well-being. Angner (2005) adds that expectation that parenthood has psychological benefits is also implicit in the literature on the detrimental emotional effects of unattained and blocked life goals, in particular, goals that are highly valued both personally and culturally. Indeed, parenthood stands out as a central life goal, with virtually everyyoung adult planning to have children.

McQuillan (2007) says parenthood is also culturally salient, as evidenced by the strong expectations towards parenthood in western societies. Park (2002) argues that although the social stigma of childlessness has softened, it still persists. This view is supported by Connidis, (2011) that attitudes towards non-normative life paths would lead us to predict that childless individuals receive less support and fewer rewards than parents. Blake (2009) states that childlessness clearly represents a blocked life goal to most people who are now at midlife and especially to those in old age. Specifically, not having children may decrease social recognition, and involuntary childlessness may lead to a sense of failure and disappointment, that, in turn, would lower people's sense of well-being. Childless persons in their 40s especially, are more likely to prepare for a life without children, thus bringing potential Psychological consequences of childlessness more to the fore than in younger couples.

Cognitive well-being; Pettus (2010) considers two aspects of cognitive well-being: satisfaction with life (i.e., life satisfaction) and satisfaction with self (i.e., self-esteem). Life satisfactionrefers to an overall assessment of ones quality of life whereas self-esteemis a global evaluation of self-worth, Self-acceptance, self-respect, and self-satisfaction. Both self-esteem are believed to result from people's evaluating their lives according to various standards, such as the accomplishments of others, their earlier lives, personal goals and expectations, and the expectations of significant others. Bowling (2005) reiterates that goal attainments appear to create stronger satisfaction gains when these goals are highly valued in one's culture. Schimmack (2002) says childlessness represents a disruption of the expected and projected life course for the bulk of childless persons in midlife and old age. Not having had children may thus lead to a sense of loss or failure, which may in turn affects positive self-evaluation particularly by comparing

oneself to the majority who are parents or even grandparents, by perceiving oneself as not meeting social expectations or by feeling that one is “not doing the right thing.”

Mark (2008) adds that the benefits from the mere presence of children,that parents experience may boost self-esteem and make parents feel like better persons. Parenthood provides opportunities for belonging, contributing, and receiving favorable feedback, and opportunities for helping and taking care of others. The psychological benefits of caregiving have been found to be particularly pronounced among women. Positive and negative affects represent spontaneous, ongoing emotional reactions to everyday experience. Generally, life circumstances seem to have relatively small effects on affective experience, unless these circumstances directly impact the person’s immediate life situation, for example causing stress, conflict, or poor sleep.

Indeed, according to parents children generate more daily problems and worries but also more fun and enjoyment .Thus, having children presumably brings more challenges into people’s lives, i.e. more positive and negative effects. Mark notes further that influence should be more pronounced during the childcare stage, although parents are still affected by the children’s lives even after the children have moved out. Djernes (2006) says depression is a mental health construct that refers to lowered mood, loss of interest, self-deprecation, and hopelessness. Depression and negative effects are commonly conceived as general measures of psychological distress.Mirowsky and Ross, (2003) adds that loneliness is defined as an unwelcome feeling of lack or loss of companionship (Bowling, 2005). With higher age, the risk of depression and loneliness increases due to the loss of health (mobility) and peers (e.g., partner, sibling, and friends. However, childlessness may exacerbate these detrimental consequences of aging. Both depression and loneliness are sensitive to lack of support, companionship, and intimacy and the

literature consistently links childlessness in old age with psychological well-being networks, support deficits, institutionalization, and higher usage of formal services.

Wenger and Schutzy (2007) put it that the association between parenthood and depression, however, is less straightforward among middle-aged adults. On the one hand, involuntarily childless couples may perceive themselves as failures or regret not having had children. Lecci (1994) says life- regrets are indeed correlated with depression yet, studies on small, non-representative samples show that expressions of regrets about not having had children is either rare or only moderately common among childless persons in midlife and beyond. Mirowsky and Ross (2003) saythat having children protects against depression and loneliness in old age but not in middle-age.

Emotional Implications

The third theme consists of the sub-categories of fear, anxiety and worry; loneliness and guilt; grief and depression and regret. Fear and anxiety characterises the lives childless couples who realized that they may never have children. As one of a childless person expressed, “I fear that I can never have a child particularly that my husband eternally loves and supports me. I constantly ask God, don’t disappoint me in this way’’. Another participant said, “Although I told my husband before marriage that I have problems to become pregnant, but I'm afraid what happens in the future’’. Turning age 30 without children and the challenge of social pressure around on the couples is a serious concern in the life of most couples. As narrated by a member of the researcher’s church; “I cannot stand the way people look at me and my husband. Needless to say that I fear my husband gets disrupted again. His feelings are really essential to me’. Another person said, “Since I got married very late. I'm concerned about not to respond to treatment’’.

There are feelings of loneliness and guilt from childless couples. As another person expressed, “My home is silent from morning to night so that sometimes I am talking to myself in the fear of not becoming dumb”. The women who get emotional support from their families, especially from their husbands, have a feeling of guilt not being able to make their husband the father of a child. As one stated, ’I have tested my husband several times he is so gentle and never blames me as an infertile woman. This constantly causes my guilt consciousness as I think I am the source of his misery in this regard’’.

Most couples, however, experienced sadness one way or the other due to expressed worries by the family members, the bitter reactions of their community or being blamed by their spouse for the childlessness. These issues are generally related to the duration of childlessness and the longer the couples experienced childlessness, the more they became depressed. As one of the women in the researchers consistory stated, “12 years of infertility is a life time. Now I am completely depressed. I can bear no more’’ .The challenge of childless couples seeing families embracing a child, conduct and observe pregnant women, small children and babies especially while they are being breastfed, or call “Mommy” is one of the many problems they face. A woman expressed her feelings in these words, “When I see a pregnant woman, I say to myself: God, when will I be wearing pregnant women’s clothes?’’.

Childless couples react in so many ways, they express fear, anxiety and worry; fatigue and helplessness; grief and depression; and hopelessness. Fear of going for a pregnancy test and fear of telling the husband the negative result in some participants, anxiety about how the treatment process and concerns about the result of treatment are some of issues experienced by childless couples. Couples are worried if they do all of these and the result turn out to be negative, what do they do’’. The frequent use of hormonal treatments and non-medical interventions and repeated failures is frustrating for some of

the childless couples. Frequent and long trips from couples' hometowns to the clinic centers as well as unexpected length of treatment cycles leave some of them exhausted and hopeless, as many expressed their tiredness after so many years of continued treatment.

In the year 2015, a nongovernmental organization called Christian Caregivers and Peace Initiators of Nigeria (CCAPIN) conducted a workshop in Kaduna where so many childless Christian couples attended and expressed their feelings, A participant said, "Sometimes I feel really frustrated, I like to commit suicide''. Experience of such boring conditions has caused many participants to become grief-stricken, and depressed. A participant narrated her experience in this way, "Whenever I see that my test result is negative, I say to myself 'I wish I could become pregnant'. My heart is full of sorrow and pain''. The observations in the field of research indicated that the participants were frequently surprised and concerned not only because of the negative test results but the cost of the treatment.

Some participants were asking the medical staff about where they could get loan or reduce costs, to which unfortunately they did not receive encouraging answers. Some participants stopped treatment because of the cost. As one of the participants expressed, "I cannot do it as it is not affordable; I have nobody and no source to seek help''. When participants with lots of difficulties are able to provide for the cost of the treatment and began the process of treatment with hopes for fertility, the prospects of defeat would become intolerable to them. Extreme hopelessness when the fertility test after the treatment of their various causes of childlessness were positive but after a few weeks the pregnancy sometimes interrupted. One of the women expressed her feeling by these words, "When a lot of enthusiasm results in failure, you become extremely hopeless and disenchanted".

Utsua (2012) reviews that reproduction Benue State and Tivcultures is one of the highest values and when childbearing seems impossible, probable psychological crisis set in. Having children has a significant impact on the mental health of infertile couples, stabilizing women status within the family and community. Childlessness causes a couple's inability to achieve the desired social role.It is often associated with psychological distress. On the other hand, the dramatic advances in the assisted reproductive technology have acted as a double-edged sword, itself causing mental, social, moral, financial, and legal concerns. Moreover, the review of literature on the consequences of childlessness reveals that most studies did not conduct a separate inquiry and study of the psychological consequences of childlessness and the consequences of its treatment. Therefore, the comparing this study findings, with findings of the existing studies, is more or less difficult in some cases.

According to Verhaak (2003) the use of therapies is one of the factors affecting the psychological problems of childlessness. Fortunately, there are some studies in the literature that only discuss the psychological consequences of the treatment. Many childless couples had experienced some psychological consequences due to both childlessness and medical interventions like psychological turmoil, fear and anxiety and worry, grief and depression, but consequences like mental engagement, loneliness, guilt, and regret were only reported as childlessness consequences. The consequences like difficulty in self-control, reduced self-esteem, feelings of failure and helplessness, and hopelessness were experienced following treatment process. Childless couples experienced mental problems for example, a sense of loss of personal control, grief, depression, anxiety, stress, loss of self-esteem, and guilt. However, most studies have not separated the psychological consequences of childlessness from its treatments or interventions.

Verhaak further assert that cognitive and emotional-affective reactions resulting from treatment process, many people being treated have more anxiety, depression and low self-esteem than the fertile peers. Moreso, in a study on childless couples in an infertility treatment center, couples experience emotions like deep grief, guilt, loneliness and fear of the future insecurity. However, many health care providers and mental health clinics still give little value to the negative psychological effects of childlessness. These feelings are also experienced by couples in their study on the cognitive and emotional-affective reactions due to childlessness. In a qualitative study, person's guilt is rooted in his or her childless status and it is consistent with the present study, while unclear future usually resulted in frustration, worry and fear in childless couples.

Couples are sometimes exposed to treatments with psychosocial turmoil. Shavazi (2014) in a cross-sectional study of 585 couples who had been reported in women's using hormone injections, 53% reported discomfort on the treatment that failed, and 44% expressed anxiety while being treated. Two of the most common negative feelings were hopelessness and impatience. 49% of respondents reported they felt uncomfortable when they were around pregnant women or couples with children. He further said that childless couples experience grief and hopelessness following repeated failures, anxiety during the treatment process and unclear result and the feeling of regret seeing pregnant women.

The stress stem from the non-affordable treatment costs, especially among people of low income earners. This was observed to be a serious problem. In addition, Der (2015) observes that, despite differences in socio-cultural backgrounds in developing countries, many studies have shown that the consequences of childlessness are often surprisingly much, but there is a significant difference between the experience of childlessness in developing and developed countries. Furthermore, he states that childlessness in

developing countries means a patient's body and a human identity has not completed that have direct consequence on the social and psychological implications because childbearing is so central and key to women's power. In developed societies, voluntary childlessness is viewed as a more viable and legitimate option and women without children are often presumed to be voluntarily childfree.In cultures in which there is no concept of voluntary childfree status like Nigeria, it is impossible to hide childlessness. Distress of childlessness, therefore, is likely to be greater in developing countries like Nigeria.

Economic Implications

From economic perspective, childlessness has several effects ones economic status.It also has possible positive effects. First, by not having children means not spending on children welfare, and higher education, childless adults may save more money and have more assets. Being childless means not having one or both householders take time off from work, so childless adults may earn more by working longer. Older childless persons also may earn more because of the returns to greater work experience when younger. Older childless women may earn more because they avoid the wage penalty of motherhood. Higher earnings, whatever the reason, tend to lead to higher savings and assets. Greater assets, in turn, would increase income in old age and lower the likelihood of one becoming poor.

From a negative perspective, childless adults, with fewer financial demands, may work less or choose jobs that trade lower compensation for higher nonfinancial rewards and thereby have less income. Such choices could reduce savings, too. There is little evidence whether, on net, the possible positive or negative economic effects are more important or whether they offset each other. Allen (2009) states that research on the effects of childlessness for American elders examines mainly psychological well-being

or the availability and provision of instrumental support and care. Despite reasons to think that childless elders fare worse in both domains, they generally fare about the same as parents, other things being equal. He further adds that the effects of childlessness for elders in other countries addresses mainly psychological well-being or instrumental.

Freedman (1996) did a study which examined the relationships between family structure, social support, and use of nursing home services. He found out that having a living daughter or sibling is associated with a lower likelihood of being admitted to a nursing home, but having a living son is not. Aykan (2003) reports that childlessness raises the risk of nursing home use for women but not men. Lakdawalla and colleagues (2003) report a negative relationship between number of living children and entering a nursing home for persons aged 65 years and older.

Johnson and Favreault's (2004) study the economic analysis and finds that women aged 65–75 years who were childless or raised children outside of marriage had about the same wealth and same probability of being poor, and both were economically worse off than continuously married mothers. A literature search did not reveal studies with direct relationship between childlessness and conventional indicators of elders' economic well-being. The one study of retirement that examined childlessness. Szinovacz, DeViney, and Davey, (2001) found mixed relationships with the likelihood of retiring for Americans aged 55–75 years. Mellor (2001) reports that the presence of children and other potential informal caregivers is unrelated to buying or intending to buy long-term care insurance. In other countries, analyses of how childlessness affects elders' economic outcomes are similarly rare.

Budig and England (2011) opines that wages of working-age persons help determine retirement income and savings, evidence on how parenthood affects wages in early and

mid-adulthood is also relevant to understanding the impact of childlessness on elders' economic status. The literature on this issue suggests that the impacts are highly gendered. American mothers' wages are significantly lower than wages of women without children after controlling for work experience, education, and other relevant characteristics. Lundberg and Rose, (2000) Estimates that the net difference ranged from 5% to 15%. Fathers' wages, in contrast, do not fall relative to men without children and may even rise slightly.

Though theory does not yield a clear prediction of the direction of effect, intuition and random sampling suggest that childless older adults are likely to be financially better off. This seems especially likely for wealth because even if a childless couple or person earned less, savings are likely to be higher if the lifetime reduction in earnings was less than what the couple or person would have spent on children. Childless elders could enjoy more leisure, more no pecuniary rewards, or both and still accumulate more wealth. The adverse impact of motherhood on working-age women's wages suggests that childless single women and couples will have higher incomes and assets later in life relative to single mothers and couples with children. Because parenthood is not associated with lower wages for fathers, childless single men may not be financially better off later in life relative to single male parents. Thus, the economic consequences of childlessness may differ by gender and type of household.

Mudege and Ibisoni (2014) notes that childlessness has major psychological and social implications for affected persons, especially in settings where fertility is highly valued. While a number of studies have documented how childlessness is perceived in these societies and the multitude of adverse consequences suffered by affected individuals, studies have not made a clear distinction between voluntary and involuntary childlessness in these settings. Using focus-group discussions from three Nigerian

communities, their study explores societal perception and acceptance of childlessness in Nigeria, focusing on both voluntary and involuntary childlessness. Findings show that not having children, whether voluntarily or not, contributes to a kind of invisibility and poverty in Nigeria. Regardless of the reason, voluntary childlessness evoked strong negative feelings among discussants. The study also shows the broad definition given to voluntary childlessness in Nigeria as including individuals that are childless because they chose to stay with an infertile partner and also those who could not have biological children and chose not to adopt. Childlessness is not yet embraced in Nigeria, where pronatalist culture is still very strong. However, the study noted a more tolerant attitude to involuntary childlessness, suggesting possible changes in perceptions of the condition.

Moral Implications

Family dreams or expectation can be complex. One couple longs for a baby girl after giving birth to four sons. Another infertile coupledreams of cradling just one infant they can call their own. If the first couple's hopes are shattered, they are still thrilled to take home a baby boy. But what about the Childless couple's shattered dreams? They have spent time, money, and emotional energy on infertility treatments and adoption pursuits. What if a bolted door that says keep out is the only thing waiting for them at the end of their quest. For them, watching other families from the sidelines hardly seems like an acceptable alternative. Childless couples travel the rocky road of uncertainty. They find themselves asking, "What can we hope for?"

Schmal (2017) says some couples see childlessness as a malady and are consumed by it. Their longing for a child swallows up the joy in their lives. Money and time are no objects in their pursuit to adopt or become pregnant. They will do anything, make any sacrifice, to have a child. They may have uncomfortable feelings toward those who are

blessed with children. They may find fault with each other or become angry with themselves. They may doubt God's wisdom as it applies to their lives. These are intense feelings. And very real for that matter. Such couples often spend many years seeking medical treatment. Sometimes their pursuits are successful, and they eventually conceive. At other times treatments are unsuccessful. It may not be clear even to a physician why a couple cannot conceive. The suspicion of infertility and the eventual validation of that suspicion is always traumatic. Disappointment and the prospect of unrealized expectations occur often in life, but never quite to the degree that they do with childlessness.

White (2012) adds that unwilling childlessness can be a difficult burden to live with. All cases can look the same from the outside. On the inside, in light of the often painfully personal details that define each case, the picture is rather different. It can be a pressing, cold certainty that you and your wife will never naturally conceive. Or it can be an elusive uncertainty, constantly teasing the possibility of resolution yet one more year down the road.

Robert (2006) maintains that it is dangerous to conclude that childlessness is always a curse from God. Even in the Old Testament, this is not the message. Ruth's childlessness from her first marriage was not said to be a curse (Ruth 1). When God answered Hannah's impassioned plea for a child (1 Sam 1), it was not given in the context of removing a curse. In addition, in Deuteronomy 25:5, God tells the brother of a childless widow to marry her and this does not in any way imply that her childlessness is a curse. The prophetess Anna was apparently childless when she was widowed (Lk 2:36), and she was clearly a godly woman.To say that childlessness is a curse or a judgment from God is simply not true. God has His purposes hence in some cases, He allows childlessness. Some cannot have children for medical reasons. In some cases, there is

nothing medically wrong with the husband or wife. So, praying and looking into the Scriptures gives peace that it is God's plan for the childless and has to be gladly accepted.

Skafete (2016) posits that the Scriptures teaches that childlessness is not a punishment or judgment from God. We are complete in Christ: childless people are complete and single people are complete in Christ. In Genesis 2:24 we are told, "A man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh". In other words, husband and wife are complete as a family. Children are additional blessings from the Lord. This does not mean that a couple is incomplete when they do not have children.

He further reiterated the need to make it clear to Christians that, human beings belong to Christ and to the Church and in that sense should experience completeness in Christ and not in child bearing. It is helpful if people in the church have this perspective so that they do not look down on those who are childless, as if there is something wrong with them. It's a known fact that in Singapore today, more couples are childless, and some of these have decided to be childless. Is it wrong for people to choose not to have children? There are some couples I know who have made the choice. A principle that is helpful is in 1 Corinthians 7:20 which says, "Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him." It is a good principle that teaches us to accept and enjoy the place we are in - and to realise that in that condition, we can be a blessing to other people as well. There is no record of Paul being married and having children. Yet he gave advice to children and parents. It does not mean that you have to have children in order to be blessing to people including parents. It's important to have children in our minds especially when one is childless, because children teach us to be humble. Isaiah 54:1-3 - The barren sing! These verses refer to spiritual parents.

Olford (2016), a renowned Bible teacher comments on the advantages of a life of singleness from 1 Corinthians 7. Saying;

> First, it is a life of compensation (verse 28b). If you have kids, you have major responsibilities. A single person and those married without children are free from a lot of anxiety. The moment you have a child, you have a new set of responsibilities.
>
> It is, secondly, a life of contentment (v 31-32). We are told we can easily be engrossed with the things of this life. Childlessness means we can choose to live simply rather than be entangled with the concerns of bringing up children. The cares of life, the desire for riches and the lust for other things (Mk 4:19) are very real in Singapore society.
>
> Thirdly, it is a life of concentration (v 33-35) on priorities — keeping Christ central. Applying Paul's trend of thought, a married person who has children can be very worried about how to please the spouse and how to bring up kids. Being childless means we can give greater focus and attention to the Lord Himself I remember talking to one couple and finding out that the wife had had to stop work the moment they had children. She left her job because it was affecting her relationship with Christ Himself. She just did not have time with Him.
>
> Finally, being childless means a life of contribution (v 32-34) in the areas of our gifts and calling. You can also minister to those who are childless like you.

Two keys are essential not just for childless couples but for everyone who has a relationship with the Lord. The first is to be totally surrendered and to gladly maintain our surrender to the Lord. Second, is availability to the Lord to do whatever He wants us to do. When you are surrendered, you are in the position to be available. Availability to God also means availability to your family.

It is the responsibility of the church to organize marriage seminars and seminars for raising children for proper information on what is needed to be done both on the side of the affected and other church members. The church needs to provide small communities

that are emotionally safe for people to share their trials. Many churches have home groups. When there are single persons or couples in a group that can create an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality. The worst thing is to preach about people who cannot have children and suggest that there might be some sin in their lives.

Schmal (2017) in her study, used an essentially phenomenological methodology. Fifteen participants were recruited through purposive and snowball method. Data were collected via an open-ended narrative inviting the informants to focus on the experiences of being childless and were analyzed thematically. The issue of personal context emerged as a key theme in understanding perceptions of the respondents. Another important theme was the social context. This study has tried to explore the emotional challenges faced by childless couples in the Indian context. Findings of this study revealed that prevalence of the social culture largely influences the psychosocial state of childless couples and hence coping strategies adopted by them are largely influenced by the prevailing culture.

Infertility or childlessness is an invisible defect or a hidden disability. It is not fatal but carries the burden of social stigma and results in a sense of personal failure, especially for women. The female partner generally feels more responsible and guilty even when the cause of infertility may be due to the male. This feeling is more pronounced in a society where womanhood and motherhood are important status symbols. Hence, infertility, particularly for women, imposes profound emotional and social stress, which in turn evokes feelings of denial, depression, desertion, grief and guilt.The study explores the lives of women of two religious communities from India whose personal stories depict their daily struggle to resist disempowerment and stigmatization. It also examines the position of childless women who are overwhelmed by complex and countervailing social and familial pressures. The lives of Muslim women are rendered

more difficult, given the various provisions of the Shariah on the one hand and the adoption law of the land on the other.

Barga (2016) adds that, in the search for children, childless couples leave no stone unturned. They consult spiritualists, prayer houses, traditional medicine doctors or made orthodox doctors and in most cases, without the desired results. They engaged in ritual activities to deities and divinities whom they feel are responsible for their unfortunate condition and could help them out of their plight. In their desperation to have a child of their own, the couples will do anything even if it means backsliding in the church-practice and getting initiated into occultism. This type of condition is a direct attack on once moral life which can greatly affects the church.

2.8. Empirical Studies

This section is a review of related empirical studies on the implications of childlessness among Christian couples generally. Some of these studies empirically carried out by several other scholars are presented here.

A study was carried out by Bamidele and Oladipo (2017) on the topic 'Childlessness and its Socio-Cultural Implication on Communities in South-West Nigeria. The specific objectives were to find out the socio-cultural implication of childlessness on couples, causes of childlessness,perception of couples towards childlessness, and the effects of childlessness couples and solutions adopted by these childless couples from the selected Yoruba communities. Descriptive survey design was used through the administration of a designed questionnaire. This study selected both couples that were blessed with either a child or children and those that were childless from a population of 1200 from the selected Yoruba communities in south-west, Nigeria, where people from different ethnic groups were found. Therefore, the communities were purposively selected for the study.

The sample size for the work was 120 respondents which were selected using multi-stage sampling procedures. The respondents were married couples selected from four areas in the selected communities, which were Area A; Area B; Area C and Area D. 12 respondents were also selected for the in-depth interview. The study explores both voluntary and involuntary childlessness. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to elicit information from the selected population

The findings showed that childlessness, whether voluntarily or not, contributes to a kind of invisibility and stigmatization in Yoruba communities. Regardless of the reason, voluntary childlessness evoked strong negative feelings among people of those communities. The study also revealed the broad definition given to voluntary childlessness by the people, as including individuals that are childless because they chose to stay with an infertile partner and also those who could not have biological children and chose not to adopt any.

Childlessness is not well embraced in Yoruba communities, where pro-natalist culture is still very strong. It further indicated that, Childlessness has major psychological and social implications for the affected persons, especially in settings where fertility is highly valued. Treatments used by infertile individuals in the selected communities studied vary fromtraditional and spiritual to the latest and advanced medical treatment. When people face the problem of infertility in most parts of the communities, they try traditional and spiritual practices rather than modern treatment. The study further revealed that in Nigeria, Yoruba, for instance, many childless couples from this community use a variety of traditional and religious treatments. Bamidele and Oladipo further gave these recommendations, that a couple is assumed to have problems of childlessness if after two years of regular and active sexual life, there is no pregnancy. It is also recommended that couples should have regular sex. That childless couple should appreciate the fact that

some women with short or irregular menstrual periods may ovulate during menses. It may, therefore, be advisable to have sex even during their period because there is nothing wrong with it. They should avoid herbal concoctions that are not certified by specialists, instead, they should seek medical attention.

Ordu (2009) carries out a study and investigated socio-economic status and personality type as correlates of spouse abuse behaviour in Rivers State. The purpose of the study was to determine the degree and nature of association among Socio-Economic Status, gender and religion, as well as predict spouse behaviour. Three research questions and three null hypotheses were examined in the study. The correlational design was adopted in the study. Data collected from 500 subjects with the aid of a 43-item spouse abuse behaviour questionnaire were analyzed with multiple regression and path analytic models. It was found that there was no significant correlation among socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse behaviour. The moderating impact of the secondary independent variables, gender, religion, were not significantly correlated among socio-economic status, personality type and spouse behaviour in the study respectively. On the basis of these findings, counsellors and psychologists should not rely on the level of socio-economic status and personality type to predict the spouse abuse behavior since socio-economic status and personality type did not correlate significantly with spouse abuse behaviour.

Counsellors, teachers and psychologists should not rely on the basis of religion and gender to predict spouse abuse behavior since they did not significantly moderate the correlation among socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse behavior. Since this study has actually established that socio-economic status, personality type, gender and region were not significantly predictors of spouse abuse behaviour among couples in Rivers state, it was recommended that the State Government should without

further delay come up with a policy statement for the urgent need for the introduction of premarital education and counseling programme in the state schools in order to facilitate preventive counseling against spouse abuse behaviour. It was also recommended that marriage seminars and workshops which could help minimize disunity in families should be organized and couples of various level should be encouraged to attend.

The failure of Bamidele and Oladipo to discuss the biblical perspective of childbearing and how many Christian couples view childlessness as a curse is a great concern and has created a vacuum in his research, to breach the gap there was concerted efforts by the researcher to specifically fill this gap. However there is a correlation between the two researches because both researches are on childlessness as its affects on different communities.

Isemann and Onnen (2000) in a study tittled 'Involuntary Childless Marriages and the Effects of Reproductive Technology: The Case of Germany.This was carried out at the University of Berlin, in Germany. The primary objectives of carrying out the research was to look into reproduction treatment and its implications on the childless couples. Also to tackle how men and women cope with the burdens accompanying the reproduction treatment. That is from the period before entering a reproduction program, the time during which the couples realizes that there is a problem of lack of conception, up to the beginning of the treatment, and the time during which affected person undergo a reproduction treatment up to its completion.

The study had a population of 1573 and a sample size of 162 respondents. Questionnaire was used as instrument for generating the theoretical model of coping with infertility. Interviews were also conducted. The theoretical differences of relevant parts of strain during the phase from diagnosis to the beginning of a treatment program before carrying

out narrative interviews was discovered. The interview was directed and focused on individual experiencesof the respondents. This procedure allowed two ways of getting data: first the respondents were able to talk about their individually experienced burdens before and after getting the medical diagnosis, secondly they could argue directly by the scheme of process with their burdens after getting the diagnosis.

The first finding of the study was that the reasons for getting married given by those who were unable to realize their wish for a child did not differ from those reasons indicated by couples who had children after getting married: The reason which all of the interviewees gave was to have children, which means that marriage, most of the couples did not yet know that they may not have children. Initially the realization of their wish for a child was postponed. Owing to gynecological or andrological changes that occurred (illness due to age or psychosomatic illnesses) voluntary temporary childlessness may lead to involuntary childlessness.

This was the case with 62% of the women interviewed who eventually started a reproduction treatment. Hence medicine has brought about a paradox: after effective contraceptives to avoid pregnancy have been developed, today, many women can only overcome the inability to procreate and involuntary childlessness respectively with the help of modern medical technologies. Those seeking to overcome childlessness were under pressure because it was their wish to set up a "standard family" with a child of their own. When they finally decide to have the children they would had reached an age at which the ability to have a child is reduced.

The psychological strain combined with helplessness associated with childlessness is a serious life stressor, considering the emotional stress the question of coping-strategies

raises. The diagnosis of sterility or infertility means for most of the couples a growth of psychological strain that has to be contend with.

A greater number of the women interviewed, who had undergone a reproduction treatment, had desire to be pregnant for a long time. Before making the decision to start a reproduction treatment these women had already gone through several unpleasant "stages": being hopeful of getting pregnant.However the realization that either the man is sterile or the women is barren triggers a kind of psychological reactions.

The observations were made thatemergence and continuous development of reproduction technologies triggered a social process, the end of which is not yet foreseeable. It is worthy to also note that in public as well as scientific discussions, the "benefits" of these medical developments have been hotly debated hence the need to caution over dependence on it. Couplefeel their desire for children will be attained by means of a reproduction treatment. It was discovered through the research that many childless couples consider reproduction technology the only possibility to achieve the goal set by society, i.e. to have a family withone's biological children.

While Iseman and Onnen focused on real effects of reproductive treatment on the part of the childless couples, the present researcher is concerned about childlessness among Christian couples as its implications on the NKST Christian church in Benue State, Nigeria. Though all the researches are about childlessness, however, Iseman and Onnen research focused primarily on reproductive treatment and the challenge that is associated with it, while this researcher focused on the implications of childlessness on the NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria. This story is specific about the Christian couples and the NKST church, so the result of Iseman and Onnen research does not have a bearing with the present study because Christians have specific places to go for treatment

according to the scripture, it is therefore possible that his treatment options may not be in line with Christian values.

Igbolo (2011)Ph.D research titled “Social Implications of Sex Performance for Fertility and Marital Stability in Cross River State” Department of Sociology, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria,specifically examined the sociological implications of sex preference in Cross River State as it affects fertility behavior and marital stability with a view to isolating factors which are important to planners and policy makers in addressing high fertility levels.

The survey which is a quantitative technique made use of the questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. According to Igbolo, the questionnaire had, both closed and open ended questions. The schedule contained questions on respondents socio-demographic background; fertility; marriage history; systems of inheritance; influence of tradition; religion; education; sex preferences, use of contraceptives and a host of other related issues. The schedule was framed in English but interpreted in the local dialects for 1150 respondents who could neither read nor write. The respondents for the study included the married, separated, divorced or widowed.

From the study, it was found that there was a strong relationship between cultural norms prevalent in the State and the preference for the gender of a child. The preference for male children was strongly related to the prevalence of traditional cultural norms that places much importance on the male child particularly and generally to the position of the male in the society. Level of income was found to have a strong relation with the number of children desired and the gender of a child. Respondents with higher income level were more likely than their counterparts with lower income levels desire fewer children and exhibit little or no sex preference.

The issue of family planning also came up for analysis the finding revealed that, though the level of awareness was high, the level of usage was very low. This affects fertility positively, since a society where there is a high prevalence of approval and use of family planning will equally be matched with a low level of fertility. On the whole, preference for sex of child was strongly related to the knowledge, approval and use of family planning methods and services. Respondents' who preferred more male children were on the whole more likely to disapprove family planning methods than respondents who did not express any preference. The study made the following recommendations.Men are currently targeted in all reproductive health programmes, therefore this situation needs to be addressed as it is believed that the sexual behavior of men has implications for the health and wellbeing of the family. Also men play a dominant role in decision making about reproduction and sexual matters in the family, thus, it is pertinent to involve them in all reproductive health programmes both for their own benefit and that of other family members. Population education should be encouraged and promoted. Government should draw up and include in the curriculum of primary and post primary education issues of population.

It is believed that if young people become acquainted with population issues early enough, it will help in no small measure to reduce the fertility rate. Improvement in the status of women is very crucial in the task of reducing population growth rate. In empowering the women, they could assume and perform most of the roles performed by men in the society, which includes title inheritance, and carrying on the lineage. To improve the status of women will require the government and non-governmental organization (NGOs) to increase alternatives to marriage, such as education and employment which not only lead to delayed age at marriage but also provide them with

choices as well as the confidence that they can achieve anything whether they are male or female.

Igboloexamined the social implication of gender preference for fertility and marital stability in whole of Cross River State, across all tribes and religions. The researcher here is considering childlessness among only Christian couples in Benue state with a view to finding its implications on only the NKST Church. Again there researcher here does not limit his finding to the social aspect of life of the childless couple as Igbolo did instead his study covered the Psychological, economical, moral life of the NKST members in Benue state.

Bola and Femi (2017) carried out a research at the ObafemiAwolowo University, titled "Does Having a Living Child Increase Women's Risk of Intimate Partner Violence Evidence from 2008-2013 Nigeria Demographic and Health Surveys". The objectives was to ascertaing whether having a living child or not was associated with increased risk of intimate partner violence among currently married women in Nigeria.

The study assumed the trust worthiness of Demographic and Health Survey's (DHS) data based on the standard methodology adopted in collecting the data. The study analyzed data from 2008-2013 Nigeria Demographic and Health Surveys. The binary logistic regression was applied. Results showed that women who had two or more living children were 20.5% more likely to experience intimate partner violence compared with women who had no living child (OR=1.205; CI: 0.993-1.461).

Based on Nigeria Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), this study provided empirical evidence that having living children increase women's risk of intimate partner violence. The following solutions were proffered: that it is important that women experiencing any type of intimate partner violence seek psycho-social counselling in

order to reduce the incidences of intimate partner violence that may arise from childbearing. Also, expanding medical services, particularly, assisted reproductive technologies will enhance the prospect of men, women, or couples who desire children, to not only achieve their desired fertility, but also reduce the potency of a possible cause of marital discord. Adequate enforcement of legislations against women, irrespective of their fertility status will also enhance the promotion of women's sexual and reproductive health in the country, particularly in the north-east geo-political zone

Bola and Femi's observed that, Nigerian men may be tolerant and supportive of women who are yet to have a living child. This is an important behaviour change that should be strongly emphasized in all marital counselling and infertility interventions in the country. It will be almost impossible for women to cope with or overcome the mental stress and societal pressure arising from demand for children without the support and cooperation of the male partner hence the need for such cooperation in marriage. Bearing in mind that in virtually all Nigerian communities, men have dominance over women's sexual and reproductive behaviours, infertility interventions whether medical or non-medical should target more male involvement. This could help to further reduce the occurrence of intimate partner violence among women facing fertility challenges. However, such behaviour change concern should be enhanced by improving the availability of assisted reproductive technologies such as fertility medication (to stimulate ovulation), in-vitro fertilization (IVF), and artificial insemination (AI) in both secondary and tertiary health care levels in the country.

Bola and Femi's research had no population from which a sample was drawn for statistical measurement, therefore making their research less reliable and dependable. This research has filled the gap by identifying a sample population and reaching out to

the respondents hence the information obtained from the victims themselves rather than relying or trusting completely on a data that is collected by an organization.

Adele (2017) carried out a research at the University of Pretoria in South Africa tittled'Involuntary Childlessness: An Interpretive Phenomenological Inquiry into Couples' Experiences of Infertility Treatment in the South African Public Health Sector'. The researcher's primary objective was to attempt to understand couples' joint fertility treatment experiences. The secondary objective of the project was to provide an opportunity for couples to share their experiences, where they could make sense of their fertility treatment experiences, the results of which would be utilised to establish guidelines for healthcare professionals working in this context.

The researcher used survey design for the project, data was collected and analysed leading to the following. Creating participant certainty: Information seemed to be necessary for couples to prepare themselves for what to expect in their treatment process. The creation of certainty through detailed explanations of what to expect regarding their fertility treatment was particularly important for couples at the beginning of their treatment. Whilst some couples experienced detailed explanations, others felt more could be done to enhance participant certainty.

This research shows that doctors not only have the responsibility of proficiently practicing their well-oiled skills in the medical facilitation of treatment, but are also required to meet and deliver on patients' communicative expectations. Analysis of the findings highlighted that mutually open communication, stripped of its medical terminology, is encouraged, and in turn enabled couples to mobilise psychologically and pragmatically when it comes to treatment. Doctors are required to provide consultations that are psychologically mindful, empathic and supportive. They are responsible for creating a co-partnership with their patients so that free will is exercised with the

compliment of medically informed backing. Patients required a lot more than physiological treatment and for the most part, received just that.

An important facet of the couple-doctor relationship was the significance of their appointment time with their doctor. Consultations held immense value for couples, over and above the medical reason for bringing them there in the first place. Consultations were perceived as having interpersonal value for couples, allowing for rapport building through personalised consultations. Couples experienced consultations as empathic interactions and as creating treatment-related opportunities in the treatment process. As with any communication, there can be unintended paradoxical interactions, which highlighted the importance of communication during their consultation. Couples' experiences of the couple doctor relationship as a facilitative facet of fertility treatment demonstrated that consultations are not a means-to-an-end for couples, but formed an important facilitative function in their treatment experience. A patient-centred approach during consultations was significant to couples' treatment experiences, as it created a sense of warmth, and with that, rapport in the treatment process.

The researcher concentrated on fertility which is just one of the reasons for childlessness. The researcher also dwell on inquiry into couple's experiences. This research therefore looked at childlessness as a whole including fertility as one of the causes. Adele's general inquiry into couples experiences also differ with this study as this one is only concerned about Christian childless couples.

A research was undertaken by Hephzibah (2015) at Cardiff University in Wales, United Kingdom titled 'The Social Stigmatisation of Involuntary Childless Women in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Gender Empowerment and Justice Case for Cheaper Access to Assisted Reproductive Technologies' with the followings as objectives. The study considered the social stigmatisation of involuntary childlessness in Sub-Saharan Africa.

It explored the socio-legal issues that arise when involuntary childlessness is given a gendered meaning and how this contributes to the social stigmatisation of involuntarily childless women in this developing region. The method of research was survey design. Though the population and how data was collected for the research was not clearly stated, however data was said to have been analysed and results was brought forth.

The social stigmatisation of involuntarily childless women in Sub-Saharan Africa has been widely documented in the social science literature. This body of literature on the gender meaning of infertility and its impact on involuntary childless women has helped to change attitudes and perspectives on involuntary childlessness in the international public health framework. This has led to calls that infertility should no longer be treated as the 'Cinderella of reproductive health rights in the developing world. The case for wider access to ARTs in the developing world has been made on a number of grounds, including those of human rights and social justice. International public health policy makers have also canvassed for wider access of affordable ARTS based on the notion of universal access to reproductive health care.

The study identified that much of the discourse on this issue has been situated within the schools of African Womanism and African Motherism. Yet, itargued that African Motherism in its veneration of motherhood as the key way in which women are socially empowered may have unintentionally contributed to the social stigmatisation of infertility and involuntary childlessness.

The researcher recommended that gender equality and rights of women should be reviewed to clearly incorporate a right regime for involuntary childless women. This does not mean proposals for new amendments to these instruments. Rather what may be useful at this stage is to canvass that the Committees responsible for the implementation of these instruments become more proactive in working to ensure that the needs of

involuntary women are more fundamentally addressed in their working methods and in their general recommendations. The researcher has covered a lot but failed to address the subject in relation to the Bible. This research addressed childlessness and all that surround it in relation to the scripture because of the researchers' target population.

A research by Balman and Dalen (2006) titled, "Definite Involuntary Childlessness" undertaken at the University of Oxford in England has as a main objective of accessing the extent to which people cope with distress in childlessness. The researcher in order to contact subjects from the target group, several patients, organizations and several health care workers were approached to support this study and to act as intermediaries to help approach subjects from the target group.

These intermediaries helped by distributing leaflets with information about the study among the target group members and by placing appeals to participate in their association's newsletters or on their websites. Subjects who were interested to participate could request a questionnaire either by phone or email. The written questionnaires were sent back by mail and were anonymous. The total of 132 subjects requested a questionnaire; 93 of these were women, 29 were men and from 10 the gender was unknown. Of these, 119 sent back the questionnaire (response, 90%). Three copies of the questionnaire were excluded because of too many missing data. Of the 116 remaining subjects (response 88%), 87 were female (75%) and 29 were male (25%). Of the 29 male respondents, 17 had filled in a questionnaire, while their partner had also participated in the study. In these situations, where both partners received a questionnaire, the questionnaire was accompanied by an explicit instruction for the partners to fill in the questionnaire independently, without consulting each other and without sharing any of the information. However, the sample as a whole was treated as an independent data sample.

The average age of the subjects was 39 years (SD = 6.0), and 91% had a spouse. Half of the subjects (50%) had known of their involuntary childlessness for over 2 years; On the average, the period of involuntary childlessness was 40 months (SD = 46.6). Almost half of the subjects (49%) had undergone infertility treatments for 3 years; the average length of fertility treatments was 45 months (SD = 34.3). From the finding; according to Balma and Dales, No difference was found between men and women in the extent to which they use an active coping style.

The finding further indicate that in comparing the scores of men and women on coping, experienced support and distress with norm group scores from the general population, some interesting results appeared. While the scores of men did not differ substantially from the norm scores, it seems that the women tended to score differently compared with women in the general population. Women in this study experienced more health complaints, more anxiety and depression symptoms and more dissatisfaction with the social support they receive, and they had a more passive coping style than women in the general population. Men only differed from the general population in that they experienced more dissatisfaction with the social support. Because the questionnaire was specially adapted for this study, it was not possible to compare the scores on complicated grief with other norm groups. However, especially for women, the adapted score on complicated grief can be considered as very high.

Overall, it seems that the impact of definite involuntary childlessness on coping, experienced support and experienced distress is primarily an issue for women. Furthermore, the impact of definite involuntary childlessness on the experienced distress of these women seems to be significant and long-lasting, even when the initial period of childlessness has passed. The researchers, (Balma and Dales) recommended that, in order to help people learn to accept their involuntary childlessness, these interventions

should be continued after the childlessness has become definite. By giving these people insight into the way that factors such as coping style and social support are associated with the distress they experience, and by letting them learn how to cope actively with their childlessness and how to ask for support, the negative consequences of their childlessness may be decreased.

The research presented above is similar to the present study because they are both about childlessness but they also have differences which is the fact that Balma and Dales examins ways of coping with childlessness while this research is concerned with the implications of this menace on the church.

In another research carried out by Robert (2009) in the Journal of Gerontology series in America titled "Childlessness and Economic wellbeing of older Americans", with the aimof examining the relationship between childlessness and two key indicators of older Americans' economic well-being: income and wealth. Using the Health and Retirement Survey, The expanded HRS is representative of all persons over 50 years old in the United States as at 1998 and had more than 26,000 persons as the study population. The study estimates this relationship and compares findings from standard ordinary least squares, random effects, quantile regression, and two propensity score models. The Health and Retirement Survey (HRS) provided the data. The HRS is a federally funded, ongoing panel study which started in 1992. It re-interview subjects biannually, with proxy interviews after death. Hispanics, Blacks, and Florida residents were oversampled. Initially, the HRS included persons born between 1931–1941 (and their spouses, if married, regardless of age). In 1993, the Assets and Health Dynamics Among these Old (AHEAD) survey started collecting data on persons born in 1923 or earlier. In 1998, HRS and AHEAD data were merged and two complementary samples were added.The War Baby sample of persons born between 1942 and 1947 and the Children of the

Depression sample of persons born between 1924 and 1930. The result showed that in 2006, 20.4% of women aged 40–44 years were childless by choice or because of infertility problems, compared with 17.5% in 1995 and 10.2% in 1976. For the next few decades, rising childlessness will be one factor that increases the ratio of older to working-age adults.

Rather than proffer solution to the research findings, the study further enumerated areas that needed more research with the hope that future research with the Health and Retirement Survey's data can fruitfully examine relationships between childlessness and poverty status, participation in Medicaid and other income-tested programs, receipt of Social Security disability benefits, long-term earnings, amount of specific assets, purchase of long-term care insurance, transfers to nieces and nephews, and timing of retirement. Research on the relationship of childlessness to health status, use of health care services, and use of long-term care would provide evidence on other important aspects of well-being with possibly large consequences for public expenditures. Detailed analysis of the relationships among persons' marital histories, earnings histories, childlessness, and economic and health outcomes is needed. In an ideal research, solutions are proffered to identify problems for the benefit of the people. What is lacking in the research is the inability of Robert to solve the identified problem. This gap is what this researcher seek to close.

Anberbir (2008),conducted his Ph.D research titled "Infertility; perceived causes and Experiences in Rural Southwest Ethiopia', with the aim of describing perceived causes, experiences and perceptions of infertility in rural Ethiopia. This study was conducted using survey design in Illubabor Zone, which had an estimated population of 1,290,000 in 2005 projected based on the 1994 census. During the study, Illubabor was divided into 14 administrative wards. Its capital, Mettu Town is located 600 Km Southwest of Addis

Ababa via Jimma. A community based cross-sectional study was conducted from May.12-26, 2005, to describe perceived causes, experiences and perceptions of behaviors about infertility in four woredas of Illubabor zone (Yayu-Hurumu, Mettu, Gore and Bedele). The study focused on these four districts (weredas) as there was no similar program in others at the time of the study. One hundred and sixty six Community Based Reproductive Health Agents (CBRHAs) trained and supported by Menschen fur Menschen Foundation (MfM) provided reproductive health services in the four weredass since September 2003.

The study subjects were infertile men and women who were selected from the list of individuals from Community Based Reproductive Health Agent's (CBRHAs) registered book. These CBRHA's register individual as infertile, when couples engaged in marital relation and living together could not have child for a year while they had demand. The sample of study was determined using a formula for a year as they desire. The expected proportions of infertile individuals (16%) were taken from a study conducted in the area which is in agreement with the estimate for sub Saharan African countries (13, 14). The other assumptions were 95% and 5% margin of error. This gave a sample size of 207 and 10% was added for non-response and giving a final sample size of 228. Of the 903 registered infertile individuals, 228 were selected for the study using simple random sampling from the total registered infertile individuals found from the four woredas.

Data collectors were 12^{th} grade completed by Community Based Rehabilitation Health Agents who knew Oromifa language, got orientation on the purpose of the study and trained on the instrument. A structured questionnaire was employed for data collection. The variables included were socio-demographic characteristics, knowledge on infertility, future expectation and experiences in living with infertility. Data were analyzed using SPSS for windows Version 11.0. An official permission was obtained from Illubabor

Zone Health office and from the four respective ward's offices. The respondents gave their verbal consent for participation in the study and all information obtained was kept confidential.

It was discovered that two hundred and twenty-five infertile (167 women and 58 men) individuals participated in the study. The perceived cause of infertility in this study was mainly mystical power. One hundred and Twenty (53.3%) of the respondents reported God's wrath as the cause of infertility and One hundred and Thirty Four (59.6%) noted that it could be cured. The frequently reported methods of cure were God's will Fifty Seven (42.5%) followed by modern medicine Fifty Six (41.8%). Forty-three (19 %) had history of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and 62(28%) had extra marital sex for the sake of child bearing. Eighty-four (37.3%) of the participants faced some difficulty related to their infertility. One hundred and thirty seven (60.9%) of the respondents hope to have a child in the future. This study showed that there is lack of knowledge of both causes and treatment of infertility in the study community. The researcher recommended that community-based programs to increase public awareness and to reduce myths related to infertility are needed and further community based study is recommended. This study was all about childlessness but had limited the study to infertility and not all forms of childlessness, while the present researcher is generally on childlessness of which infertility is one of its many causes.

Amoo and Ogbeide (2016) conduct a research at the Covenant University in Ogun State titled 'the Impact of Male Reproductive Health Problems on Conjugal Satisfaction: Implication on Women Fertility'. The research examined the incidences of male sexual diseases, the influence of fertility desire and coping strategies among currently married women in Nigeria. According to Amoo and Ogbeide, the data for the study was extracted

from a 2010 survey on 435 couples collated for a doctoral programme in Covenant University, Nigeria.

The experimental group supply information while the control respondents were selected among those whose husbands have no reproductive health problems. Respondents consist of husbands and wives whose husbands have reproductive health challenges. They were selected following a "key informant-leading approach" where the informants (mostly health personnel from modern and orthodox health facilities) led the group to the respondent having secured the latter consent. All respondents were selected from the 16 wards of two local government areas in the two states with similar ethnic profile. The states were purposively selected among the six (6) states in the south-west geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Frequency distribution was used to present background information about the subject while binary logistic regression was employed to estimate the effects of male reproductive diseases and coping strategies on conjugal satisfaction. Data obtained were analyzed using a combination of univariate and binary logistic.

The results identified that common male reproductive health challenges includ erectile dysfunction (10.5%), gonorrhea (12.7%), low sperm count (0.1%), testicular cancer (6.3%), prostate (3.2%) and prostate cancer (1.6%). Where the husbands experience erectile dysfunction, prostate or gonorrhea, the couples are 0.064, 0.898 and 0.583 times (respectively) less likely to enjoy marital satisfaction.

The study recommended the establishment of robust specialized reproductive healthcare services to cater for health needs of men who may be experiencing sexual problems in order to engender stability in family and a stable nation. The study concluded that marriage counselors, social workers and other health officials need to focus on erectile

dysfunction, gonorrhea and prostate as major determinants of sustainable marital satisfaction.

This research was well conducted and they discovered that most times society holds the female responsible for infertility, but this research served as an eye opener to the fact that the problem infertility can as well come from the male partner contrary to societal expectation. While Amoo and Ogbeide focused on the male partner with very useful suggestions, this research complements by generally discussing childlessness especially among Christian couples as with its implications on the church with emphasis on NKST Church in Benue state.

2.9. Summary

Many researches carried out by different academics in different universities across the world as presented here revealed numerous results based on their topics and objectives of their studies. What is common among these researches is the fact that there are feelings of bitterness, dissatisfaction and sadness from childless couples. African related researches shows that African society detests childlessness, for some tribes, marriage can only be consummated when procreation takes place. Discrimination that is constantly shown especially on the female partner has been satisfactorily addressed and solutions given.

Though these researchers have done sufficiently well in their various themes in relation to childlessness, there is still some gaps here as far as this research (Childlessness among Christian Couples and its implications on the NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria) is concerned. In the empirical studies revealed, there is no single work that is directedspecifically on Christian childless couples relating to its implications on the church, with specific interest in NKST Church in Benue State. The uniqueness of this

work lies in the multidimensional approach of examing the social, psychological, economic, moral implications of childlessness on Christian couples in relation to the growth of NKST Church in Benue State. This particular work has closed up the existing gaps and proffered solutions to both Christian childless couple, the church and the society in general.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the methodology in this study under the following subheadings: research design, population, sample and sampling procedure, instrumentation for data collection, validity, pilot study and reliability, method of data collection and analysis.

3.2. Research Design

Research design is the guiding steps to a successful thesis. Burns and Grove (2016) defines a research design as a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings. Research design therefore refers to the overall strategy that is chosen by researchers to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby, ensuring that they effectively address the research problem. It constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. It is a systematic approach for gathering information that are needed to make inference. Survey design was chosen so as to reach significant number of the target population, get their views on time, analyze, and make generalization base on the findings.

3.3. Population

Population refers to a group of individuals, persons, objects, or items from which samples are taken for statistical measurement. The population for this study was 517 childless members of the NKST church in Benue State from the consistories in the three senatorial zones of the state (NKST Secretariat, 2017). The population includes; urban and rural church members, male and female members, literate and illiterate members, employed and unemployed members; youths and adults members that are childless.

3.4. Sample and Sampling Technique

Research studies are distinct events that involve a particular group of participants. In statistics and survey methodology, sampling is concerned with the selection of a subset of individuals from within a statistical population to estimate characteristics of the whole population. The three main advantages of sampling are that the cost is lower, data collection is faster; and the accuracy and quality of the data can be easily improved. Brown (2016) says that the main aim of psychological research is to be able to make valid generalisations and extend their results beyond those who participate. It is obvious that data cannot be collected from every single individual in the population of interest, since this would be extremely expensive and take a very long time, a small group of individuals called a sample is usually used to facilitate the research. Sample therefore is chosen from the population and is used to represent the population. The researcher therefore used census sampling technique because of the unique nature of the population. This means that the whole population in the state from all the three senatorial zones participated in the study.

3.4.1. Sampling of Respondents from the three Senatorial Zones

The area for sampling is Benue state. The state has three senatorial zones (A,B,C.). All NKST churches in each of the zones participated in the study. This is further illustrated in table 01.

Table 01: Sampling of Respondents from the Three Senatorial Zones

SN	Zone	Churches	Population of Childless members	Sampled Childless Ministers and Members
1	A	NKST Church Katsina – Ala	49	49
		NKST Church Kyaave	27	27
		NKST Church Adikpo	36	36
		NKST Church Ugba	31	31
		NKST Church ZakiBiam	48	48
		NKST Church Ushongo	18	18
		NKST Church Kaaii	36	36
2	B	NKST Church Aminde	19	19
		NKST Church Gboko	31	31
		NKST Church Agasha	38	38
		NKST Church Tavaku	29	29
		NKST Church Aliede	27	27
		NKST Church Iortyer	29	29
		NKST Church Wannune	25	25
3	C	NKST Church Ado	12	12
		NKST Church Agatu	13	13
		NKST Church Apa	7	7
		NKST Church Obi	9	9
		NKST Church Ogbadibo	6	6
		NKST Church Ogbokoro	-	-
		NKST Church Okpokwu	9	9
		NKST Church Oju	-	-
		NKST Church Otukpo	18	18
Total			**517**	**517**

3.4.2. Sampling of Ministers

All church ministers (Pastors, and Elders) of the sampled churches that have no children of their own, at the time of visitation participated in the study. This is necessary due to the fact that they were resident in these areas and have receive complaints from the members. So, they have firsthand information about what happens among their members in respect to childlessness. On the basis of their status, 30 ministers were purposively sampled to participate in the qualitative aspect of the study (Interview). They were involved among other reasons for their strategic position in the life of the affected

couples and families. Their experiences in church administration, counselling and teaching were very useful for the research.

3.4.3. Sampling of other Members

The target population of the study is unique and not too large. Consequently, all childless couples (male and female) were identified in the church services through the help of ministers in charge of those consistories, research assistants and various church members. Specifically, sampled male and female respondents were from both rural and urban areas, some employed while others were not, some literate and others illiterate; and some were youths and others adults.

3.5. Instrumentation

The researcher used two instruments, questionnaire and interview as a research strategy for effective data collection for a successful work. In survey design, Troachim (2009) postulates that the instrument used can be divided into two broad categories; the questionnaire and interview. Questionnaire was used in this study to generate data within a short period. Questionnaire is usually paper-and-pencil that the respondent completes. Interviews are completed by the interviewer based on what the respondent says. Sometimes, it is hard to tell the difference between a questionnaire and an interview. For instance, some people think those questionnaires always ask short closed-ended questions while interviews always ask broad open-ended ones. Instrumentation has often been cited as the pacing factor of research; the productivity of researchers depends on the tools they have available to observe, measure, and make sense of nature. In this research, the researcher used questionnaire written in English language and Tivsince the target population is mostly Tiv people. The questionnaire was a modified likert type. It has four rating scales of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Responses to positive statements were awarded the following scores: SA attracts 4

points, A is 3 points, D is 2 points; and SD attracts 1 point. Reverse was the case for responses to negative statements. A self-developed questionnaire of six sections was used. The first section of the questionnaire was bio-data of the respondents, the second section was the respondents information on social implication of childlessness, the third section was psychological implication of childlessness on Christian couples, the fourth section was to know the economic implication of childlessness on the Christian couples, the fifth was to investigate the moral and religious implication of childlessness on Christian couples while the sixth was to find out how childlessness exerts implications on the NKST Church in Benue State, Nigeria. The researcher had face to face interview with the respondents which include both ministers and other members of the NKST Church.

3.5.1. Validity of the Instrument

Validity is the extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure and performs as it is designed to perform. In order to ensure the validity of the instruments used in this research, question items generated from the review of related literature and interview questions were critically examined with the inputs of supervisors and statistician. The internal consistency of the respondent's information was duly checked in line with the items on the questionnaire.

3.5.2 Pilot Study.

Pilot study was conducted to further ascertain the validity and reliability of the question items. Biddix (2012) states it is rare, if not nearly impossible, that an instrument be 100% valid and so, validity is generally measured in degrees. As a process, validation involves collecting and analyzing data to assess the accuracy of an instrument. There are numerous statistical tests and measures to assess the validity of quantitative instrumentwhich generally involves pilot testing. Cronbach's alpha was used to test the

responses of twenty sampled respondents. Statistics Package of Social Science (SPSS) was used for the computations in appendix 2. The maximum value for this statistics is 1 while the minimum is 0 but can be negative in Cronbach's alpha. The coefficient of the five sections of the question items was 867.8: section A has .868, section B was .881, section C was .870, section D was .865, section E .864, and section F was .859.

3.5.3. Reliability of the Instrument.

From the Cronbach's alpha results, the instrument could be adjudged good since a commonly accepted rule of thumb is alpha of 0.7 (some say 0.6, indicating a maximum reliability coefficient of 0.8). However, very high reliability (0.95 or more) is not necessarily desirable because it implies that the items may be entirely redundant. The results showed a reliability coefficient of .865.5 approximately .866 for the six sections in respect to each of the stated objectives of the study. The details are presented in appendix 3. With this result of the reliability test, the question items were adjudged to be reliable.

3.6. Administration of Research Instrument

The researcher collected a letter of introduction from the Department of Arts and Social Science Education and gave copies of same to all ministers (pastors or leaders) of the sampled churches. This was done to inform, seek for permission and to notify the respondents about the nature of the instruments (as the researcher did during the pilot study). The researcher engaged ministers of those congregations and 6 research assistants who were instructed on what to do before the commencement of the distribution of questionnaire. They were instructed on how to handle the instrument, relate with the respondents to honestly fill and return the questionnaire given to them; and be patient with impolite utterances of the respondents. They also contacted the researcher when the need arose.

3.7. Procedure for Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics of frequencies, simple percentages, mean and standard deviation were used in the presentation of the results especially for demographic characteristics of the respondents. These characteristics were non-parametric in nature, only the strength of association between them were explained. The null hypotheses were tested using t-test statistical tool. They have independent samples for correlation between two homogenous groups. The justification for the t-test arose from two perspectives. One was the quantitative nature of the dependent variables which were measured with the four-point interval scale. The second reason was the two categorical natures of the independent variables that were tested at 0.05 levels of significance.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Introduction

Chapter four is the presentation and analysis of the research data on 'Comparison of implications of childlessness among Christian Couples of the *Nongo u Kristu u iSer u Sha Ta*r (NKST church) in Benue state, Nigeria'. The data was collected from the three senatorial zones in the state. The respondents for this study were 517, however, the copies of questionnaire that were returned for analysis were only 441(85.30%). This was largely because of mortality rate, non-availability of some respondents at the time the research assistants visited. The data collected was statistically analyzed to achieve the stated objectives. The data was analyzed with means, frequencies, percentages, standard deviations, and t-test statistics. In addition, 27 subjects were interviewed. Their responses were used to collaborate that of the questionnaire but the additional points of both the open ended questions and that of interviewees' responses were stressed.

4.2. Demographic characteristics of the respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Tables 02 to 06.

Table 02: Distribution of respondents by gender

Variable	Quest. Freq.	Quest. Percent.	Inter. Freq.	Inter. Percent.
Male	236	53.5	15	55.6
Female	205	46.5	12	44.4
Total	**441**	**100**	**27**	**100**

Table 02 shows the distribution of those that responded to the questionnaire by gender. The table reveals 236 (53.5%) of the respondents were male while the remaining 205 (46.5%) were females. This shows that there was an almost even distribution between the male and female respondents in NKST Church of Benue State. Further evidence was that of the interviewees, 15 (55.6%) were males while 12 (44.6%) were females.

Table 03: Educational status of respondents

Variable	Quest. Freq.	Quest. Percent.	Inter. Freq	Inter. Percent.
Literate	305	69.2	18	66.7
Illiterate	136	30.8	9	33.3
Total	**441**	**100**	**27**	**100**

Table 03 reveals that 305 (69.2%) of those that responded to questionnaire were literates while the remaining 136 (30.8%) were illiterates. This revealed that more of the respondents at the time of study were literates which made it easier to report in English. In the same vein for those interviewed, 18 (66.7%) were literate and 9 (33.3%) were illiterate.

Table 04: Employment status of respondents

Variable	Quest. Freq.	Quest. Percent.	Inter. Freq	Inter. Percent.
Employed	271	61.5	17	63.0
Unemployed	170	38.5	10	37.0
Total	**441**	**100**	**27**	**100**

Table 04 presents the employment status of those that responded to the questionnaire in NKST Church of Benue State. From the table, 271 (61.5%) of the respondents were government employees while the remaining 170 (38.5%) of the respondents were not but engaged were self-employment as attested to by the interviewees. This was an indication that there were more employed respondents in NKST Church of Benue State than the unemployed. Fourteen of the males and three females interviewed were employed (63.0%). However, nine females and only one man were self-employed (37.0%).

Table 05: Distribution of respondents by their location

Variable	Quest. Freq.	Quest. Percent.	Inter. Freq	Inter. Percent.
Urban	251	56.9	16	59.3
Rural	190	43.1	11	40.7
Total	**441**	**100**	**27**	**100**

Table 05 shows the distribution of those that responded to questionnaire by their location. The table revealed that 251(56.9%) of the respondents were resident in the

urban area while 190 (43.1%) of the respondents reside in the rural areas. This indicated that even though the distribution is seemingly even, more of the respondents were resident in the urban area. Similarly, 16 (59.3%) interviewees resided in urban areas and 11 (40.7%) had theirs in rural areas.

Table 06: Distribution of respondents by age

Variable	Quest. Freq.	Quest. Percent.	Inter. Freq	Inter. Percent.
Youth	164	37.2	18	66.7
Adult	277	62.8	9	33.3
Total	**441**	**100**	**27**	**100**

Table 06 reveals that 164 (37.2%) of those that responded to questionnaire were youths while the remaining 277 (62.8%) of the respondents were adults. This implies that there were more adults than youths in NKST Church of Benue State which was an indication that matured people were involved in the study. Eight males and ten females (66.7%) interviewed were youths and seven males in addition to two females were adults as at the time of this study.

4.3 Answers to Research Questions

Research question 1: What are the implications of childlessness on the social life of Christian married couples in NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria? Items 1 – 12 of the questionnaire were used to answer research question one as shown in Table 07.

Table 07: Opinions of respondents on the implications of childlessness on the social life of married couples

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	The childless suffers Shame in the society	106	191	106	38	2.83	0.89	Agreed
2	The childless suffers reproach in the society	91	230	91	29	2.87	0.81	Agreed
3	The childless suffers condemnation in the society	97	120	164	60	2.58	0.98	Agreed
4	The childless suffers Rejection by the society	70	156	147	68	2.52	0.94	Agreed
5	Childless wives can be divorced	122	201	54	64	2.86	0.98	Agreed
6	Childless wives are treated as outcasts by husband's relations	133	194	62	52	2.93	0.95	Agreed
7	Childless husbands are respected in the society	49	150	164	78	2.39	0.90	Disagreed
8	The childless suffers loss of power and social order	90	163	146	42	2.68	0.90	Agreed
9	Childlessness threatened continuity of lineage	130	221	72	18	3.05	0.79	Agreed
10	The childless suffers less social support	62	194	145	40	2.63	0.84	Agreed
11	Childlessness decrease social recognition	104	147	128	62	2.66	0.99	Agreed
12	Childless are always in mourning mood	34	36	21	12	2.88	1.00	Agreed
	Cumulative					**2.74**	**0.91**	

Benchmark: Mean ≥ 2.50 = Agree; Mean < 2.50 = Disagree

Table 07 shows the respondents' opinions on the implications of childlessness on the social life of married couples in NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria. The cumulative mean responses of all the items is 2.74 which is greater than the decision

mean of 2.50 with the standard deviation value of 0.91 implying that their responses were significant. Specifically, they were of the opinion that childlessness decreases social recognition as this item (9) attracted the highest mean response of 3.05 and standard deviation of 0.79 with details showing that 351 respondents were in agreement while 90 respondents disagreed to this view. This implies that respondents agreed to all the mentioned items as having implications on the social life of childless couples except item seven (7) which states that childless husbands are respected in the society with a mean of 2.39 less than the benchmark of 2.50. It connotes that no respect is given to childless couple in the society.

For the optional and additional social implications of childlessness, the questionnaire respondents were in accordance with the interviewees. That childless couple were not comfortable among their peers in the society. This makes them withdraw from social gatherings. Another implication was celebration of children's birth day. They do not celebrate well with adopted children to avoid mockery. Finally, loss of sexual desire by the male partners was identified as a problem. This implies that childless males are prone to infidelity than their female spouses.

Research Question 2: what are the psychological implications of childlessness on Christian married couples in NKST Church in Benue state of Nigeria? Table 08 presents the opinions of respondents on ways in which childlessness exerts psychological implications on married couples in NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria.

Table 08: Opinion of respondents on ways childlessness exerts psychological implications on married couples

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	Childlessness Reduces interest in sexual activity between spouses	52	213	107	69	2.56	0.89	Agreed
2	The childless resorting to alcoholism	67	213	103	58	2.66	0.89	Agreed
3	Childlessness reduces self-esteem	112	203	87	39	2.88	0.89	Agreed
4	The childless feel empty	139	202	62	38	3.00	0.90	Agreed
5	Childless life is less rewarding	84	181	124	52	2.67	0.92	Agreed
6	The childless fear loneliness in old age	224	166	25	26	3.33	0.83	Agreed
7	The childlesshave no much connections	85	182	128	46	2.69	0.90	Agreed
8	The childless have no security and control	84	138	146	73	2.53	0.98	Agreed
9	The childless have dissatisfaction with life	93	226	81	41	2.84	0.86	Agreed
10	The childless lives a depressed life	126	249	46	20	3.09	0.75	Agreed
11	The childless couples lives a distressed life	103	214	85	39	2.86	0.87	Agreed
	Cumulative					**2.83**	**0.88**	

Benchmark: Mean ≥ 2.50 = Agree; Mean < 2.50 = Disagree

Table 08 shows, the respondents' opinions on ways in which childlessness exerts psychological implications on married couples in NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria. The cumulative mean responses of all the items was 2.83 which is greater than the decision mean of 2.50 with the standard deviation value of 0.88 implying that their responses were noteworthy. Explicitly, they were of the opinion that loneliness in old age is one major psychological implications of childlessness on married couples in NKST

Church in Benue State as this item attracted the highest mean response of 3.33 and standard deviation of 0.83 with details showing that 390 respondents were in agreement while 51 respondents disagreed to this view. This implies that respondents agreed to all the mentioned items as having psychological implications on married couples as all the individual items have means greater than the benchmark of 2.50.

Furthermore, responses to the open ended and interview schedule revealed that childless couples suffer from inferiority complex. According to the respondents, childless couples worry much and are most times absent minded even in public places. This could lead to mental impedance and complexities if not properly addressed.

Research Question 3: what are the economic implications of childlessness on the life of Christian couples in the NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria? Table 09 presents the opinions of respondents on the ways in which childlessness affects the economic life of childless Christian couples in the NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria.

Table 09: Opinion of respondents on the economics implications of childlessness on the life of married couples

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	Childless couples become rich there are no children to carter for	90	107	173	71	2.49	0.99	Disagreed
2	The childless have great assets	66	114	180	81	2.37	0.95	Disagreed
3	Childlessness raises the risk of nursing home use for women but not men	54	181	153	53	2.54	0.86	Agreed
4	Childless couples spend extravagantly	59	133	173	76	2.40	0.92	Disagreed
5	Economic status of childless elders deteriorates	43	183	148	67	2.46	0.87	Disagreed
6	The childless have more time for themselves	80	229	96	36	2.80	0.83	Agreed
7	The childless have no time for themselves	53	96	218	74	2.29	0.86	Disagreed
8	The childless engaged more in productive activities	78	164	152	47	2.62	0.90	Agreed
	Cumulative					**2.50**	**0.90**	

Benchmark: Mean ≥ 2.50 = Agree; Mean < 2.50 = Disagree

Table 09 shows, the respondents' opinions on the economic implications of Childlessness on the life of childless couples in the NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria. The cumulative mean responses of all the items was 2.50 which is equal to the decision mean of 2.50 with the standard deviation value of 0.90 implying that their responses were noteworthy. The responses revealed that childless married couples in NKST Church in Benue State have more time for themselves hence they have less dependents to cater for, as this item attracted the highest mean response of 2.80 and standard deviation of 0.83 with details showing that 309 respondents were in agreement while 132 respondents disagreed to this view. This is an indication that the respondents

were divided in their opinions: some agreed while others disagreed to some of the items indicated by a mean greater than the benchmark of 2.50 while others were less than 2.50. Items which respondents disagreed to as economic implications of childlessness by married couples in NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria include amongst others: childless couples become rich since there are no children to carter for; they also have great assets and as well as more time for themselves with means less than the benchmark of 2.50. This might not be unconnected with the fact that some of the items were stated as positive implications while others were negatively stated.

The results of the interviewees as additional information indicated that childless couplesare extravagant. In an attempt to solve the problem, childless couples spend a lot on both orthodox and herbal medications. They listen and buy all kinds of affordable drugs prescribed by both professional and unprofessional medicalpractitioners. One of such drugsidentified by the respondents was fertility supplement, which is expensive.

Research Question 4: what are the moral and religious implications of childlessness on Christian Christian couples in NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria?

The moral implications of childlessness on married Christian couples in NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria are presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Opinions of respondents on the moral and religious implications of childlessness on Christian couples

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	Childless partners engage in extramarital sex	98	213	93	37	2.84	0.86	Agreed
2	Childless spouses do ungodly things to get children	147	206	59	29	3.07	0.85	Agreed
3	Childless couples feel empty in the presence of those with children	67	210	121	43	2.68	0.85	Agreed
4	The childless sacrifice their happiness to get children	87	234	85	35	2.85	0.83	Agreed
5	The childless are difficult to live with as they are always in mourning mood	56	133	201	51	2.44	0.86	Disagreed
6	The childless Consult spiritualists	98	218	69	56	2.81	0.92	Agreed
7	They Consult different prayer houses	206	186	24	25	3.30	0.81	Agreed
8	They consult traditional herbalists instead of trusting in God	119	179	67	76	2.77	1.03	Agreed
	Cumulative					**2.85**	**0.88**	

Benchmark: Mean ≥ 2.50 = Agree; Mean < 2.50 = Disagree

Table 10 shows, the respondents' opinions on the moral and religious implications of childlessness on married couples in NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria. The aggregate mean responses of all the items was 2.85 which is greater than the decision mean of 2.50 with the standard deviation value of 0.85 implying that their responses were remarkable. Obviously, they were of the opinion that childless married couples in NKST Church inBenue State consult different prayer house with this item attracting the highest mean score of 3.30 and standard deviation of 0.81. The details show that 392 respondents were in agreement while 41 respondents disagreed with this view. This

implies that respondents acknowledged that items have moral implications on married couples because the mean of all the items is greater than the benchmark of 2.50.

Punishment for sins not repented of was pointed as one factor for childlessness by those who responded to additional moral implications and interviewees. Childlessness is believed to be a just punishment for those who were worried and committed abortion when they were single lives. For the men, it was pointed out that multiple sex partners and improper treatment of sexually transmitted diseases could be responsible. However, they acknowledged that childless couples could be undergoing trial of faith, which some will pass while others will fail.

Research Question 5: What are the implications of childlessness of Christian couples on the numerical growth of NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria?

Ways in which childlessness of couples affected the numerical growth of NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria is presented in Table 11.

Table 11: Opinions of respondents on the implications of childlessness of christiancouples on the numerical growth of NKST Church

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	Some have left the Church to where they are promised children	154	220	42	25	3.14	0.81	Agreed
2	Some do not wholeheartedly devote their time for Church services	82	251	60	48	2.83	0.86	Agreed
3	They skip Church services	38	238	104	61	2.57	0.83	Agreed
4	They move from one church to another in search of solutions	118	217	53	53	2.91	0.93	Agreed
5	Childlessness decrease population of the Church	99	183	108	56	2.74	0.95	Agreed
6	Child bearing increases the population of the church	194	200	35	12	3.31	0.73	Agreed
7	There is decrease in the Church youth population	145	166	113	17	3.00	0.86	Agreed
8	There is increase in the population of the youth	92	122	142	85	2.50	1.03	Agreed
	Cumulative					**2.88**	**0.88**	

Benchmark: Mean ≥ 2.50 = Agree; Mean < 2.50 = Disagree

Table 11 shows the respondents' opinions the implications of childlessness on the numerical growth of NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria. The aggregate mean responses of all the items is 2.88 which is greater than the decision mean of 2.50 with the standard deviation value of 0.88 implying that their responses were remarkable. They were of the opinion that if couples give birth to children, the population of the church increases as this item attracted the highest mean score of 3.31 and a standard deviation of 0.73 with details showing that 394 respondents were in agreement while 47 respondents disagreed. This implies that the greater number of respondents agreed to all the

mentioned items as having implications on the numerical growth of NKST church as indicated by the means of individual items being greater than the benchmark of 2.50.

Two views were pointed out by the interviewees. One that of leaving or abandoning the church for another in order to find solution to the problem of childlessness. They confessed that the number of those who leave is greater than those who stay in the church. This implies decrease in numerical growth of the church. The second view was some couples stay and keep trusting God haven only very few take this stand or position.

4.4. Test of Hypotheses

Five null hypothesis were raised for this study which they were tested and presented in this segment.

Ho_1: There is no significant difference in the opinions of male and female spouses on the social implications of childlessness of christian couples in NKST Church of Benue State.

To test this hypothesis, the respondents' opinions on the social implications of childlessness among married couples were subjected to t-test analysis. The result is shown in Table 12.

Table 12: t-test for difference in the opinions of male and female spouses on the social implication of childlessness of married couples

Variable	N	$\overline{X}$	S.D	df	t-cal	t-cri	P	Remark
Male	236	31.71	5.33					
				439	4.57	1.96	0.00	Sig.
Female	205	34,21	6.19					
Significant at	**P<0.05**							

Key: N = Sample Size; $\overline{X}$ = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; df = Degree of Freedom
t-cal = t calculated; t-crit. = t critical; Sig = Significant

Table 12 shows that significant difference exist in the opinions of male and female spouses on the social implications of childlessness of couples in NKST Church of Benue State. The reason is that the calculated p-value of 0.00 is less than the 0.05 level of

significance; and the calculated t-value of 4.57 is greater than t-critical of 1.96. Furthermore, the calculated mean responses are 31.71 and 34.21 for male and female respondents respectively with a mean difference of 2.50 in favour of female respondents. This suggests that more female respondents responded to the social implication of childlessness among married couples in NKST Church. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the opinion of male and female spouses on the social implications of childlessness of couples in NKST Church of Benue State, is hereby rejected.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference in the opinions of literate and illiterates on the psychological implications of childlessness on couples in NKST Church in Benue State.

To test this null hypothesis, the respondents' opinions on the psychological implications of literate and illiterate on childlessness of couples were subjected to t-test analysis. The result is shown in Table 13

Table 13: t-test for difference in the opinions of literate and illiterate spouses on the psychological implication of childlessness of married couples

Variable	N	$\overline{X}$	S.D	df	t-cal	t-cri	P	Remark
Literate	305	31.42	6.15	439	1.45	1.96	0.15	NS
Illiterate	136	30.46	6.92					

Not significant at P<0.05

Key: N = Sample Size; $\overline{X}$ = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; df = Degree of Freedom
t-cal = t calculated; t-crit. = t critical; NS = Not Significant

Table 13showes that there is no significant difference in the opinions of literate and illiterates on the psychological implications of childlessness of couples in NKST Church of Benue State. The reason is that the calculated p-value of 0.15 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance; and the calculated t-value of 1.45 is less than t-critical of 1.96. The

calculated mean responses are 31.42 and 30.46 for literate and illiterate respondents respectively with a mean difference of 0.96 in favour of the literate respondents. This is an indication that more educated respondents in NKST Church of Benue State participated in the study. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the opinion of literate and illiterates on the psychological implications of childlessness on couples in NKST Church in Benue State, is hereby retained.

Ho_3: There is no significant difference in the opinion of the employed and unemployed on economic implications of childlessness of married couples in NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria.

To test this null hypothesis, the employed and unemployed respondents' opinions on economic implications of childlessness of couples were subjected to t-test analysis. The result is shown in Table 14.

Table 14: t-test for difference in the opinion of employed and unemployed spouses on the economic implication of childlessness of married couples

Variable	N	$\overline{X}$	S.D	df	t-cal	t-cri	P	Remark
Employed	271	19.31	3.66					
				439	4.35	1.96	0.00	Sig.
Unemployed	170	21.06	4.46					
Significant at	**P<0.05**							

Key: N = Sample Size; $\overline{X}$ = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; df = Degree of Freedom
t-cal = t calculated; t-crit. = t critical; Sig = Significant

Table 14 shows that significant difference exist in the opinions of employed and unemployed respondents on the economic implications of childlessness of couples in NKST Church of Benue State. The reason is that the calculated p-value of 0.00 is less than the 0.05 level of significance; and the calculated t-value of 4.35 is greater than t-critical of 1.96. From the table, it can be observed that there were more employed

respondents 271 compared to the unemployed 170 respondents in NKST Church of Benue State. The calculated mean responses are 19.31 and 21.06 for employed and unemployed respondents respectively with a mean difference of 1.75 in favour of the unemployed respondents. From the result in table 14, it can be concluded that the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the opinions of the employed and unemployed on economic implications of childlessness of married couples in NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria, is hereby rejected because a significant difference exists in the opinions of employed and unemployed respondents in the study area.

Ho_4: There is no significant difference between the opinions of rural and urban members on the moral implications of childlessness on the life of couples in NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria.

To test this null hypothesis, the opinions of rural and urban respondents on the moral implications of childlessness on the life of married couples were subjected to t-test analysis. The result is presented in Table 15.

Table 15: t-test for difference in the opinion of rural and urban spouses on the moral implication of childlessness of married couples

Variable	N	$\overline{X}$	S.D	df	t-cal	t-cri	P	Remark
Urban	251	22.63	4.67					
				439	0.66	1.96	0.51	NS
Rural	190	22.95	5.61					

Not significant at P<0.05

Key: N = Sample Size; $\overline{X}$ = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; df = Degree of Freedom
t-cal = t calculated; t-crit. = t critical; NS = Not Significant

Table 15 reveals that there is no significant difference in the opinions of urban and rural respondents on the moral implications of childlessness of married couples in NKST Church of Benue State. The reason is that the calculated p-value of 0.51 is greater than

the 0.05 level of significance; and the calculated t-value of 0.66 is less than t-critical of 1.96. From the table, it can be see that there were more respondents in the urban areas (251) compared to their rural counterparts (190) in NKST Church of Benue State with mean responses of 22.63 and 22.95 respectively and a mean difference of 0.32 in favour of rural dwellers.This clearly indicates that more urban dwellers responded to the moral implications of childlessness of married couples in NKST Church. From the result in Table 15, it can be concluded that the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the opinions of rural and urban members on the moral implications of childlessness on the life of couples in NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria, is hereby retained.

Ho_5: There is no significant difference between the opinions of youths and adult members on the implications of childlessness of couples on the numerical growth of NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria.

To test this null hypothesis, the opinions of youth and adult respondents on the implications of childlessness of married couples on the numerical growth of NKST Church were subjected to t-test analysis. The result is prese4nted in Table 16.

Table 16: t-test for difference in the opinions of youth and adult spouses on the numerical growth of NKST Church

Variable	N	$\overline{X}$	S.D	df	t-cal	t-cri	P	Remark
Youths	164	21.77	3.60					
				439	5.17	1.96	0.00	Sig.
Adults	277	23.72	3.96					
Significant at	**P<0.05**							

Key: N = Sample Size; $\overline{X}$ = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; df = Degree of Freedom
t-cal = t calculated; t-crit. = t critical; Sig = Significant

Table 16 reveals that there was a significant difference between the opinions of youth and adult members on the implications of childlessness ofcouples on the numerical

growth of NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria. The reason being that calculated p-value of 0.00 is less than the 0.05 level of significance; and the calculated t-value of 5.17 is greater than t-critical of 1.96. From the table, it can be observed that there were more adult respondents (277) compared to youths (164) in NKST Church of Benue State with mean responses of 21.79 and 23.98 respectively with a mean difference of 1.95 in favour of the adults. This implies that the adults responses were specifically noteworthy as they understood what it means to be childless compared to the youths in NKST Church. From the result of Table 16, it can be concluded that the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the opinions of youth and adult members on the implications of childlessness of the married couples on the numerical growth of NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria, is hereby rejected.

4.5. Summary of Major Findings

From the analysis of the data, the findings are therefore presented as follows:

1 The researcher found out that childless women were stigmatized with no recognition. They suffer in the hands of the husband's relations and this accounted for the disagreement between the male and female respondents as shown in table 12 with a p-value of 0.00.

2 Childlessness leads to loneliness at old age as seen in table 13 which led to the retention of the hypothesis with a calculated p-value of 0.15.This makes childless couples worry much and they are often absent minded.

3 The p-value of 0.00 shows that the employed and the unemployed do not agree on the economic implications of childlessness.Wealth is generated but not properly channeled, so much is spent on orthodox and herbal medications in seeking solution to the problem of childlessness.

4 Childlessness is considered abnormal, hence the visit to different prayer houses and engaged in unwholesome practices in order to get children, is represented on table 15, with a calculated p-value of 0.51. They were adjudged also to have been serving punishment for unrepented.

5 More childless youths leave the church easily than the adults who are trusting God to give them children as shown in table 16 with a p-value of 0.00.

4.6. Discussion

In this research, it has been discovered that Childlessness among Christian couples in NKST in Benue State has social, psychological, economic, moral implications on the growth of the church in Benue state. The implications are discussed in the following below.

Socially, it was discovered in the test of the null hypothesis that a significant difference exist in the opinions of male and female spouses on the implication of childlessness on Christian couples in the NKST Church. Childless wives suffer in the hands of their husband's relations. They suffer maltreatment and treated as outcasts. This is in line with Quillan's (2014) submission that the perception of people regarding childlessness is often derogatory and judgmental. Whatever the cause may be, as a result of existing social and gender norms, childless wives bear much of the blame in the society. Feldman (1999) supports this claim when he explains that childlessness is a ground for divorce, depriving a woman of access to her husband's property and treating her as an outcast. In consonant this finding, during the interview, the interviewees agreed to the fact that communities negatively react to childless couples through disrespect, ridicule, insults or verbal abuses. They are stigmatized, marginalized and isolated from social gatherings. It is difficult for childless couples especially the men to socialize as seen in table 07. They

avoid social functions which involve children because in such gatherings, they feel inferior to other couples that are blessed with children. Sometimes, this situation makes them develop hostility towards anyone around them. Those who live away from home take a long time to come back thereby becoming recluses. The condition is worsened where the environment has wicked and bad associates or relatives who sneer at the couples and attribute the cause of their woes to a curse from their gods and ancestors for sin(s) which both or either of the parties have committed. The additional social implications and responses of the interviewees revealed that childless male partners no longer desire to sexually relate with their wives (loss of sexual desire). This implies that childless males are more prone to infidelity.

Psychologically, there is no significant difference in the opinions of both the literate and illiterate on the implications of childlessness among Christian couples. The respondents explicitly concurred that childlessness causes loneliness especially at old age. This confirms the position of Hagestad and Call (2007) who maintain that parenthood is central to a meaningful and fulfilling life, and that the lives of childless people are emptier, less rewarding, and, at old age, lonelier, than the lives of parents. More specifically, people tend to believe that parenthood entails substantial and existential advantages. The finding shows that the presence of children, the parenthood itself boost self-esteem and make parents feel like better persons especially at old age. Childless couples may have many relativesyet still feel lonely as certain joy is derived in having children.

This explains the reason why the item attracts the highest mean response of 3.33. Interviewees added inferiority complex as a psychological implication of childlessness. According to them, childless couples worry much and are most times absent minded even in public places. This could lead to mental retardation and complexities if not

properly addressed. This agreed with Blake (2009), who says that childlessness clearly represents a blocked life goal in middle age people but more so to the aged.

There is no significant difference in the opinions of the employed and unemployed on economic implications of childlessness of Christian married couples in NKST Church in Benue State. The respondents agreed to the fact that economically, childless couples have more time toacquire wealth and have great assets since there are no children.This then had a mean sore of 2.80. The closest mean to this affirmation is 2.62 within this items the respondents overwhelmingly assert that childless couples engage in more productive activities which generate wealth for them and the economic growth of the society in general. On the contrary, the interviewees pointed out that childless couples do not have economic security, they are at old age lack no economic support from others, unable to find work, they have no connections, they suffer the problems of restricted land use, harassment, pressure and rejection, exploitation and abuse perpetrated. In an attempt to solve the problem, childless couples spend a lot on both orthodox and herbal medications. They listen and buy all kinds of affordable drugs prescribed by both professional and unprofessional medical practitioners. One of the drugs identified out by the respondents is fertility supplement, which is expensive. The observations done in the course of this research indicated that the participants were frequently concerned about the cost of the treatment.

There is no significant difference in the opinions of the rural and urban respondents on moral implication of childlessness on Christian couples in NKST Church in Benue State. The respondents were of the opinion that childless couples in NKST Church in Benue Stateengage in the search for solutions to their childlessness by consulting different

prayer houses outside of the NKST Church. This assertion has the backing of the highest mean score of 3.30 meaning that 392 respondents were in agreement. The finding is in line with Barga's (2016) submission that childless couples leave no stone unturned in their search for solution to childlessness. They often consult spiritualists, prayer houses, traditional doctors (herbalists) or an orthodox doctors, and in most cases, without the desired results. Sometimes, thus engage in ritual activities to deities and divinities whom they feel are responsible for their unfortunate condition. In their desperation to have children, the couples do anything even if it means backsliding in church-practice and getting initiated into occultism. These activities have grave consequences on the morality of the members. The hypothesis test shows that there is no significant difference between the opinions of both urban and rural respondents about the moral implications of childless Christian couples in the church. Those who responded to additional moral implications and interviewees also postulated that childlessness could be a sort of punishment for those who committed abortions when they were single.For the men or husbands their childless could be as a result of multiple sex partners and improper treatment of sexually transmitted diseases before marriage. Generally they, however acknowledged that childless couples could be undergoing trial of faith, which some will pass while others will fail.

There is no significant difference in the opinions of the youth and adult on the implication of childlessness on Christian couples on the numerical growth of NKST Church in Benue State. The growth of the NKST Church depends also on procreation. This implies that childlessness amongchristian couples is a peril to the survival of the church. This was made very clear as the respondents opined that when couples give birth to children the church increases in population this is supported with the highest mean of 3.31. This is a unique finding that would be of great benefit to the church for action. The

implication of childlessness among Christian couples on the church is therefore clear that the numerical growth of NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria suffers setback.

When the church leadership is proactive in dealing with the issue of childlessness, by way of encouraging multiplication in the church of Christ and also boosting the sense of fulfillment in the hearts of childless Christian couples, it will lighten their frustrations. In dealing with childlessness, advocacy, workshops, sermons and ideal counsellingsession have proven to be very useful in providing succor to the affected. The unfavorable acts towards the childless couples by other people include, gossip, scornful laughter downgrading looks, direct/indirect reference to their plight and sometimes open confrontation. From the responses of the interviewees, two positions were pointed out: One was that of leaving or abandoning the church for another while seeking for salvation. They confessed that the number of those who leave is greater than those who stay in the church. This implies decrease in the numerical growth of the church. The second position was for the childless to stay and keep trusting God only very few take this stand or position.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARRY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMODATIONS

5.1. Summary

This study has successfully done'Comparison of implications of childlessness among Christian Couples of the *Nongo u Kristu u iSer u Sha Ta*r (NKST church) in Benue state, Nigeria'. The pain associated with childlessness is a concern throughout the world and particularly in African societies, including the church which believed so much in the biblical command by God to Adam and Eve to multiply and fill the earth. The implications of social, cultural and biblical factors attached to children make childless couples go through intense pain, loss of faith, anger frustration. The choice of this topic was motivated by the fact that childlessness is a neglected research area and not much has been done in it. The study was conducted to examine the social, psychological, economic, moral; and numerical growth implications of childlessness on NKST Church in Benue State of Nigeria.

Related and relevant literature were reviewed as this is necessary and important for a researcher to have a comprehensive and relevant body of supporting materials to his work. The related literature and studies provided insight into the theoretical and conceptual background of the study. These include both published and unpublished reports of actual studies done previously. Documents such as theses and dissertations were used especially for empirical studies. Others were conceptual literature, such as articles, and books written by authorities expressing their opinions, experiences, theories, or ideas on childlessness.

Survey design was used for a population of 517 childless members of the NKST church in Benue state. They were from the consistories in the three senatorial zones of the state. They include urban and rural church members, male and female members, literate and

illiterate members, employed and unemployed members, youths and adults members that were childless. Census sampling was used for the research, which means that the whole population was considered. The instruments used to generate information from respondents for this research were questionnaire and interview. The data collected from responses of questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Data collected from 468 respondents were used out of the expected 517. Responses from 441 questionnaire respondents were analyzed using t-test statistics while that of the 27 interviewees were used to collaborate that of the questionnaire. The results were presented in tables and briefly explained.

5.2. Conclusions

The following conclusions were reached based on the results obtained in this study that:

1 childless women suffer in the hands of the husband's relations than the male counterparts in NKST Church in Benue State.

2 both the literate and illiterate respondents experienced the same measure of psychological imbalance such as misery and depression in NKST Church in Benue State.

3 childless couples were more economically productive but spend much money for treatment, which was more economically stressful for the unemployed than the employed ones in NKST Church in Benue State.

4 childless couples sacrifice their moral dispositions to get children in both rural and urban areas in NKST Church in Benue State.

5 procreation increases membership in the church, while childlessness is the opposite in NKST Church in Benue State.

5.3. Recommendations

From the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

1 Pastors; Eldersof the NKST Church in Benue state should lead in a crusade against ungodly cultural tendencies like reproach, condemnation and shame that sometimes have these couples with no option but withdrawal from the public on account of their childlessness.

2 The NKST synod should direct all her member church through the education department to develop a blue print to educate her members the unfortunate condition of childlessness and how to manage it. Biblical teaching in church sermons, workshops, seminars and counselling activities should be reactivated in the church to properly reposition the childless couples and give knowledge to members of the church.

3 Childless couples should admit the challenge of childlessness as a part of life so that they can open up to the society for health workers, councilors for interventions when and where necessary. They should bear in mind that marriage according to the scripture is for love first and not child bearing.

4 Concerted efforts should be made by the pastors and ministers of the gospel in NKST Church members especially the childless couples to understand that child bearing is a blessing from God, therefore, they should not resort to consulting one spiritualist to another, moving from one church to the other, or one prayer house to another.

5 The NKST church in Benue state should sensitise, provide medical information or assistance to the childless couples from time to time.

6 Adoption of children is an option which can be explored through social development office. Childless couples can use this opportunity to have children.

5.4. Suggestions for Further Research

1. Further studies can be conducted in other Christian denominations.

2. It is again suggested that other researches can be conducted to specifically find out causes of childlessness and the solutions

5.5 Contribution to Knowledge

1 Childlessness among NKST members could lead victims to mental stress, trauma, stigmatization in the Church and the society as they are not given recognition in the society.

2 Childless couples though engage in productive economic activities which generates wealth, yet spend much of their income and wealth in attempt to get children.

3 Childlessness among Church members leads to syncretism, infidelity and polygamous life and this has great negative implication for the growth of the Church.

4 The research revealed that, Childless young couples of NKST church leave the Church for any other church that promised them children.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE EDUCATION

Date……

Dear Sir

STUDENTS' FIELD RESEARCH

The Department of Arts and Social Science Education, AhmaduBello University, Zaria require each Doctorate student to complete a Dissertation. The student (ANNGER, Christopher) will interview and administer questionnaire to some members of your church on the topic titled:

'COMPARISON OF IMPLICATIONS OF CHILDLESSNESS AMONG CHRISTIAN COUPLES OF THE *NONGO U KRISTU U I SER U SHA TA*R (NKST CHURCH) IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA'

Please, give him the necessary assistance.

Yours Faithfully

Prof. J.N.Kwasau

Research Supervisor

APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF CHILDLESSNESS ON CHRISTIAN COUPLES ON THE NKST CHURCH IN BENUE STATE OF NIGERIA

Dear Respondent,

This researcher, a student of ABU Zaria is carrying out a study on **'Comparison of implications of childlessness among Christian Couples of the *Nongo u Kristu u iSer u Sha Tar* (NKST church) in Benue state, Nigeria'**kindly assist in filling this questionnaire as truthfully as possible for a successful research.

There is no need writing your name on the questionnaire. Your response will be treated with a high level of confidentiality. Please respond to the statements by **ticking**(√) in one option of your choice from the columns provided for each number.

Section A: Bio-data of Respondents

Instruction: Tick (√) one item option from numbers 1 – 6 in Section A below:

1 Gender: Male ( ) Female ( )

2 Education Status: Literate ( ) Illitereate ( )

3 Employment Status: Employed ( ) Unemployed ( )

4 Location: Urba ( ) Rural ( )

5 Age: 20-40yrs ( ) 41 years and above ( )

Instruction: Tick (√) one of the following keys that best suit your choice for each item in Sections B - F:

SA = Strongly Agree A = Agree D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree

Section B: Social Implications of Childlessness

SN	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD
1	Shame in the society				
2	Reproach in the society				
3	Condemnation in the society				
4	Rejected				
5	Childless wives can be divorced				

6	Childless wives treated as outcast by husbands' relations				
7	Childless husband are respected in the society				
8	Childless wives lose their powers and social order				
9	Threatened continuity of lineage				
10	Less social support				
11	Decrease social recognition				
12	Mourning mood				

List other social effects of childlessness that are mentioned

13 ……

14 ……

15 …….

Section C: Psychological Implications of Childlessness

SN	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD
1	Reduced interest in sexual activity with spouses				
2	Resorting to taking alcohol				
3	Reduced self-esteem				
4	Emptiness				
5	Less rewarding				
6	Loneliness in old age				
7	No connectedness				
8	No security and control				
9	Dissatisfaction with life				
10	Depressed life				
11	Distressed				

List other psychological effects of childlessness that are mentioned

12 ……

13 …….

14 …….

Section D: Economic Implications of Childlessness

SN	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD
1	Childless couples become rich with no children to carter for				
2	They have much assets				
3	Childlessness raises the risk of nursing home use for women but not men				

4	Spend extravagantly				
5	Economic status of childless elder deteriorates				
6	Have more time for themselves				
7	Have no time for themselves				
8	More engaged in productive activities				

List other economic effects of childlessness that are mentioned

9 ……

10 ……..

11 ……

Section E: Moral and Religious Implications of Childlessness

SN	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD
1	Childless partners engage in extramarital sex				
2	Childless spouses can do ungodly things to get children				
3	Uncomfortable feelings for those with children				
4	Sacrifice their happiness to get children				
5	Very difficult to live with				
6	Consulting spiritualists				
7	Consulting different houses of prayers				
8	Consulting traditional herbalists instead of trusting in God				

List other moral and religious effects of childlessness that are mentioned

9 ……

10 ……..

11 ……..

Section F: Numerical growth of NKST church as a result of childlessness

SN	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD
1	Some have left the church to where they are promised children				
2	Some do not whole heartedly devout their time for church services				
3	They skip church service				
4	Jumping to and fro the church				
5	Birth rate decreases the population of the church				
6	If the childless couples give birth to children, the population increases				
7	Decrease in the church youth population				

8	Increase in the population of the youth				

List other things that affect population of the church as a result of childlessness

9 ……

10 ……

11 …….

APPENDIX3

Interview Schedule for Childless Couples

Dear respondent,

This researcher is carrying out a study on **'Comparison of implications of childlessness among Christian Couples of the *Nongo u Kristu u iSer u Sha Ta*r (NKST church) in Benue state, Nigeria'.**You are expected to kindly assist in answering the following questions for the success of this study.

Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.

1. How long have you been childless?

2. Have you ever heard childless couples complain concerning their status?

3. What do you think are the reason why some Christian couples remain childless after marriage?

4. What are the implications of childlessness on Christian couples in the following aspects of their life?

i. Social life

ii. Psychological life

iii. Economic life

iv. Moral life

5. In what ways does childlessness among Christian couples wields implication on the Church? 6. What can the leadership of the church do to assist childless couples and the church?

Thank You.

CODE: 01

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES

Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.

Age:30

Gender: Female

Employment Status: xxx

In what way has childless affect your social life?

1. Negatively especially when we are with other family

How has childlessness affected the way you think?

1. Most times we feel God has abandoned us

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?

1. Always believing that God will visit us one day

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remainin the church without going to others where they can get children?

1. Yes

CODE: 02

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES

Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.

Age:36

Gender: Male

Employment Status:Employed

In what way has childless affect your social life?

1. Negatively especially when we meet with couple blessed with child
2. Emotional disturbances

How has childlessness affected the way you think?

1. Most times we think we are deformed spiritually

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?

1. Though we didn't have children, one still spend on brothers, sisters and uncles relations

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?

1. We always pray and trust God to give us children

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remain in the church without going to others where they can get children?

1. Yes

CODE: 03

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES

Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.

Age:37

Gender: Male

Employment Status:Employed

In what way has childless affect your social life?

1. It has no serious effect on my social life but sometime I feel emotional insecurity

How has childlessness affected the way you think?

1. stagnation, feeling of doing nothing, a sense of wasting away

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?

1. Unable to provide adequately at home due to medical expenditure like drug and laboratory testes

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?

1. To God be the glory, it has no effect on my relationship with God. I am straight with hum

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remain in the church without going to others where they can get children?

This generally affects some couple in third world countries, African belief, taboos and stereotypes do have great effect on the couple staying in the church. Some believe that God is responsible and some attributed to witches, wizard or evil committed by the couple. This lead some couple out of church. But some belief in the church.

CODE: 04

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES

Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.

Age:27

Gender:Female

Employment Status:Employed

In what way has childless affect your social life?

1. I normally have inferiority complex whenever I am with my friends that are married with children
2. Emotional insecurity

How has childlessness affected the way you think?

1. am always so deep in thought
2. I used to be absent minded at time even in public

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?

1. The treatment concerning fertility issues are very expensive, so we tend to spend more, is as if every effort concerning spending is not enough so we tendto spend more and more

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?

1. It has no effect on my relationship with God,
2. It cause feels as if maybe I did something wrong in my walk, I don't really know but the zeal to worship God more becomes strong.

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remain in the church without going to others where they can get children?

1. It depends on the couple and the level of their faith in God. It doesn't matter the church you attend. Most people will feel insured because of pressure from family so they will prefer to look for solution in other church or outside Christ.

CODE: 05

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES

Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.

Age:30

Gender: Female

Employment Status:Employed

In what way has childless affect your social life?

1. I don't have someone to call my own
2. I don't have someone that I would that I would interact with
3. I don't have someone to care for
4. I don't have someone that can call me mother

How has childlessness affected the way you think?

1. it's affect me mentally
2. it's bring argument between the couples
3. it's bring issues between the both families
4. it's gives me sleepless night

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?

1. 1 am on able to keep savings
2. I am always going for medical check up
3. I pass through some many miscarriages
4. always spending money on drugs

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?

1. it's makes me to lose faith in God
2. it's makes me to think that God cannot provide
3. it's makes me to backslide in church activities
4. it's makes me to be prayer-less

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remain in the church without going to others where they can get children?

1. is not possible because anyway there is solution they go
2. the couples will go to hospital for check-up
3. the couple would go to any length to get children
4. The couple may go for adoption to get someone to call their own

CODE: 06

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES

Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.

Age:36

Gender: Male

Employment Status:Employed

In what way has childless affect your social life?

1. It brings unhappiness to the couple
2. it brings overthinking
3. it brings problems between wife and husband
4. it also brings issues to the parents of the couples

How has childlessness affected the way you think?

1. that if I die, my name has ended
2. Think that if I die I have no one to take care of my properties
3. It makes me to think negatively
4. It make me not to plan for feature

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?

1. it makes me to spend more on medical
2. it makes me spend any how because I have no child
3. it brings over expenditure on drugs buying

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?

1. it makes me think that God is not answering my prayer
2. it makes someone think of consulting some herbalist
3. it makes me think that somebody is responsible for my problem

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remain in the church without going to others where they can get children?

1. If they are unbeliever they can think of going to others.
2. if the couple are believers, they will remain and set their eyes on God
3. Some couples are today to find child to any where

CODE: 07

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES

Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.

Age:29

Gender: Male

Employment Status:Employed

In what way has childless affect your social life?

1. It affected my psychological social being
2. It affected at been lonely
3. it affected for being depressed for something
3. it affected for no representation

How has childlessness affected the way you think?

1. it affected in the way been weak in thinking
2. it affected psychologically and psychosomatic
3. it affected most frequent distress
4. it affected sometime reduced sexual interest

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?

1. it affected my spending aimlessly
2. it affected my spending without planning
3. it also affected my spending without been saving for future

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?

1. it reduces my strong hold faith in God

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remain in the church without going to others where they can get children?

1. Good has his own way of direction, you have to remain focus where you are in your own church and God will surely answer your prayer.

CODE:08

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES

Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.

Age:35

Gender: Female

Employment Status:Self-employed

In what way has childless affect your social life?

1. Lack of encouragement to face other women that has children
2. Stigma from the family and friends
3. fear of losing one's husband

How has childlessness affected the way you think?

1. fear of our efforts not been recognized because of lack of children
2. fear of working hard to achieve success
3. Thinking that we don't have successor

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?

1. Excessive spending because of no child to inherit our success

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?

1. Most question arises from our heart toward about the promise in the Bible
2. We sometime question or sonship

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remain in the church without going to others where they can get children?

1. Buy His grace most childless couple could still stick to their faith in God.

CODE: 09

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES

Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.

Age:40

Gender: Male

Employment Status:Employed

In what way has childless affect your social life?

1. Lack of joy where you see other children and you have not
2. The stigma from family and family and friends that mocked you
3. Discouragement from associating with people who have children

How has childlessness affected the way you think?

1. Discouragement from putting more efforts in whatever you are doing thinking that they might not be someone to take after you

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?

1. Excessive spending due to the fact that you have no child to inherit these things you have acquired

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?

1. Most time so many questions arise from the mind of a childless couple such as the Bible says there will be no barren in the house so why is their own different,

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remain in the church without going to others where they can get children?

1. Yes, the childless couple that believe in God knows that whether He (God) answer us or not He is still our God, so without child many couple can still stick to their faith.

CODE: 10

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES

Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.

Age:32

Gender: Male

Employment Status: Employed

In what way has childless affect your social life?

1. It makes one's one life to be so depressed
2. it raised depression and anxiety level
3. felling of blame and guilty
4. It lowered self-esteem

How has childlessness affected the way you think?

1. Childlessness make one think he doesn't have future, as he can die without legacy
2. on will become to feel that his life is not complete
3. One will become/felt incredibly jealous towards those with children
4. it causes immerse shame on top of sadness because of childlessness especially when our ability to reproduce is compromised

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?

1. Childless person spends spend a lot on hospital bill to ascertain the cost,
2. He transport to many places especially churches in search of solution

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?

1. I learned how to engage with God and learn to know him best
2. sometimes I do feel that my prayers never bothered God
3. struggle and grief over childlessness can become a stead upon which we ride in prayer with God
4. Bitterness of spirit may be an index of our need of prayer and incentive to that holy exercise

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remain in the church without going to others where they can get children?

CODE:11

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES

Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.

Age:43

Gender:Male

Employment Status:Employed

In what way has childless affect your social life?

1. It makes one life look dull
2. It makes some look uncompleted
3. It lowered self-esteem

How has childlessness affected the way you think?

1. Thinking like no future or continuity
2. Thinking that no person or children to inherit property
3. Think no need for investment because no children
4. No preparation for children like house, bank account etc

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?

1. spending money at the hospital for treatment
2. spending money on transportation for visiting of hospital
3. Spending your energy
4. Spending money for consultation

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?

1. visiting of father in-law for traditional treatment
2. Accusing God and person for not having children
3. No trust in waiting for God time
4. No need for prayer and hope

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remain in the church without going to others where they can get children?

1. though for visiting churches or man of God
2. Visiting Hospitals
3. Consulting others for advise

CODE: 12

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES

Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.

Age:38

Gender: Female

Employment Status:Self-employed

In what way has childless affect your social life?

1. You felt you are not considered

How has childlessness affected the way you think?

1. Feeling dejected
2. No sense of belonging
3. Feeling lonely even among people
4. feeling incomplete

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?

1. It affected by spending much in the hospital

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?

1. As for me, I kept on trusting in God and it come to pass
2. It rather made me to know God the more

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remain in the church without going to others where they can get children?

1. Many goes to other places to seek for solution
2. I was once advised by a lady to go to somewhere

CODE: 13

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES

Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.

Age:42

Gender: Female

Employment Status:Employed

In what way has childless affect your social life?

1. Emotional Instability
2. Social retardation
3. Physical abuse by the society
4. fear of the unknown

How has childlessness affected the way you think?

1. Anxiety
2. Emotional Imbalance
3. Humiliation
4. Worry

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?

1. Fear of the unknown who will inherit my wealth
2. Extravagant
3. Lack of saving

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?

1. sometimes I think if He really exist
2. lack of commitment
3. Doubt His work or deeds

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remain in the church without going to others where they can get children?

1. Yes of course
2. sometimes no

CODE: 14
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES
Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.
Age:53
Gender: Male
Employment Status:Employed
In what way has childless affect your social life?
1. Self-withdrawal from social gathering
2. Avoid marital and family conversations
3. self-pity
4. inferiority complex overwhelming my personality

How has childlessness affected the way you think?
1. Irrational thinking
2. lack of positivity in life interaction
3. Low Emotion
4. sense of defeat

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?
1. Zero Saving
2. extravagant in spending
3. Absence of capital project
4. Budget free life style

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?
1. Make re-doubting
2. lack of total submission to God
3. Questioning His true existence/sovereignty
4. Asking God where is your love

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remain in the church without going to others where they can get children?
1. Their faith experiences a lot of trials, some backslide
2. Many of them become scorn from others seek solution other churches
3. some visit herbalist or shrine in looking for solution
4. Some still hold unto God and expect lasting solution from God

CODE: 15

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES

Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.

Age:45

Gender: Male

Employment Status:Employed

In what way has childless affect your social life?

1. I do engage in social media to keep busy at home
2. The laugh children brought at home is missing in my house
3. Who do I buy sweet and biscuit while returning after work
4. is not easy discussion children related topic with friends

How has childlessness affected the way you think?

1. I do think and reason how to handle my child if I will have one
2. I image the day I will have a child how I will feel
3. What do people say about my marriage
4. How will other parents feel and saw when you discipline their children

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?

1. childlessness affects my expenditure position because I have no school feels to pay
2. I don't have any child that I will buying shoes and tea
3. I will spend less on medical bills
4. I will spend less money at home and have more money to save to or income

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?

1. childlessness brings me closer to God
2. it helps me to study bible to know the experience other believers had
3. It strength my faith to wait upon the Lord
4. I do believe one-day God will answer my prayer

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remain in the church without going to others where they can get children?

1. Yes, if they are true believers
2. Yes, if they will resist external forces
3. Yes, if church will be in touch with them and counselling them
4. Yes, if church will form a prayer group for childless couple.

CODE: 16
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES
Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.
Age:30
Gender: Female
Employment Status: xxx
In what way has childless affect your social life?
1. it will not be fun been without a child at home
2. at times children bring back joy after been boring
3. I make my social media to keep me busy
4. affect it by socializing with other people when they are with theirs

How has childlessness affected the way you think?
1. Imaging how people look at me
2. affect my mindset on who will benefit my wealth
3. the desire of having a child never goes away
4. How do I deal with being childless

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?
1. It minimized the cost of living i.e. school fees, clothing and feeding
2. It minimized the cost of house ware in the house
3. It minimized the cost of buying some of the small thing like sweet.
4. It promote saving in monetary section and plan well.

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?
1. It does not real affect it much because I know it is the will of God to me
2. I think he want to test my faith in Him.
3. I compare myself at times with those in Bible like Abraham, Hanna
4. I think he want to use me as example to other

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remain in the church without going to others where they can get children?
1. Yes, if they know who they are serving
2. Yes, If they don't hear from other people advice that are related to God
3. Yes, if they don't mind hear said from friends and relatives
4. Yes, if they have some prayer support from church elders. Member also have some counselling from different people mostly Doctors and priest

CODE: 17

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES

Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.

Age:40

Gender:Male

Employment Status:employed

In what way has childless affect your social life?

1. No cordial relationship between my sister's in-law
2. having partial good time with mother in-law
3. thinking on how to concentrate in my activities
4. being somehow jealous with

How has childlessness affected the way you think?

1. Always looking focus
2. Thinking whether it's my spouse that is sick
3. endless expectation
4. thinking weather it's my sin that on my childless

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?

1. always thinking of myself (little expenditure)
2. having only one way of spending
3. accumulating wealth to myself
4. Having good time with your spouse only

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?

1. Distrust in God
2. Thinking of unfaithful God or a partial God
3. backsliding
4. No concentration during church programme

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remain in the church without going to others where they can get children?

1. they will sure go other ways to find children
2. they will go for miracle children avenue or centers
3. They will go for implant
4. some will still keep their trust and faith in God

CODE:18
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES
Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.
Age:26
Gender: Female
Employment Status:Self-employed
In what way has childless affect your social life?
1. No happiness in the family
2. No good relationship with themselves
3. Thinking whether the marriage will not last again
4. Having no time with themselves

How has childlessness affected the way you think?
1. Not been happy seeing other people children
2. Is my spouse ok
3. Thinking of getting another marriage
4. Get married for the second time

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?
1. at time speeding only on spouse
2. spending on self
3. no extra speeding
4. Not even thinking of speeding on extended family

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?
1. Not been faithful to God
2. Not been trustworthy
3. backsliding
4. no more commitment to church activities

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remain in the church without going to others where they can get children?
1. they can go extra mine
2. always looking for solution while going to Babalawo
3. thinking of treating unknown treatment

CODE: 19

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES

Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.

Age:37

Gender:Male

Employment Status:Self Employed

In what way has childless affect your social life?

1. You are depressed
2. Humiliation is always there
3. People will mock you that you cannot produce an egg

How has childlessness affected the way you think?

1. I think my sins are unforgivable
2. I think 1'm barren
3. I always think there is generational curse
4. God is not with me again after aborted many children

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?

1. Medical check-up to ascertain your status will increase

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?

1. I still believe God control the universe
2. There is time for everything as appointed by God
3. My trust is the Lord

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remain in the church without going to others where they can get children?

1. Yes, those who put their trust in God will remained in the present church
2. No, they believe in miracle centres so they will go there for children
3. some will go and come back to wait for the Lord
4. some will go and never come back to marry their wife

CODE: 20

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES

Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.

Age:30

Gender: Female

Employment Status:Self-employed

In what way has childless affect your social life?

1. It makes me devastated and shy
2. fear of being humiliated among people
3. it reduces the level of boldness and ability to complete

How has childlessness affected the way you think?

1. It makes me think abnormal
2. it has affected my sense of reasoning to which I look at everyone as an enemy
3. it makes us feels that I'm bewitched

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?

1. by moving to hospital to know the cause of my childlessness
2. To some point running from church to church for prayers

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?

1. To the extent that I I feel God does not really care about me
2. To the extent that I sometimes doubt His powers
3. To some extent I feel He does not exist

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remain in the church without going to others where they can get children?

1. Yes, they can remain in the church if they have faith in him
2. The church is the only safe where they can wait
3. And is it the church they can be encouraged and given hope
4. It Depends on your level of trust and believe in Christ

CODE: 21

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES

Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.

Age:Adult

Gender: Male

Employment Status: Employed

In what way has childless affect your social life?

1. Loneliness and boring

How has childlessness affected the way you think?

1. Feeling there is sickness in one of the spouse or heritage issues

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?

1. the childless couple spends much on going for medical check-up or spend on herbalist

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?

1. It depends on one faith or belief; some are never patient to wait for God so distrust God

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remain in the church without going to others where they can get children?

1. many will prefer going to other places rather than remain in church

CODE:22
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES
Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.
Age:54
Gender: Female
Employment Status: xxx
In what way has childless affect your social life?

1. very uncomfortable

How has childlessness affected the way you think?

1. thinking that God don't want to give now

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?

1. Spending much money on medication
2. Visiting many prayer houses

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?

1. There are doubts so much as to whether God really love us

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remain in the church without going to others where they can get children?

1. they will prefer to visit others where they can get children

CODE: 23

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES

Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.

Age: 45

Gender: Male

Employment Status:Employed

In what way has childless affect your social life?

1. Fear of isolation
2. none participation is social gathering
3. Absent of personal family friend
4. Zero public appearance

How has childlessness affected the way you think?

1. No proper coordination
2. Anxiety
3. Confusion
4. Insecurity

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?

1. Plan-less spending
2. No saving
3. no Investment plan
4. extravagancy

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?

1. Hopelessness
2. Little faith
3. doubts on God's promises (internally)
4. Discouragement in praying to God

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remain in the church without going to others where they can get children?

1. The possibility of the couple leaving church is high
2. With counselling, the leadership will try to encourage in scriptures and prayer
3. Constant visitation, prayer and sharing the word willingly they will stay in church in waiting on God

CODE: 24

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES

Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.

Age:Adult

Gender: Male

Employment Status:Employed

In what way has childless affect your social life?

1. it's make me feel unhappy
2. I can't go to birthday party in the midst of parents

How has childlessness affected the way you think?

1. I always think of who will take my name
2. Is this how I will leave this word?

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?

1. No experience on what to buy for children

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?

1. Sometime feel God does not love me
2. Feel not to pray

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remain in the church without going to others where they can get children?

1. it is very difficult
2. there are a lot of couple that are moving from one place to another looking for children

CODE: 025
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES
Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.
Age:xxx
Gender: Female
Employment Status:Self-employed
In what way has childless affect your social life?
1. It makes me unhappy all the time
2. It means you cannot organize birthday party
3. feeling uncomfortable associating with other women

How has childlessness affected the way you think?
1. It makes one not to be mental fit
2. it also makes you happy
3. It also make you feel inferior

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?
1. It makes you spend below what you like to spend

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?
1. I still hold on God and belief He will do something so nothing has change

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remain in the church without going to others where they can get children?
1. Yes.
2. God can bless me in the church
3. Gift of child came from God

CODE: 26

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES

Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.

Age:47

Gender: Male

Employment Status:Employed

In what way has childless affect your social life?

1. Withdrawal from public places
2. loss of sexual desire
3. share constantly with my spouse

How has childlessness affected the way you think?

1. every negative comment on childless is always painful

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?

1. a lot is used on fertility clinic
2. a lot is saved as there is no child to care for

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?

1. Sometime praying becomes difficult as one is not fulfilled
2. the feeling that the whole church should be praying

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remain in the church without going to others where they can get children?

1. The thought of trying every man of God/church
2. The temptation of visiting spiritualist and herbalist set in

CODE:27

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES

Do not mention your name in the course of answering the questions. Your response will be treated with optimal confidentiality.

Age:30

Gender: Female

Employment Status: xxx

In what way has childless affect your social life?

1. Withdrawal from social gathering
2. Loneliness
3. Reserve

How has childlessness affected the way you think?

1. It makes me have negative taught like divorce
2. Separation from my spouse
3. Sometimes you feel like ending your life

How has childlessness affect your expenditure or spending?

1. I spend a lot on hospital bills
2. Buying fertility supplements
3. since there are no children, money is saved
4. No school fees for children no birthdays etc.

To what extent does childless affect your relationship with God or your born again experience?

1. it is capable of pulling one away from God
2. The faith going extra mile to get children
3. But as for me I fought that thought, I known that its God that gives children hence closer to Him

In a childlessness condition, do you think that couple will remain in the church without going to others where they can get children?

1. Some people do but as for me I will not go anywhere at the proper time He will give me after all he calls things that are not as if there were and it happens. Withdrawal from the church is not the best action

Appendix 4

Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Statistics

Reliability	Section B	Section C	Section D	Section E	Section F	Section G
Cronbach's Alpha	.881	.870	.865	.864	.859	.854
N of items	12	11	8	8	8	9
N of Respondents	20	20	20	20	20	20
N of Valid Cases	20	20	20	20	20	20
%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Appendix 5

Output for Analysis

Frequency Table

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	236	53.5	53.5	53.5
	Female	205	46.5	46.5	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Educ_Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Literate	305	69.2	69.2	69.2
	Illiterate	136	30.8	30.8	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Employ_Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Employed	271	61.5	61.5	61.5
	Unemployed	170	38.5	38.5	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Location

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Urban	251	56.9	56.9	56.9
	Rural	190	43.1	43.1	100.0

	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Youth	164	37.2	37.2	37.2
	Adult	277	62.8	62.8	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Frequencies

Statistics

		Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q10	Q111	Q112
N	Valid	441	441	441	441	441	441	441	441	441	441	441	441
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Frequency Table

Q11

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	38	8.6	8.6	8.6
	D	106	24.0	24.0	32.7
	A	191	43.3	43.3	76.0
	SA	106	24.0	24.0	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q12

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	29	6.6	6.6	6.6
	D	91	20.6	20.6	27.2
	A	230	52.2	52.2	79.4
	SA	91	20.6	20.6	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q13

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	60	13.6	13.6	13.6
	D	164	37.2	37.2	50.8
	A	120	27.2	27.2	78.0
	SA	97	22.0	22.0	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q14

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	68	15.4	15.4	15.4
	D	147	33.3	33.3	48.8
	A	156	35.4	35.4	84.1
	SA	70	15.9	15.9	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q15

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	64	14.5	14.5	14.5
	D	54	12.2	12.2	26.8
	A	201	45.6	45.6	72.3
	SA	122	27.7	27.7	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q16

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	52	11.8	11.8	11.8
	D	62	14.1	14.1	25.9
	A	194	44.0	44.0	69.8
	SA	133	30.2	30.2	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q17

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	78	17.7	17.7	17.7
	D	164	37.2	37.2	54.9
	A	150	34.0	34.0	88.9
	SA	49	11.1	11.1	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q18

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

Valid	SD	42	9.5	9.5	9.5
	D	146	33.1	33.1	42.6
	A	163	37.0	37.0	79.6
	SA	90	20.4	20.4	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q19

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	18	4.1	4.1	4.1
	D	72	16.3	16.3	20.4
	A	221	50.1	50.1	70.5
	SA	130	29.5	29.5	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q10

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	40	9.1	9.1	9.1
	D	145	32.9	32.9	42.0
	A	194	44.0	44.0	85.9
	SA	62	14.1	14.1	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q111

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

Valid	SD	62	14.1	14.1	14.1
	D	128	29.0	29.0	43.1
	A	147	33.3	33.3	76.4
	SA	104	23.6	23.6	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q112

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	60	13.6	13.6	13.6
	D	77	17.5	17.5	31.1
	A	159	36.1	36.1	67.1
	SA	145	32.9	32.9	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

```
FREQUENCIES VARIABLES=Q21 Q22 Q23 Q24 Q25 Q26 Q27 Q28 Q29 Q210 Q211
  /ORDER=ANALYSIS.
```

Frequencies

Statistics

		Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q28	Q29	Q210	Q211
N	Valid	441	441	441	441	441	441	441	441	441	441	441
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Frequency Table

Q21

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	69	15.6	15.6	15.6
	D	107	24.3	24.3	39.9

	A	213	48.3	48.3	88.2
	SA	52	11.8	11.8	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q22

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	58	13.2	13.2	13.2
	D	103	23.4	23.4	36.5
	A	213	48.3	48.3	84.8
	SA	67	15.2	15.2	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q23

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	39	8.8	8.8	8.8
	D	87	19.7	19.7	28.6
	A	203	46.0	46.0	74.6
	SA	112	25.4	25.4	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q24

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	38	8.6	8.6	8.6
	D	62	14.1	14.1	22.7
	A	202	45.8	45.8	68.5

	SA	139	31.5	31.5	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q25

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	52	11.8	11.8	11.8
	D	124	28.1	28.1	39.9
	A	181	41.0	41.0	81.0
	SA	84	19.0	19.0	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q26

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	26	5.9	5.9	5.9
	D	25	5.7	5.7	11.6
	A	166	37.6	37.6	49.2
	SA	224	50.8	50.8	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q27

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	46	10.4	10.4	10.4
	D	128	29.0	29.0	39.5
	A	182	41.3	41.3	80.7
	SA	85	19.3	19.3	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q28

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	73	16.6	16.6	16.6
	D	146	33.1	33.1	49.7
	A	138	31.3	31.3	81.0
	SA	84	19.0	19.0	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q29

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	41	9.3	9.3	9.3
	D	81	18.4	18.4	27.7
	A	226	51.2	51.2	78.9
	SA	93	21.1	21.1	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q210

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	20	4.5	4.5	4.5
	D	46	10.4	10.4	15.0
	A	249	56.5	56.5	71.4
	SA	126	28.6	28.6	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q211

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	39	8.8	8.8	8.8
	D	85	19.3	19.3	28.1

	A	214	48.5	48.5	76.6
	SA	103	23.4	23.4	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

FREQUENCIES VARIABLES=Q31 Q32 Q33 Q34 Q35 Q36 Q37 Q38
/ORDER=ANALYSIS.

Frequencies

Statistics

		Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36	Q37	Q38
N	Valid	441	441	441	441	441	441	441	441
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Frequency Table

Q31

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	71	16.1	16.1	16.1
	D	173	39.2	39.2	55.3
	A	107	24.3	24.3	79.6
	SA	90	20.4	20.4	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q32

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	81	18.4	18.4	18.4
	D	180	40.8	40.8	59.2
	A	114	25.9	25.9	85.0
	SA	66	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q33

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	53	12.0	12.0	12.0
	D	153	34.7	34.7	46.7
	A	181	41.0	41.0	87.8
	SA	54	12.2	12.2	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q34

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	76	17.2	17.2	17.2
	D	173	39.2	39.2	56.5
	A	133	30.2	30.2	86.6
	SA	59	13.4	13.4	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q35

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	67	15.2	15.2	15.2
	D	148	33.6	33.6	48.8
	A	183	41.5	41.5	90.2
	SA	43	9.8	9.8	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q36

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

Valid	SD	36	8.2	8.2	8.2
	D	96	21.8	21.8	29.9
	A	229	51.9	51.9	81.9
	SA	80	18.1	18.1	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q37

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	74	16.8	16.8	16.8
	D	218	49.4	49.4	66.2
	A	96	21.8	21.8	88.0
	SA	53	12.0	12.0	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q38

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	47	10.7	10.7	10.7
	D	152	34.5	34.5	45.1
	A	164	37.2	37.2	82.3
	SA	78	17.7	17.7	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

```
FREQUENCIES VARIABLES=Q41 Q42 Q43 Q44 Q45 Q46 Q47 Q48
 /ORDER=ANALYSIS.
```

Frequencies

Statistics

		Q41	Q42	Q43	Q44	Q45	Q46	Q47	Q48
N	Valid	441	441	441	441	441	441	441	441
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Frequency Table

Q41

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	37	8.4	8.4	8.4
	D	93	21.1	21.1	29.5
	A	213	48.3	48.3	77.8
	SA	98	22.2	22.2	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q42

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	29	6.6	6.6	6.6
	D	59	13.4	13.4	20.0
	A	206	46.7	46.7	66.7
	SA	147	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q43

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	43	9.8	9.8	9.8
	D	121	27.4	27.4	37.2
	A	210	47.6	47.6	84.8
	SA	67	15.2	15.2	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q44

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	35	7.9	7.9	7.9
	D	85	19.3	19.3	27.2
	A	234	53.1	53.1	80.3
	SA	87	19.7	19.7	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q45

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	51	11.6	11.6	11.6
	D	201	45.6	45.6	57.1
	A	133	30.2	30.2	87.3
	SA	56	12.7	12.7	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q46

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	56	12.7	12.7	12.7
	D	69	15.6	15.6	28.3
	A	218	49.4	49.4	77.8
	SA	98	22.2	22.2	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q47

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

Valid	SD	25	5.7	5.7	5.7
	D	24	5.4	5.4	11.1
	A	186	42.2	42.2	53.3
	SA	206	46.7	46.7	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q48

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	76	17.2	17.2	17.2
	D	67	15.2	15.2	32.4
	A	179	40.6	40.6	73.0
	SA	119	27.0	27.0	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

```
FREQUENCIES VARIABLES=Q51 Q52 Q53 Q54 Q55 Q56 Q57 Q58
  /ORDER=ANALYSIS.
```

Frequencies

Statistics

		Q51	Q52	Q53	Q54	Q55	Q56	Q57	Q58
N	Valid	441	441	441	441	441	441	441	441
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Frequency Table

Q51

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	25	5.7	5.7	5.7
	D	42	9.5	9.5	15.2
	A	220	49.9	49.9	65.1
	SA	154	34.9	34.9	100.0

	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q52

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	48	10.9	10.9	10.9
	D	60	13.6	13.6	24.5
	A	251	56.9	56.9	81.4
	SA	82	18.6	18.6	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q53

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	61	13.8	13.8	13.8
	D	104	23.6	23.6	37.4
	A	238	54.0	54.0	91.4
	SA	38	8.6	8.6	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q54

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	53	12.0	12.0	12.0
	D	53	12.0	12.0	24.0
	A	217	49.2	49.2	73.2
	SA	118	26.8	26.8	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q55

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	56	12.7	12.7	12.7

	D	103	23.4	23.4	36.1
	A	183	41.5	41.5	77.6
	SA	99	22.4	22.4	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q56

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	12	2.7	2.7	2.7
	D	35	7.9	7.9	10.7
	A	200	45.4	45.4	56.0
	SA	194	44.0	44.0	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q57

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	17	3.9	3.9	3.9
	D	113	25.6	25.6	29.5
	A	166	37.6	37.6	67.1
	SA	145	32.9	32.9	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

Q58

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	85	19.3	19.3	19.3
	D	142	32.2	32.2	51.5
	A	122	27.7	27.7	79.1
	SA	92	20.9	20.9	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

```
T-TEST GROUPS=Gender(1 2)
 /MISSING=ANALYSIS
```

/VARIABLES=Social_Implication

/CRITERIA=CI(.95).

T-Test

Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Social_Implication	Male	236	31.7076	5.32790	.34682
	Female	205	34.2146	6.19320	.43255

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Social_Implication	Equal variances assumed	2.008	.157	-4.570	439	.000	-2.50701	.54862	-3.58525	-1.42877
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.522	405.222	.000	-2.50701	.55442	-3.59691	-1.41711

```
T-TEST GROUPS=Educ_Status(1 2)
  /MISSING=ANALYSIS
  /VARIABLES=Psychological_Implication
  /CRITERIA=CI(.95).
```

T-Test

Group Statistics

	Educ_Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Psychological_Implication	Literate	305	31.4197	6.14578	.35191
	Illiterate	136	30.4632	6.91633	.59307

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Psychological_Implication	Equal variances assumed	4.040	.045	1.451	439	.147	.95644	.65914	-.33903	2.25191
	Equal variances not assumed			1.387	233.920	.167	.95644	.68962	-.40222	2.31509

```
T-TEST GROUPS=Employ_Status(1 2)
  /MISSING=ANALYSIS
  /VARIABLES=Economic_Implication
  /CRITERIA=CI(.95).
```

T-Test

Group Statistics

	Employ_Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Economic_Implication	Employed	271	19.3100	3.66159	.22243
	Unemployed	170	21.0059	4.45556	.34173

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Economic_Implication	Equal variances assumed	7.678	.006	-4.349	439	.000	-1.69592	.38999	-2.46239	-.92945
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.159	307.935	.000	-1.69592	.40774	-2.49822	-.89361

```
T-TEST GROUPS=Location(1 2)
  /MISSING=ANALYSIS
  /VARIABLES=Moral_Implication
  /CRITERIA=CI(.95).
```

T-Test

Group Statistics

	Location	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Moral_Implication	Urban	251	22.6255	4.67110	.29484
	Rural	190	22.9474	5.60776	.40683

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Economic_Implication	Equal variances assumed	7.678	.006	-4.349	439	.000	-1.69592	.38999	-2.46239	-.92945
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.159	307.935	.000	-1.69592	.40774	-2.49822	-.89361

```
T-TEST GROUPS=Age(1 2)
  /MISSING=ANALYSIS
  /VARIABLES=Numerical_Growth
  /CRITERIA=CI(.95).
```

T-Test

Group Statistics

	Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Numerical_Growth	Youth	164	21.7683	3.59720	.28089
	Adult	277	23.7184	3.96362	.23815

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Numerical_Growth	Equal variances assumed	1.114	.292	-5.166	439	.000	-1.95012	.37752	-2.69210	-1.20814
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.295	368.966	.000	-1.95012	.36826	-2.67428	-1.22596