



KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE OF MOTHERS TOWARDS CHILD ADOPTION PRACTICES IN OGBE AHIARA AHAZU MBAISE IMO STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out on the knowledge and attitude of mothers towards child adoption practice in Ogbé Ahiara Ahiazu Mbaise. The objective was to determine the knowledge of child adoption among the mothers in Ogbé Ahiara Ahiazu Mbaise, to determine the attitude of mothers towards child adoption, to find out whether mothers know about the practice of child adoption and to find out whether couples do practice child adoption. A descriptive research design was adopted for the study. Stratified proportionate questionnaire was used for data collection which was analysed using mean and percentages and presented in tables. The results revealed that (100%) majority of the mothers have good knowledge of child adoption. The researcher made some recommendation which include that family members should love, accept and treat these children as biological children of the family and make it known to others that these are their children and they cherish them. Also members of the society should stop thoughtless comments about child adoption; rather they should love them and encourage mothers to adopt.

KEYWORDS: Knowledge, Attitude, Adoption, Mother.

INTRODUCTION

Adoption is a process whereby a person assumes the parenting of another, usually a child, from that person's biological or legal parent or parents, and, in so doing, permanently transfers all rights and responsibilities, along with filiation, from the biological parent or parents.^[3]

Unlike guardianship or other systems designed for the care of the young, adoption is intended to effect a permanent change in status and as such requires societal recognition, either through legal or religious sanction. Historically, some societies have enacted specific laws governing adoption; where others have tried to achieve adoption through less formal means, notably via contracts that specified inheritance rights and parental responsibilities without an accompanying transfer of filiation. Modern systems of adoption, arising in the 20th century, tend to be governed by comprehensive statutes and regulations.^[11]

Open adoption allows identifying information to be communicated between adoptive and biological parents and, perhaps, interaction between kin and the adopted person. Rarely, it is the outgrowth of laws that maintain an adoptee's right to unaltered birth certificates and/or adoption records, but such access is not universal (it is possible in a few jurisdictions—including the UK and six

states in the United States). Open adoption can be an informal arrangement subject to termination by adoptive parents who have sole authority over the child. In some jurisdictions, the biological and adoptive parents may enter into a legally enforceable and binding agreement concerning visitation, exchange of information, or other interaction regarding the child. As of February 2009, 24 U.S. states allowed legally enforceable open adoption contract agreements to be included in the adoption finalization.^[12]

The practice of closed adoption (confidential or secret adoption), which has not been the norm for most of modern history, seals all identifying information, maintaining it as secret and preventing disclosure of the adoptive parents', biological kins', and adoptees' identities. Nevertheless, closed adoption may allow the transmittal of non-identifying information such as medical history and religious and ethnic background.^[4]

Today, as a result of safe haven laws passed by some U.S. states, secret adoption is seeing renewed influence. In so-called "safe-haven" states, infants can be left, anonymously, at hospitals, fire departments, or police stations within a few days of birth, a practice criticized by some adoption advocacy organizations as being retrograde and dangerous. Closed adoption, lack of medical history and the broken thread of family

continuity can have a detrimental impact on an adoptee's psychological and physical health. The lack of openness, honesty and family connections in adoption can be detrimental to the psychological well-being of adoptees and of their descendants.^[4]

Child adoption is the means of meeting the developmental needs of a child by legally transferring an on-going parental responsibility for the child from the biological parents to the adoptive parents and such a new kingship network is created that forever links those two families together through the child who is shared by both parents.^[5]

Adoptions can occur either between related family members, or unrelated individuals. Historically, most adoptions occurred within a family. The most recent data from the U.S. indicates about half of adoptions are currently between related individuals. A common example of this is a "stepparent adoption", where the new partner of a parent may legally adopt a child from the parent's previous relationship. Intra-family adoption can also occur through surrender, as a result of parental death, or when the child cannot otherwise be cared for and a family member agrees to take over.^[8]

Infertility is the main reason parents seek to adopt children they are not related to. One study shows this accounted for 80% of unrelated infant adoptions and half of adoptions through foster care.^[1] Estimates suggest that 11–24% of Americans who cannot conceive or carry to term attempt to build a family through adoption, and that the overall rate of ever-married American women who adopt is about 1.4%.^[14] Other reasons people adopt are numerous although not well documented. These may include wanting to cement a new family following divorce or death of one parent, compassion motivated by religious or philosophical conviction, to avoid contributing to overpopulation out of the belief that it is more responsible to care for otherwise parent-less children than to reproduce, to ensure that inheritable diseases (e.g., Tay-Sachs disease) are not passed on, and health concerns relating to pregnancy and childbirth. Although there are a range of possible reasons, the most recent study of experiences of women who adopt suggests they are most likely to be 40–44 years of age, currently married, have impaired fertility, and childless.^[12]

METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive method adopted to access the attitude and the knowledge of mothers towards a child adoption in Ogbe Ahiara Ahiazu Mbaise.

Setting

The area of the study for this research project is in Ogbe Ahiara Ahiazu Mbaise. It consist Umuoma, Umuihi, Umulolo, Amaorji, Umueleke, and Ndiohiawith two primary schools, one secondary school and one health centre.

Target Population

The study was centralized mostly on mothers between the age of (40-50) years in Ogbe Ahiara Ahiazu Mbaise irrespective of their educational qualification, occupation and social economic background which is 200 in number.

Sample/Sampling Technique

The researcher used the entire population as the sample size since the population size obtained from the past record is small. Joshua (2004) stated that when a population is relatively small and easy to survey, the whole people in the population can be used.

Description of Data collection Instrument

The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire and illiterate couples were assisted to fill the same questionnaire after explanation. These consist of twelve questions and two hundred copies of the questionnaire were printed and distributed.

Validity/Reliability of Instrument

The research questionnaire was presented to the supervisor who approved its use. A pre-test was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument by administering questions to a population outside the working population and it yielded a reliable result.

Procedure for Data collection

In order to gain access to the mothers, a letter of introduction from the principal, seeking for permission was given to the head of the clinic. The purpose of the study was explained to them in order to gain their cooperation. Copies of the structured interview were done by the researcher. The researcher personally administered the instrument to various mothers and collected the completed copies back. Illiterates were helped thereby ensuring that the respondents were supervised. The respondents filled and returned the structured interview after completion. Although 200 copies were distributed and collected, none got missing and none was improperly filled. It was not surprising that the return rate of the instrument was 100% because the researcher administered the instrument to mother per head.

Method of Data Analysis

The researcher analysed data by using tables and percentage.

Ethical Consideration

- The researcher seek the consent of the community before carrying out the research work
- The rights of the respondents was respected and protected.
- The community culture belief, customs was respected.
- The objective research work was made known to the community.

- All confidential information gotten from the respondents was kept within the researcher and the respondents.
- The respondents have the right to withdraw from the study at all time.
- The respondents are allowed to participate voluntarily in order to see that the research work was well done.
- There was a good interpersonal relationship and the support between the researcher and the respondents.
- The entire respondents were given equal rights throughout the research work.

RESULTS

Table 1: Showing demographic data of respondents.

| Variables | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------|------------|----------------|
| Age: | | |
| 20-30 years | 40 | 20.0 |
| 30-40 years | 70 | 35.0 |
| 50 years and above | 90 | 45.0 |
| Total | 200 | 100 |
| Occupation: | | |
| Student | 20 | 10.0 |
| Civil servant | 30 | 15.0 |
| Farmers | 60 | 30.0 |
| Others | 90 | 45.0 |
| Total | 200 | 100 |
| Marital Status: | | |
| Married | 120 | 60.0 |
| Divorced | 60 | 30.0 |
| Widow | 20 | 20.0 |
| Total | 200 | 100 |

Table 2: Showing respondents knowledge towards child adoption.

| Variables | Option | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--|--------|------------|----------------|
| Have you heard about child adoption. | Yes | 120 | 60.0 |
| | No | 80 | 40.0 |
| Total | | 200 | 100 |
| If yes what is child adoption? | | | |
| 1. Taking one into your home as your child | | 120 | 60.0 |
| 2. Transfer of behaviour from natural parents to adopting parents. | | 20 | 10.0 |
| 3. Is a situation where you take someone's child by Force into your family and make he/she your Own. | | 30 | 15.0 |
| 4. The process of increasing child morbidity rate | | 30 | 15.0 |

Table 3: Showing respondents attitude towards child adoption.

| Variables | Option | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--|--------|------------|----------------|
| Do mothers have interest towards Child adoption? | Yes | 150 | 75.0 |
| | No | 50 | 25.0 |
| Total | | 200 | 100 |
| Do mothers support child adoption? | Yes | 150 | 75.0 |
| | No | 50 | 25.0 |
| Total | | 200 | 100 |

Table 4: Showing respondents practice towards child adoption.

| Variables | Option | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|----------|------------|----------------|
| Have u adopted a child before? | No | 150 | 75.0 |
| | Yes | 50 | 25.0 |
| Total | | 200 | 100 |
| If yes, what was the reaction of <u>YourCommunity</u> towards the <u>adopted child.</u> | Positive | 120 | 60.0 |
| | Negative | 80 | 40.0 |
| Total | | 200 | 100 |
| What is the benefit of the <u>child adoption?</u> | | | |
| a. It prevents divorce | | 150 | 75.0 |
| b. It creates problems <u>the couples.</u> | | 30 | 15.0 |
| c. Does not provide shelter for abandoned <u>children.</u> | | 20 | 10.0 |
| Total | | 200 | 100 |

Table 5: Showing respondents encouragement of couples to go for child adoption.

| Option | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------|-----------|----------------|
| Yes | 130 | 65.0 |
| No | 70 | 35.0 |

DISCUSSION

The result of the study revealed that 120 (60%) of the respondents say that they have heard about child adoption, while 80 (40%) say they have not heard about child adoption before. 120 (60%) of the respondents agreed that child adoption is taken one into your home as your child, while 20 (10%) agreed that is the transfer of behaviour from natural parents to adopting parents while 30 (15%) say that is a situation where you take someone's child by force into your family and make he/she your own child. 30 (15%) agreed that it is the process of increasing child morbidity rate. This corresponds with a research which reported that the aims of child adoption is to provide children for couples who find it impossible to have children on their own and to provide children for parents or couples who are able to have one but are seriously concerned about over population and decide to increase their family size through adoption.^[13]

The result of the findings revealed that 150 (75%) of respondents have interest towards child adoption, while 50 (25%) have no interest. 150 (75%) of mothers support child adoption, while 50 (25%) of them do not support child adoption. This is in line with a research which reported that such situation will raise questions on the adoptees biological children position in the family register.^[4]

The result of the study revealed that 150 (75%) have not adopted a child before while 50 (25%) have adopted. 120 (60%) say that the reaction of the community towards the adopted child is positive, while 80 (40%) have negative effect. 150 (75%) of the respondents agreed that the benefits of child adoption is to prevent divorce. 30 (15%)

of the respondents agreed that it creates problems to the couples. 20 (10%) agreed that it does not provide shelter for abandoned children. This is in concurrent with a research which reports that through child adoption, people become legal parents of a child who was not their biological son.^[9]

The result of the finding revealed that 130 (65%) of the respondents agreed it is necessary to encourage couples to go for child adoption, while 70 (35%) say that it is not necessary. This corresponds with a research who reported that through child adoption, there is transfer of parental rights from natural parents to foster parents.^[11]

SUMMARY

The study was carried out to ascertain the knowledge and attitude of mothers towards child adoption practices in Ogbé Ahiara Ahiazu Mbaize. The data used for the study were obtained from the target population with 200 respondents in the sample size. The instrument used for the study was a structured questionnaire of questions base on the research objectives. The researcher analysed the information gathered which helped him to make necessary discussion and reliable suggestion based on the findings of the research. From the findings, conclusions weremade, recommendations and suggestions for further studies were also made.

CONCLUSION

The researcher have analysed the data and concluded that both the government and other citizens including the mothers between the ages of (40-50) years in Ogbé Ahiara Ahiazu Mbaize should accept child adoption.

RECOMMENDATION

From the data collected, majority of the mothers accepted child adoption. Although, most of them do not accept the idea due to some factors. In what way can the families, government and members of the society help in solving child adoption problems among mothers in Ogbe Ahiara Ahiazu Mbaise?

The family members should love accept and treat these children as biological children of the family and also make it known to others that these are their children and they should cherish them.

Government should enlighten the public on the impact child adoption has in the society and the problems it has solved in the families of childless couples.

Members of the society should stop thoughtless about child adoption; rather they should love and encourage mothers to adopt.

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