

Review

A Review on Choosing the Right Marriage Partner: A Determinant for a Happy and Healthy Family

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This review examines the meaning/definition of marriage ; as a legally recognized relationship established by a civil or religious ceremony, between two people (man and woman).It focuses on the types of marriages; when, how and the reasons to look for a right partner. This study also put into consideration of knowing each other's families, educational and health status, the type of Genotype and the relevance of Genotype 'AA' in relation to raising healthy children. It also examines the importance of knowing the Blood groups or types and the Rhesus factor/ Rhesus Incompatibility and its prevention. Emphasis was laid on the need to know one's HIV/AIDS status, stages of HIV infection, signs and symptoms of AIDS, prevention for HIV/AIDS, as well as highlighting the qualities of a right partner and few important points or reasons to note in choosing the right partner. It was concluded with few recommendations made such as; the need to know each spouse's health status, educational /family background and character of spouse, and not to rush into marriage just for the sake of love.

Key words: Marriage, Partner, Determinant, Happy, Healthy Family

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INTRODUCTION

Considering the health and wellbeing of families, it is imperative that, the right partner is chosen for marriage. Subsequent research has sought to explore the extent of 'marriage selection' by which healthier persons are selected into marital unions.

People who are similar in their values, backgrounds and life goals are more likely to enjoy a successful marriage life. Opposites may attract but they may not live together harmoniously as married couples. People who share common backgrounds and similar social networks / healthy status are better suited as marriage partners than people who are very different in their backgrounds and are not compatible in any way.

Although getting married is no longer a requirement for social acceptance, most people do marry in their life time, and couples across the socioeconomic spectrum wish their marriage to be satisfying and long lasting.(Benjamin \$ Thomas, 2020).

The persistence of marriage makes sense, considering that the intimate relationship enshrined by marriage continues to be vital to well- being. When marriages are stable and fulfilling, spouses are healthier, (Robies, Slatcher, Trombello \$ McGinn, 2004). When the relationship falter; other pillars of well-being are also at risk, (Holt- Lunstad, Smith, Baker, Harris \$ Stephenson, 2015). Based on this premise, it is very important for young adults to choose a right marriage partner at the right age bracket of a young adult between 20 to 24 years, to live a happier, healthy and harmonious life.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER

1. To be able to produce healthy children.
2. To live a happy marriage life.
3. To create harmony in the family.
4. To live a more prolonged life.

Theoretical Frame work

In this review of choosing the right partner; the ' **Social Exchange Theory**', which focuses on marital quality and stability is used. Also these theorists have posited that individuals weigh the cost and benefits of mate selection and of remaining in a marriage. This theory is looked upon, to explain why an individual remain in a dissatisfied marriage. Barriers to change and attractiveness of alternatives are the main elements of social exchange theory when used to guide the investigation of divorce, (Albrecht, Bahr., & Goodman., 1983); (Heaton \$ Albrecht., 1991).

This theory is applied in the above subject matter, of choosing the right marriage partner, since it is looked upon to explain why an individual might remain in a dissatisfied marriage and its elements when used helps to guide the investigation of divorce. This is because, if the right marriage partner is chosen, there will be stability and numerous benefits in a marriage. But on the contrary, if a wrong marriage partner is chosen, it might cause dissatisfaction and resulting to divorce and so many negative outcomes, such as; bearing of unhealthy children, untimely death, and unhappiness, just to mention but few.

Concept of Marriage:

The dictionary definition/meaning of marriage: a legally recognized relationship established by a civil or religious ceremony, between two people (man and woman) who intend to live together as sexual and domestic partners.

Marriage also called matrimony or wedlock is a culturally recognized union between people, called spouses that establish rights and obligations between them, as well as between them and their children, and between them and their laws. Marriage could as well mean the bonding between people by social union or legal contract, which is traditionally based on sexual relationship and applying a permanence of the union.

Marriage is a cultural, and like family, it takes many forms. Who gets married, what the marriage mean to the couple and to the society, why people get married (ie economic, political, or for love) and how it occurs (ie wedding or other ceremony) vary widely within societies and between societies.

In practicing cultural relativism, we should also

consider variations; such as whether a legal union is required (think of 'common law', marriage and its equivalents), or whether more than two people can be involved (consider polygamy). Other variations on the definition of marriage might include whether spouses are of opposite sexes or the same sex and how the traditional expectations of marriages (to produce children) is understood today.

In many countries around the world, Nigeria inclusive, and in the Ijaw culture in particular, having one spouse is not the only form of marriage. Most men practice polygamy. A recent article by Thobejane and Flora., (2014), provides an update on polygamy, or being married to more than one person at a time . Polygamy is more common than, one would think, with high percentage of human societies permitting the practice, but is most common in African countries, as a reflection of tribal and religious customs and economic and social structures.

This culture of practicing polygamy exposes our young adults to marrying or making the wrong choices of marriages based on cultural rites, and most times through parental influence, due to economic reasons,(ie getting married to a spouse without minding the variables, such as; age difference, educational and health status of the spouses), causing early divorce and unhappy marriage life.

Also according to the Episcopal Book of Common prayer., (1979), reflecting the traditional view, "Christian marriage is a solemn and public covenant between a man and a woman in the presence of God", intended by God for their mutual joy, for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity, and when it is God's will, for the procreation of children and their nurture.

Hence the definition of marriage varies around the world, ie different cultures have their own concept of marriage. Overtime, it has expanded and also constricted in terms of who and what is encompassed. Marriage, being familiar concepts that have existed since ancient societies, have not always been the same concept modern society deems it to be.

People enter into marriage for different reasons. These may include social, economic, religions, emotional, or legal reasons. We, in modern days, seem to instantaneously link love to marriage because it is a tradition that has been passed down to us from previous generations

TYPES OF MARRIAGES

Basically there are two types of marriages in Nigeria:

- Traditional marriage
- English marriage

Traditional Marriage

Is a marriage conducted according to the **Native law** and **Customs** of the people of Nigeria. It is recognized by the people, the government, all and sundry as the real marriage.

English Marriage (Wedding or Holy Matrimony)

This is another type of marriage that exists in Nigeria. It is conducted according to the rules and regulations of the different churches. As a matter of fact, there is no standard way of conducting this marriage. Each church does it the way they like.

In Nigeria, if a couple goes directly to marry in the church, that marriage is not recognized by their families, friends and in fact by the people in general. If they do not pass through the Traditional Marriage Rites of their ethnic group first.

When to look for a right partner

The process could start from the time of courtship (prelude to marriage: the period of a romantic relationship before marriage or trying to gain somebody's love: the act of paying attention to somebody with a view to developing a more intimate relationship). Most importantly when the young adult is of age (about 20-24 years and above) when he or she is matured enough to take responsibility.

Why should one choose a Right Partner?

1. To avoid producing unhealthy children
2. To live harmoniously
3. To avoid divorce
4. To avoid frequent hospitalization with its attendant cost
5. To avoid untimely death of parents/children
6. To avoid psychological problems

How Can One Choose A Right Partner?

(A) Know each other's family background/ history:

- Hereditary illnesses e.g., hypertension, diabetes, mental health status, obesity etc.
- Attitudinal/behavioural traits: being arrogant, saucy (showing a lack of respect), and being humble.
- Personality types: Is he /she an introvert or an extrovert?

(B) Educational status: the person should be able to read and write so that he/she can reason well with people.

(B) Health status: such as genotype/ blood group/ Rhesus factor

- **Genotype:** this is the genetic make-up of an organism as opposed to its physical characteristics, phenotype (visible characteristics of an organism resulting from the interaction between its genetic make-up and the environment).
- It means the homozygous dominant non hereditary factor's variation.

(D) Types of Genotype

There are basically three types of genotype:

- AA/AS/SS.

(E) The Genotype Question:

1. What does this have to do with my relationship?
2. Does this affect my choice of partner?

(F) The Relevance of Genotype AA in Relation to Your kids

1. If you and your partner are both AA, then you will have AA kids
2. If you are AS and your partner is AA, chances are that you might have 3 AA kids, and 1 'AS' kid out of every 4 children you have.
3. If you are AS and your partner is also 'AS', chances are that you will have 1 'AS' kid and 3 'SS' kids
4. If you are SS and your partner is also SS, then all the kids would definitely be SS
5. Hence, it is always advisable for AS individuals to marry AAs
6. SS should stick to AAs too
7. AA can marry both AAs and SS.

NOTE: *we marry for love and at the same time we should take the issue of genotype seriously because it is true, no father or mother will like to see his/her children suffer, except those affected with the issue of AS are planning not to have any babies.*

(G) Blood Types

- There are 4 types (groups) of blood: Blood group A, group B, group AB, and group O.
- **Group AB;** are universal recipients (they can receive blood from any other groups), while group O are universal donors (they can give blood to anybody)

(H) The Rhesus Factor:

- The Rhesus Factor is an antigen that exists on the surface of red blood cells in most people. People who have the Rhesus Factor are considered to have a positive (+) blood type, such as A+ or B+. Those who do not are considered to have a negative (-) blood type, such as O⁻ or AB⁻.
- The Rhesus Factor gets its name from experiments that involved rabbits which when injected with the Rhesus monkeys' red blood cells, produced an antigen that is present in the red blood cells of many humans- more than 85% of people are Rh+.

NOTE:

- *Antigens are proteins that when introduced into a body that does not have the same type, can cause the person's immune system to respond by producing anti bodies that attack the protein.*
- *The Antigens tend to cause an essentially strong immune response in people who do not have it. (Arya, Osoba & Benneth, 1988)*

(I) Rhesus Incompatibility

The fetus of a woman with Rh-negative blood may have Rh-positive blood if the father has Rh-positive blood.

- Rhesus incompatibility does not cause problem in a first pregnancy. Problem can occur if the fetus Rh-positive blood enters the blood stream of a woman with Rh-negative blood.
- The woman's immune system may recognize the fetus's red blood cells as foreign and produce antibodies called Rh-antibodies, to destroy Rh-positive blood cells.
- The production of these antibodies is called Rh-

sensitization. This is uncommon during first pregnancy because no significant amount of the fetus' blood is likely to enter the woman's blood stream until delivery. So the fetus rarely has problem. However, a woman becomes sensitized during delivery. Once she is sensitized, problems are more likely with each subsequent pregnancy when the fetus' blood is Rh-positive.

- In each pregnancy, the woman produces Rh-antibodies earlier and in larger amounts.
- If the antibodies cross the placenta to the fetus, they may destroy some of the fetus' red blood cells, if red blood cells are destroyed faster than the fetus can produce new ones, the fetus can develop anemia. Such destruction is called **hemolytic** disease of the fetus. (erythroblastosis fetalis) or of the new born, (erythroblastosis neonatorum) (Achal, 2008)

(J) Prevention of Rhesus Incompatibility

- As a precaution, women who have Rh-negative blood are given an injection of Rh-antibodies at 28 weeks of pregnancy and within 72 hours after delivery of a baby who has Rh-positive blood, even after a miscarriage or abortion. The antibodies given are called Rh (D) immune globulin.
- This treatment destroys any red blood cells from the baby that may have entered the woman's blood stream. Thus, there are no red blood cells from the baby to trigger the production of antibodies by these women, and subsequent pregnancies are usually not in danger. (Achal, 2008).

(K) Know your HIV/ AIDS Status

HIV stands for Human Immune Deficiency Virus. It is a retrovirus originally isolated in Paris in May 1983 by Luc-Montagnier.

AIDS stands for Anti Immune Deficiency Syndrome. The Human Immune Virus is transmitted through various routes, but the major mode of spread is by heterosexual or homosexual transmission. That is through sexual intercourse from an infected person to his partner. (i.e, penetrative penile-vaginal, penile-anal or oral genital contact).

(L) Stages of HIV Infection

- There are 5 stages of HIV infection as follows:
 1. **Primary HIV Infection (acute phase)**, presenting with history of a short illness similar to glandular fever. 2-6 weeks after exposure.
 2. **Latency period** (Asymptomatic phase) which could last for several months or years. The HIV continues to multiply and affect more and more lymphocytes with no obvious symptoms.
 3. **Persistent Generalized lymphadenopathy**. This stage where the infected persons show signs and symptoms of illness after six months or after many years, characterized by lymph glands, involving two or more extra –inguinal sites, etc
 4. **AIDS –Related Complex (ARC)** : This stage is characterized by considerable damage to the immune system. The symptoms at this stage are similar to that of AIDS but less severe.
 5. **Full Blown AIDS**: is the last and most severe stage of HIV Infection.

Signs of AIDS

There are basically major and minor signs and symptoms as follows:

MAJOR SIGNS:

- Weight loss greater than 10% of body weight
- Persistent fever for more than one month
- Diarrhea longer than one month
- Persistent severe fatigue

MINOR SIGNS OF AIDS:

- Constant cough for more than one month
- Swollen glands lasting for many months
- Itchy skin rashes (generalised pruritic dermatitis)
- Cold sores all over the body
- Recurrent herpes zoster
- Oro-pharyngeal candidiasis

Opportunistic Infections:

Just to list the most common ones-

- Tuberculosis
- Recurrent pneumonia

Prevention for HIV AIDS

According to Robert (2001): measures taken to try to minimize the risk of sexually transmitted diseases especially AIDS include the avoidance of promiscuity, use of condoms, fidelity (keeping to your partner) etc. (Shah, 2006).

Normalcy of Reproductive Organs

- Be sure your reproductive organs are complete and normal-uterus, fallopian tubes, ovaries, etc for the female. This can be done through ultra-scan.
- While for the male, the sperm count should be adequate to fertilize the ovum and to make sure the man is not impotent.

Qualities of a right partner:

- Creative ability- to create new ideas or things,
- Skillfulness- having the special ability and dexterity in doing something.

CONCLUSION

This paper had revealed that, your all round success in life, i.e. happiness, harmony, finances, being healthy and producing brilliant children, avoiding psychological problems, untimely death of parents and divorce etc is a function of the right choice of a partner you make in life.

SUGGESTIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop a natural love for your partner and not just for his or her wealth.
2. Coworker-ship towards a better living and not looking for a ready-made spouse because it does not last.
3. Have good understanding about each other in terms of character or behavior.
4. Do not be in a rush to choose a partner because marriage is for life and not a short term contract.
5. Do not consider the outer appearance of the individual as the ultimate, rather, the behavioral, attitudinal traits and gynecological /health conditions of the individual is most paramount.
6. Having this knowingness that marriage is for better and for worse

7. The need to know each spouse's educational /family background and not to rush into marriage just for the sake of love.

Reason: to avoid regret or early divorce and disharmony in the family.

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